



# For a relational, historical ethnography of hope : indeterminacy and determination in the Bosnian and Herzegovinian Meantime

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**For a Relational, Historical Ethnography of Hope:  
Indeterminacy and Determination in the Bosnian and Herzegovinian Meantime**  
Stef Jansen

**Abstract:** This article aims to contribute to the formulation of an analytically operational notion of hope best suited to its treatment as an object of ethnographic investigation. First it dissects epistemological and political assumptions of recent writings on the burgeoning anthropology of "hope". Then, reflecting on an ethnographic study of temporal reasonings in the "Meantime" in supervised, postwar, postsocialist, post-Yugoslav and presumably Europeanising Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), it constructs a critical conversation between anthropological replications of hope that seek to valorize indeterminacy as a principle and studies in the political economy of hope that seek to understand determinations of hope (including people's engagements with indeterminacy) in particular conditions. The article argues that the latter approach—conceiving of hope as a relational phenomenon in historical time—is better placed to capitalize on the specific strengths of ethnographic research.

**Keywords:** Hope; Indeterminacy; Ethnography; Bosnia and Herzegovina

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It is mid June 2014 and Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), is buzzing with hope. The country's football team, known as the *Zmajevi* [Dragons], have travelled to Brazil to compete in the men's World Cup tournament. Supporters' songs blare from speakers around the city, and a brisk trade in hats, scarves, wigs and flags flourishes on the streets. Hope—and some trepidation—permeate conversations and media coverage as people prepare for collective viewing sessions. This affect, which started during the qualification rounds and exponentially increased when the BiH team qualified for the World Cup in autumn 2013, has now intensified to the point where it infects many who are not interested in football at all. After days of anxious anticipation, the streets are deserted when the *Zmajevi* finally start the first of their three group games, against top side Argentina. Less than three minutes in, the BiH team scores an own-goal. Groans of disappointment echo across the city. Yet the underdogs up their game beyond expectations. Although eventually beaten 2-1, most of us agree that the *Zmajevi* impress with their valiant play, embodied especially by unknown youngster Bešlić, who almost keeps the world's best player out of the game (*almost*: except for the bit where Messi scores the winning goal). In the following days,

Sarajevans note with pleasure that foreign media reports also praise the quality and especially the pluckiness of the BiH team, further fuelling hope in the city. The second group game, against Nigeria, who drew their first match after a poor display, is awaited with breathtaking excitement: Sarajevo is like a pressure cooker of hope. And then, on the great day, the *Zmajevi* are unrecognisable, seeming to have lost the energy and spirit they displayed against Argentina. In football lingo: they simply "don't turn up" and lose 1-0. This is the end of any hopes for progression, whatever the outcome of the third group game against Iran. Along with the usual blaming of the referee, the affect of hopefulness that has permeated life the previous days evaporates in a flash. The hangover that follows is commensurate with the volume and intensity of hope that preceded it.<sup>1</sup>

This story is hardly unique to Sarajevo. Similar ones occur in different places on the occasion of different events. And although, in the case of football, which I really do consider the "beautiful game", I very much tend to get caught up in it myself, I am aware that such affective investment is heavily promoted by marketing campaigns in this multi-billion corporate business. However, I want to stress that my feeling that mid June 2014 saw a tremendous *upsurge* of hope is based on the fact that, frankly, I can't often truthfully write a sentence such as the one with which I open this text. Amongst all the nice things I could say about this city, you would not usually hear me declaring that "Sarajevo buzzes with hope". Having this in mind, this text will cast the affect surrounding BiH's participation in the 2014 World Cup against the background of my previous research in BiH in order to address recent developments in the anthropology of hope.

When I first turned to questions of hope, in the early 2000s, I found little anthropological writing on this topic. Meanwhile there has been an explosion of interesting work in anthropology and beyond. As part of this, hope has emerged as a signpost in calls for epistemological renewal, foregrounding the importance of *indeterminacy* not only as a marker of how hope functions in the world, but also a principle that should be valorized in anthropological knowledge production. Such "replications of hope", as Miyazaki calls them (2004), seek to provide an alternative to studies of the political economy of hope. The latter primarily approach hope as an empirical object of analysis and, amongst other things, aim to reveal the conditions of possibility for (particular forms of) hope. Analysing how hope is produced and distributed in different intensities and oriented at different objects, they thus include an interest in the ways in which it is itself *determined*.<sup>2</sup> In this text, I reflect on my research on questions of hope in BiH to spell out the implications of the differential emphasis in these two approaches. My goal is to encourage reflection on the particular contributions that ethnographic research can make to the study of hope.

### **What Do We Talk About When We Talk About Hope? Hopefulness and Hopes**

If hope now appears not only as a common term to denote an object of analysis, but also as a figure in programmatic calls for epistemological renewal, the meaning of the term and its status in the analysis are often left unspecified. To be fair, this is partly true in my own writings too. Therefore, to initiate a move towards a degree of clarity, I first suggest an analytical distinction between two modalities of use of the term hope in the English language literature: an "intransitive" and a "transitive" modality.

In its intransitive use, the term hope refers first and foremost to an affect. We could call this affect *hopefulness*. In this modality, the focus is not on any particular hope oriented at a specific object. Usually no objects are considered at all and, if they are, this dimension remains subdued. On the whole undefined, hope is then deployed in an expectation of recognition that is itself largely based on affective resonance: hopefulness as an intransitively understood affect seems to be considered simply the opposite of hopelessness. Such an understanding of hope is prevalent in non-anthropological writings on the topic that proceed on implicit normative notions of what qualifies as hopeful and what does not (see, for example, most contributions in Zournazi 2002; Harvey 2000; Rorty 1999). Hopefulness is then considered to be a *good* affect—put bluntly: an affect of the left, however understood. Accordingly, in a climate considered to be marked by relative hopelessness, phenomena are seen to be hopeful to the degree that they contribute to the imagination and realization of certain alternatives to a current order referred to as neoliberal, capitalist, racist, imperialist, etc. In anthropological studies, which tend to display a keener eye for diversity and less normative conceptions, the intransitive modality allows assessments of the varying intensities, volumes and spreads of hopefulness. For instance, we find studies of the relative distribution of this affect in a particular social configuration (for example Hage 2002, 2003), of the differential degrees of hopefulness associated with particular places (for example Čelebičić 2013; Demant Frederiksen 2014; Grill 2012; Jansen 2008a; Mar 2005; Pine 2014) or detected amongst particular sets of people at particular times (for example Bourdieu 1979; Jansen 2015; Reed 2011; Ringel 2014; Schielke 2015). Some authors emphasize that this affect may permeate not only people, but also landscapes, buildings, and so on (for example Street 2012).

The second modality of use of the terminology of hope is based on a transitive understanding of the term: hope is then approached as having one or more specific objects (in addition to the authors above, who also use hope in its intransitive mode, see for example Beyer 2015; Hage 2009; Novas 2006; Nuijten 2003). Here the focus is on people who hope *for* something or hope *that* something will occur. The word can then be preceded by an article and, in contrast to hopefulness, it can be used in the plural form. Importantly, this allows for acknowledging many potentially incompatible hopes oriented at different objects (within one and the same person or between persons). I will therefore render this modality from now on as *hopes*, to be understood as "hopes for/that". The analytical pertinence of this modality does not require a constitutive opposite such as hopelessness. Instead, it is understood that amongst all the other things they may do, people sometimes hope for certain things, or that certain things will happen. Intensity may vary, and so may the relevant objects of those hopes.

Clearly, the transitive and intransitive modalities of use of the term hope can be seen as referring to different dimensions of one and the same phenomenon. My story about Sarajevo in mid June 2014 speaks of hope as an affect, but as we shall see below, this can be partly specified in particular hopes. In anthropology the two modalities are often put to work in one and the same text in productive ways. However, I suggest that making an analytical distinction between hopefulness and hopes helps to set the stage for a clearer discussion of the different kinds of work that the notion of hope does, and can do, in our writing.

## **Anthropological Replications of Hope: Indeterminacy and Epistemological Renewal**

In his book *The Method of Hope*, Miyazaki argues that anthropologists should not merely seek to understand the instances of hope we ethnographically document but that our primary aim should be to "replicate the spark of hope" we detect in them "on another terrain" (2004, 30). This other terrain concerns knowledge production and the most important spark to be replicated, for Miyazaki, is the principle of indeterminacy. Hope is thus incorporated into a programme for epistemological renewal.

Miyazaki's book ethnographically documents compensation claims and rituals of Suvavou people in Fiji and later articles turn to the activities and dreams of financial traders in Japan (2006, 2010). He conceptualizes these instances of hope as knowledge practices, through a formal notion of hope as a "method" and a claim that this method underlies *all* knowledge formation. Miyazaki's stated focus is "not so much on the divergent *objects* of these hopes as on the idea of hope as a method that *unites* different forms of knowing" (2004, 4, italics in original). One key source for the elaboration of this method is Ernst Bloch's book *The Principle of Hope* (1986), which calls for a shift in philosophy from a contemplative, retrospective orientation to a prospective one. Foregrounding the "anticipatory not-yet-conscious" (also: "forward-dawning") Bloch urges us to heed the unrealized surplus meaning that it contains as a prefiguration of the future (1986, 116). Taking seriously the prospective momentum that is ubiquitous in the world, he writes, we should let it animate our thinking. Picking up this thread, Miyazaki intends his book to be "not so much a study of the hope of others as an effort to recapture that hope (Fijians' as well as Bloch's) as a method for anthropology" (2004, 25).

My discussion here will focus on Miyazaki's contention that efforts to retrace the social production of particular forms of hope back to their conditions of existence—what I call studies of the political economy of hope—cannot do justice to the inherent forward-looking temporal orientation that makes hope what it is. Hope, according to him, cannot be represented in any such categories; it can only be replicated, that is, performed (128–29).<sup>3</sup> "As soon as hope is approached as the end point of a process", Miyazaki states, "the newness or freshness of the prospective moment that defines that moment as hopeful is lost" (8). From this perspective, a study of the practices, relations and conditions that produced—that is, determined—the particular instances of hope that he ethnographically documented in Fiji and Japan would necessarily fail to adequately render that hope because it would undo its core characteristic: indeterminacy. Moreover, such an analysis of the political economy of hope would also fail to capitalize on the potential of the study of hope to effect a Blochian "radical temporal reorientation of knowledge" (5), replicating hope as a method in anthropology and beyond to "redefine radically and imaginatively the constitution of a critique rather than defend one's own critical practices in a morally empowering manner" (Miyazaki 2006, 165). The call for epistemological renewal thus feeds into a (subdued) political aim, as the valorization of indeterminacy allows replication of hope into a "nondirectional stance [...] a paradoxically hopeful possibility that the critical study of neoliberalism and global capitalism could reorient itself radically to embrace its loss of direction" (Miyazaki 2010, 250).

Other anthropologists have taken up Miyazaki's call. In a thoughtful study of the hopeful practices of anarchist activists in the German city of Hoyerswerda, Ringel deploys a

similar focus on the promise such an approach holds for "reconstitut[ing] the future as an analytical domain and a methodological tool for anthropological knowledge practices" (2012, 186). Here too, hope is predominantly conceived of as a knowledge practice. Others have sought to extend this "method of hope" in Deleuzian terms, despite Miyazaki's criticisms of an anthropological "aesthetic of emergence" (2004, 139–40), which seems to suggest he does not favour such directions.<sup>4</sup> Invoking Miyazaki's call, Pedersen's account of a day in the life of a group of men in Mongolia treats hope not as knowledge, but as "work" (2012). In this and other Deleuzian approaches (for example Anderson 2007; Biehl & Locke 2010), the authors' epistemological positioning again foregrounds indeterminacy, here with a focus on emergence and becoming. In that way, Pedersen describes how his informants are "erratically jumping into each situation from an unknown vantage [point] that lies ahead of them and that always disappears at the moment of takeoff [...] falling into the present from a deferred future" (2012, 148). His identification of his interlocutors' hopes, insofar as they feature, is primarily a route for uncovering and valorising sparks of indeterminacy, posited in defiant contrast to assumptions of any determination.

Anthropological replications of hope contrast their approaches to studies of the political economy of hope by, for example, Bourdieu (Pedersen 2012) or Hage (Miyazaki 2010). Against attempts to understand the ways in which hope is determined, they foreground indeterminacy and let it animate their writing as a principle of hope for new modes of knowledge production. Sometimes this is also presented as opening up political potential, in contrast to the stale alternative of "critique", considered to be doomed to reproduce closure through its focus on determination.<sup>5</sup> Such replications are theoretically sophisticated and may inspire original thought and, perhaps, action. Yet in what follows I suggest careful consideration of the assumptions and implications of an *a priori* focus on indeterminacy in the study of hope. Moreover, acknowledging that studies of the political economy of hope do indeed risk losing some of its spark in the process, I ask what we stand to lose by privileging the maintenance of that spark. What is the price paid for focusing on performing hope and abandoning investigations of how hope is produced, distributed, embedded in particular social relations—in short: the various ways in which it is determined?

### **Anthropological Replications of Hope: Selectivity for Mutual Reinforcement**

Anthropological replications of hope reverberate with the hopes of their authors for particular forms of knowledge production. And since it is claimed that hope can only be "performed", it is often difficult to distinguish in such writings between the transitively understood hopes of research subjects they document, those of the anthropologists who study them, and an intransitively understood affect of hopefulness. Replication seems to rely on an assumption that the three are mutually reinforcing. A quantitative and qualitative increase of hope amongst our research subjects, it is implied, is congruent with an increase of hope for anthropologists as well as an increase of hopefulness for the discipline of anthropology and for the world. Clearly, such an assumption of mutual reinforcement requires empirical selectivity. Of all the forms of hope at work in the world, animating anthropology (let alone the world) with sparks of indeterminacy requires scholars to focus on particular kinds of hopes, or at least on particular formal dimensions of them.

In terms of kinds of hopes, transitively understood, anthropologists have always tended to focus on hopes they like. Few study people's hopes for, say, patriarchy, racial purity, authoritarian discipline, stricter border regimes, or capital accumulation at the expense of others, and fewer still use the terminology of hope for this (although such hopes may in fact be more prevalent and powerful in the world than the kind of hopes many anthropologists may favour). Empirical selectivity is even more notable than usual in anthropological replications of hope of the Deleuzian variety. Here authors tend to seek out hopes for mobility, rather than for fixity; hopes for openness, rather for closure; hopes for beginnings, rather than for endings; hopes for multiple possibilities, rather than for certainty. They usually also look for hope outside of people's everyday practices of social reproduction. Engagements with the future, here, are considered hopeful—and thus worth researching under the rubric of hope—insofar as they are opposed to continuation (for a critique, see Ringel 2014). Hope, here, is associated with defiance: certain hopes are privileged insofar as they allow authors to undermine pessimistic diagnoses of political-economic determination (Biehl & Locke 2010; Pedersen 2012).

To catch sparks of alternatives, anthropological replications of hope also often tend to focus on formal dimensions of hope as it seen to operate. Miyazaki's work does not rely on empirical selectivity in terms of kinds of hopes, transitively understood. Yet, as we saw, he turns away from studying people's hopes and the objects of these hopes, instead seeking to capture the indeterminacy that formally characterizes those hopes as a method of knowledge. Since whatever is hoped for—even if it is a form of certainty—has not happened yet and is not certain to happen, any hopes cherished by interlocutors can be incorporated formally in a valorization of indeterminacy. This is what Miyazaki aims to do in order to renew anthropological knowledge production. In this way, then, hope appears as an attunement—whether in "knowledge" (Miyazaki 2004) or in "work" (Pedersen 2012)—to indeterminacy. It is the valorization of this indeterminacy as a principle itself that leads authors to identify certain (dimensions of) ethnographically observed phenomena, and not others, as hope.

While such a focus can yield interesting insights, I am troubled by the tendency of anthropological replications of hope to shift imperceptibly from a focus on particular hopes, held by particular people in particular social configurations, or from particular formal dimensions of their hoping, to statements about hope *tout court*.<sup>6</sup> To trace this tendency, let us take a closer look at Miyazaki's use of his key inspiration for his "method of hope": Bloch's *The Principle of Hope*. Arguing for a philosophical shift from a retrospective orientation to a prospective one, Bloch scans a vast range of human experiences to identify sparks of hope and to capture their energy for his project. This, Miyazaki says, is what *The Method of Hope* seeks to build on. Yet there is a striking silence in the latter's incantations of Bloch. Reading his project as a strictly epistemological one, what is left out is a political dimension that was crucial to Bloch's entire opus: his Marxism. *The Principle of Hope* explicitly posits Marxism as the *real* expression of hope, "struggling on behalf of 'concrete' as opposed to 'abstract' Utopia", and embodying "real" as opposed to "ideological possibility" (1986, 479–81). To say that Bloch "abandon[s] the notion of a predetermined end" (Miyazaki 2004, 15) thus glosses over the tension between his insistence on indeterminacy and his classification of all "forward dawns of the not-yet" as prior reflections of a known "*Good Novum*": a communist society. Sure, Bloch is critical of assumptions of *predetermination*, but he has

much to say about determination. For example, stating that the ultimate ground of hope is the "basic drive" of hunger (1986, 65) he contends that Marxism has "made real" certain possibilities in modern society. For Bloch, hope lies in anticipatory action that realizes, epistemologically and politically, these possibilities as they are made available by "objective" processes already occurring and already prefigured in the past (1370).

My point here is not to argue that only a Marxist conceptualization of hope is valuable for anthropology. Rather, I suggest that Miyazaki can only claim to replicate Bloch's hope for his particular method for anthropology (2004, 25) by leaving his Marxism undiscussed.<sup>7</sup> Bloch's insistence on maintaining one single normative concept of Marxist hope while also emphasising open-endedness, namely, leads to paradoxical evocations of indeterminacy *and* determination. This is why Miyazaki's borrowings from Bloch must remain strictly formal, subscribing to his call for temporal reorientation without reproducing its normative and even teleological dimensions that grate with most anthropological approaches.<sup>8</sup> Yet what if we explicitly acknowledge the divergent logics of an authorial articulation of Marxist hope, on the one hand, and ethnographic sensibility, on the other? Ethnography reveals that many different hopes coexist in the world: if we use the term in its transitive modality, we must acknowledge that people hope for all kinds of things, often in wildly inconsistent ways. And many of these hopes, of course, are unrelated to the political making of a better world, however framed. As Gekle (1998, 56) has argued, if we drop Bloch's teleological postulation of an objective *Good Novum* and take seriously a multiplicity of hopes on their own terms, hope appears less as a principle and more as an affect or a disposition. This is precisely what Miyazaki wants to avoid. Yet conceptualising hope in this way, I suggest, brings us closer to an operational notion of hope that allows ethnographic studies of a less selective kind. In the next section I distil an implicit working definition of hope from such studies.

### **Towards an Analytically Operational Notion of Hope for Ethnography**

Having distinguished above between a transitive and an intransitive modality of use of the terminology of hope, here I return to the question what hope means in anthropological studies beyond those that are focused on replication. This is intended to launch a conversation geared towards an analytically operational notion of hope at least in one language (here: English). For me, this is not a matter of ontology (what, really really, is hope?), but of linguistic convention (are we talking about the same phenomenon when using the term hope?). I consider this necessary for productive scholarly dialogue.<sup>9</sup> From my reading of the literature, and thinking through questions of hope in my own research, I propose it makes most sense to speak of hope—whether in its intransitive modality (hopefulness) or in its transitive one (hopes)—in cases where the following four dimensions are combined:

- (a) When we speak of *dispositions* or an *affect* that is itself to large degree embodied in dispositions. The term hope then refers to (sets of) dispositions, including schemata of knowledge, embodied inclinations and affective investment (cf. Bourdieu 2003), that condition practices and that are being conditioned by them. Such a conceptualization of hope allows us to acknowledge its implication in practice without entirely conflating it with practice (as, for example, in Pedersen's phrase "to



work really is to hope—or, we could say, to hope really is to work" (2012, 147)). It also allows for a conception of hope that does not centre exclusively on knowledge per se (as in Miyazaki 2004) and it reduces selectivity by lifting the formal focus on indeterminacy. Methodologically, such an understanding allows ethnographers to capture hope not only through verbal and non-verbal communication but also through the tracking of practices embedded in social relations (think, for example, of people's practices of bringing up children, of house building, of handling of health concerns, of managing household budgets, etc.).

**(b)** When we speak of *future*-orientations, including different kinds of reasonings and affective engagements. This future dimension is already encapsulated in the notion of dispositions. The terminology of hope is not usefully brought to bear on orientations that are exclusively past-oriented. This implies that a degree of linear temporal reasoning (not necessarily "*unilinear*" or "*teleological*") is required for anything like hope to work. Without *any* linearity in temporal reasoning, there can be no future orientation, just as there can be no conception of a past. And with regard to such linearity, hope, then, concerns dispositions directed *forward* in time. As Mar puts it "Hope accesses a temporalized sense of potential, of having a future. [...] Hopeful activity entails a consciously foregrounded anticipation of a possible object in some future time, even if that object may be vague and incompletely articulated" (2005, 365).

**(c)** When these dispositions are *positively charged*, in the sense that we find a degree, however hesitant, of expectant desire. While hopefulness as an affect can co-exist with fear or avoidance, for example, it can be distinguished from them by a degree of belief that something desired may occur in the future. And in the transitive modality, hopes are oriented at a desirable rather than an undesirable object positioned in the future. Clearly this a matter of perspective and while hopes and hopefulness may be intensified when shared, this evaluation does not have to be shared by others, let alone by anthropologists studying it, for us to speak of hope. Still, some authors warn against a "positive" evaluative clause in understandings of hope. In his study of young men in Georgia looking for relationships with women in Russia in order to broaden their horizon of opportunities, Demant Frederiksen (2014, 32), for example, writes that "hope is not purely a positive notion", noting that "it is intimately related to despair [...] and poised for disappointment". Reed (2011, 533), in turn, explains that the hopes for freedom amongst Papuan prisoners on remand place them in a harder situation than their fellow-prisoners who have already been convicted. While these authors highlight important dynamics in the operation of hope, in my reading their conceptualization retains a positive charge. Demant Frederiksen and Reed only speak of hope, in its transitive or intransitive modality, when what is anticipated *is* in principle desirable to the hoper (marriage to a Russian citizen, travel, economic opportunity, a non-guilty charge, freedom, etc.) and when a degree of belief *is* at play that fulfilment is possible in principle.<sup>10</sup> Otherwise, I suspect, these authors would not have spoken of hope. The "positive" clause in our working definition, then, is not to say there are no negative sides too.

**(d)** When, in one dimension of what anthropological replications of hope refer to as indeterminacy, there is a degree of uncertainty of outcome. Here we can be brief. At

least since Spinoza (quoted in Mar 2005, 366), we speak of hope exclusively when it is in principle *disappointable*. In situations of absolute certainty, the terminology of hope does not apply.<sup>11</sup> We have other words for that.

Retrospectively, I can say that a notion of hope containing all four dimensions distilled from the literature above,<sup>12</sup> runs through my writings on hope too, albeit in conceptually underdeveloped ways and leaving too much space for confusion. In dialogue with other anthropological studies that primarily take hope as their object of analysis, I now turn to my own research in BiH.

### **Histories of Hope in the Meantime**

My initial anthropological interest in the issue of hope emerged from my research on questions of "home". Five years after the end of 1992–1995 war in BiH, in which over two out of four million Bosnians were displaced, I investigated how people imagined and sought to (re)make home. "Return to one's home of origin" was guaranteed by the Peace Agreement signed on an airbase in Dayton, USA. After the modest volume of return in the immediate post-war period, especially across the boundaries of the war-produced ethnationally homogenized "entities" of the "Dayton" BiH semi-protectorate, the early 2000s saw a push by some local actors and by in-country foreign supervision agencies to facilitate it. This involved considerable foreign funding for the reconstruction of accommodation and the restitution of property rights, and pressure on domestic authorities to evict temporary occupants (usually displaced persons themselves).

My ethnographic research alerted me to the tension between the limited conception of "home" in policy interventions and the more encompassing one that animated the practices of their supposed beneficiaries (see for example Jansen 2006). I thus challenged the privileging of private property and physical shelter in policy and reflected critically on the prevalence of a retrospective notion of "home" as place of origin in scholarly literature on migration. Learning from my interlocutors, I inserted a sensitivity to longing into a consideration of belonging, integrating questions of time into questions of place (see for example Jansen 2008b). To do this, I found useful tools in Hage's writing on Lebanese migrants in Sydney, Australia (1997). Alongside feelings of community, security and familiarity, Hage draws attention to a "sense of possibility" (1997, 103; later reformulated as hope (2002, 161)), as an often overlooked factor in people's belonging. With Staffan Löfving, I then tried to develop this into a framework for the study of "struggles for home" that takes into account people's concerns with the feasibility of potential forms of "emplacement" in particular places under particular historical conditions (Jansen & Löfving 2008). We thus turned to hope in order to devise a dynamic concept of home-*making* as a future-oriented social project, with home conceived of as an objective rather than a place of origin.

Such a linkage of questions of hope with those of mobility animates a broader body of anthropological work taking the hope of migrants as their object of analysis. In the intransitive modality of the terminology of hope, such writings show that people associate different degrees of hopefulness with different places and that they may engage in projects to migrate or stay put accordingly. For example, Grill's study of Roma from Eastern Slovakia

(2012) investigates their imaginings of "going up to England". In another example, Mar found that transmigrants between Hong Kong and Australia framed their movement in discourses of modernity that considered these places alternately to be "ahead" or "behind" in particular ways (2005, 370). So anthropologists can detect identifiable patterns in the determination of particular forms of hope. Both studies also show that the affect of hopefulness can be specified in particular hopes. As Hage has argued, people "engage in a physical form of mobility that we call migration because they are after existential mobility" (2009, 98). Conversely, by the same logic, they might want to stay put. At stake here is social mobility but also a broader "imaginary mobility, a sense that one is 'going somewhere'" (99). Amongst displaced persons in and from BiH I found a reluctance to (fully) return because they estimated that conditions in their place of origin did not facilitate a reduction of the precariousness that blighted their lives. Crucially, this included an assessment that it did not offer enough of a "sense of possibility" (see for example Jansen 2008a). Especially younger people said: "There are no prospects there".

The degree of hopefulness that displaced persons in BiH associated with particular places can be specified into hopes, transitively understood, for "normal lives". This term was used extensively in evaluation of potential return (Jansen 2006, 2008a, 2010). Until today it is widely used by all kinds of people—displaced or not—to appraise life experiences in socialist Yugoslavia, usually in positive contrast with their current predicament. It also denotes a standard for aspiration. "Normal lives", then, point both nostalgically backward to remembered Yugoslav lives and normatively forward to how lives should be. Since this notion is most frequently used in exasperated reference to something desirable but absent, my linkages of hope and mobility here occurred mostly through a focus on their opposites: an acute sense of spatiotemporal entrapment. Before the lifting of the Schengen visa regime for BiH citizens, for example, I found that resentment, cast against the possibility of extensive visa-free travel with the previous Yugoslav passport, entailed a broader preoccupation with the dignity of one's collective place in the world. And, crucially, such everyday geopolitical discourse (Jansen 2009) did not consider this place itself as fixed, but assessed it in terms of the degree of forward movement that dwelling in it allowed, ranked in relation to the movement of others, particularly in the process of EU accession. Places, but also *times*, may thus be felt to allow different degrees of hopefulness and they may be seen as less or more likely to facilitate the realization of certain hopes. Altogether, rather than leading me to emphasize and valorize the role of indeterminacy in hope, my research thus alerted me to the deeply relational and historical nature of any given instance of hope, including of people's dealings with and valorization of indeterminacy.

Evocations of "normal lives" then became the core object of analysis in my ethnographic study in a Sarajevo apartment complex in 2008 and 2010 (Jansen 2015).<sup>13</sup> Referring to a variety of aspirations that had been unfulfilled during the war (for safety, decent living standards, modern comforts, etc.) and to some that could be traced back to more specific, selective recollections of Yugoslav times (for secure employment, free schooling and healthcare, ample time for leisure and travel, low salience of ethnonational differences, etc.), my interlocutors assured me that a key characteristic of "normal lives" consisted of an expectation of their unproblematic reproduction. From this perspective, lives can be considered "normal" insofar as they allow one to realistically expect steady forward movement, if not immediate, then at least transgenerational. Tomorrow, in "normal lives"

thus conceived, can generally be anticipated as being better than today through the accumulation of more being (Hage 2003, 15–16). "Normal lives", as understood by my interlocutors in BiH, are lives that allow hopefulness (intransitive) and realistic aspirations for the fulfilment of particular hopes (transitive). Further, in making this clear to me, they systematically drew my attention to the figure of "the state" as the supreme guarantor necessary to provide the ordering framework required for the unfolding of "normal lives" thus conceived. In a sharp example of postwar, postsocialist but also broader post-Fordist affect (Berlant 2001; Muehlebach & Shoshan 2012), almost all my (adult) interlocutors, regardless of any ideological commitments, recalled previous "normal lives" as securely "gridded" in institutions and they considered such lives to be currently unfeasible due to the lack of a "functional", "ordered", "caring", or simply "*normal*" state.

So if "normal lives" were seen to require a "normal state", this, everyone agreed, had been absent ever since the war and had not been reactivated in the actually-existing state of BiH based on the 1995 Dayton constitution. Dayton BiH was, and is, a precarious state: the legitimacy of its existence is threatened by Serbian and Croatian ethnonationalism, and its claims to sovereignty are limited both by the institutional dispersion of its government and by its drawn-out status as a semi-protectorate caught up in geopolitical realignment. In the apartment complex where I worked, which had suffered heavily under Serbian siege, many were strongly affectively invested in BiH statehood and resented that such a Dayton BiH offered them no framework for the forward movement that would make for "normal lives" and no hope that one was forthcoming. And with things not improving, exasperation intensified over time. It is not just that Dayton BiH was considered (by its citizens and by "The World") a dysfunctional state, unable to move forward, but that this was *still* the case after so many years (see also Feldman, this issue). Such an affect of hopelessness also allowed particular mobilizations of hope. Political parties vying for people's support in Sarajevo can and do interpellate citizens through their hopes for a "normal state" called BiH—implying hopes for "normal lives", marked by realistic aspirations to forward movement. This is crucial to a hegemonic project that has guaranteed such longevity for the ruling caste. Politicians who have ruled for twenty years blame the absence of a "normal state" on *other* politicians and meanwhile, in this economically devastated country, their parties operate vast machines of clientelism. This means they provide a sizeable section of the population with basic conditions to endure—and some with much more. On this reduced scale, they do thus fulfil certain hopes of certain people, and awaken them in others, while a collective sense of "not moving well enough" is reproduced as people make do.

I thus encountered a pervasive sense of what Hage calls "stuckedness" (2009, 97). This served as a widely shared diagnosis not only of individual and household predicaments but also of a collective affliction: BiH itself was considered stuck. And measured against normative notions of existential mobility, there was a sense that in such a BiH lives were suspended and a continuously intensifying exasperation with the inability to reactivate temporal structures of predictable and steady forward movement associated with "normal lives". These are the contours of what I call the Dayton "Meantime". And the temporal dynamics of this Meantime, suspended between a known past (experienced, and to a degree idealized) and a normative future (so far infuriatingly out of reach), were so generalized that they became a key part of the very experience of being a citizen of BiH. This was the case in 2008–2010 and it still is as I write this.

Now, it is one thing to say that in BiH hope was seen as a structuring substance of "normal lives". Yet what about the current hopefulness and hopes of my interlocutors? Did they *hope for* "normal lives"? Most felt that this could not currently be hoped for. This signals one implication of using a working concept of hope formed around the four dimensions mentioned above: that the appropriateness of the term hope is not pre-given. Driven by empirical findings, a study focusing on *questions of* hope may ultimately find this is not the best term to denote the *object of analysis*. Concretely, I felt that the notion of hope for "normal lives" worked for some patterns during the war and in the immediate post-war period, but not for the later period. Rather than hoping for "normal lives", my interlocutors *longed to be able to hope* for them. So I opted for the term "yearning" instead.<sup>14</sup> Like hope, this can denote a positively charged, disappointable disposition. However, its intensity can be seen to be slightly different. There is not just an awareness of possible non-fulfilment, but a dread of unfulfillability. Moreover, its temporal structure is somewhat different too. Hope can be persistent, but yearning is per definition drawn-out. And, crucial to my decision, yearning is not only future-oriented: it looks both backward *and* forward. Unlike in the case of hope, the object here is known to be out of reach in both directions, lost in the past and seemingly endlessly deferred in the future. In that sense, my interlocutors yearned for "normal lives".

My research in BiH thus explored widely resonant forms of temporal reasoning in an attempt to understand how the affect of hopefulness as well as specific hopes came to flourish—or not—in a particular spatiotemporal configuration: a fragmented, supervised, postwar, postsocialist, post-Fordist polity in the European semiperiphery, presumed to be on the "Road into Europe" and long considered by its inhabitants to be caught in the Meantime. And *these* are the specific conditions in which we should understand the story with which I started this text. This story concerns Sarajevo's "buzzing with hope", and the evaporation of that hope, in mid June 2014, almost two decades into the Dayton Meantime. To make ethnographic sense of the intensity of this affect, and of the particular hopes (transitively understood) it entailed, it would not be sufficient to zoom in on the ontological importance of indeterminacy in hope per se. Instead, I contend, particular instances of hope must also be understood as relational phenomena: they must be cast against the background of what came *before* and of what happens *around*. This is not to say that the hope that pervaded Sarajevo at the time of the World Cup was all *predetermined*—but it does require an alertness to the conditions that contributed to making it into what it was; that is, that partially determined it. It is not merely that the hopes for the BiH football team occurred in a broader history of hope, in a web of relations to other hopes, but also that people in BiH are themselves aware of that history and of those relations. Ethnographers are well-placed to trace both this relational historicity and people's own understandings of it.

I suggest we can conceive of the hopes for the *Zmajevi* to win games in Brazil as part of more encompassing affective investments, centring on a concern with forward movement that in BiH often merged with questions of everyday geopolitics. These were hopes for recognition of Bosnians as legitimate and respected participants on the world stage, now proudly "stepping up" to this stage on the basis of their own efforts. Importantly, cast against a past of some great performances by the Yugoslav team, and with both Serbian and Croatian teams having participated more recently, this was the *first* time in its short history that the BiH football team had qualified for any major competition. What's more, this was a

"golden generation" that recently not just once but twice acrimoniously fell at the last hurdle: in play-off games (known in BiH as *baraž*). These failures, after similar exponential buzzes of hope, had been met with massive disappointment. As so often in BiH, this was then also integrated into self-deprecating humour, such as in a cover version of *Noir Désir*'s hit song *Voyage Voyage* by the band *Dvadesetorica*: "*baraž, baraž, mi nikad nećemo proći*" ["play-off, play-off, we'll never make it through"]. Reflecting a broad historical sense, and mirroring much cultural production and many jokes, this song also ironically reflected on BiH's "place in the world". After many aborted attempts, the hope invested in the BiH football team in June 2014, then, was hope for collective dignity on the world stage, for recognition on grounds other than war, ethnonational division and the other usual reasons for BiH to appear in global media reporting.<sup>15</sup> In this sense, some such hopes *were* fulfilled at the time of the World Cup in Brazil. Beyond everyday geopolitics too, I can speak of a tremendous *upsurge* of hope because it occurred in a situation widely understood as marked by hopelessness. And again, this sense was itself part of how people in Sarajevo engaged in the buzz. The key to understanding the intensity of the hope in June 2014, I suggest, is that people did not just feel that something good had happened and something even better could be about to happen, but that they could *finally* feel that something good had happened and that something even better could be about to happen. In that context many grabbed the promise embodied by the BiH football team with both hands as a rare opportunity for hope big enough *to get carried away by*. I certainly did, but that's besides the point of this text.<sup>16</sup>

## Concluding Remarks

In my research in BiH I primarily conceived of hope not as a method or a banner for an epistemological positioning but as an object of analysis. I trace hope's functioning and effects and seek to identify the conditions in which hopefulness and particular hopes may flourish for particular people. The latter is a study of the political economy of hope, both intransitively and transitively understood. As Hage puts it: "We need to look at what kind of hope a society encourages rather than simply whether it gives people hope or not" (2002, 152). To conclude, I relate this back to calls for anthropological replications of hope, foregrounding three differences in emphasis in terms of analytical gaze:

First, anthropological replications of hope are centred on indeterminacy. And clearly, without a degree of indeterminacy, no hope is possible. Yet must that mean that the scholarly contribution of an anthropological study of hope depends on whether it foregrounds indeterminacy *per se*? Studies of hope's political economy allow us to understand instead how indeterminacy appears to particular people in specific conditions. We don't need to exercise a priori selectivity: anthropologists already have tools to empirically study *any form of hope—and any combination of contradictory hopes—encountered in the world*. In its intransitive modality, we may study subaltern or broadly shared hopefulness, hesitant or exhilarating hopefulness. In its transitive modality, we may be looking at hopes aimed at objects that qualify them as defiant or conformist, as exceptional or run-of-the-mill, as hopes for change or hopes for continuation. And since few people can afford to be entirely consistent in anything much in life, we should allow for the fact that our research subjects may cherish different, contradictory hopes, at any one given

time, or over time. As for our own affinity with these hopes, some of them we may like, and some not. Anthropological replications of hope assume mutual reinforcement and consider it to enhance the quality of analysis. In the process, I think they risk selectively flattening interlocutors into figures of epistemological positionings. In contrast, anthropological studies that treat hope primarily as their object of analysis need not measure hope's hopefulness by its objects, by a preconceived valorization of indeterminacy or by degrees of assumed mutual reinforcement.

Second, replications of hope are concerned primarily with *what hope makes possible*, namely how it can be replicated in epistemologically reinvigorated anthropological writing thriving on the indeterminacy detected in it. In contrast, studies of its political economy are concerned primarily with *what makes possible (particular kinds of) hope*. They ask: which conditions facilitate the mobilization of *certain and not other hopes*? This means acknowledging that hope thrives on indeterminacy, that its outcomes are never fully predetermined, but that no instance of hope is itself entirely undetermined. An important dimension of its relationality, of course, lies in the realm of the "not yet", and in this way hope really does draw on an indeterminate future. Yet to make the particular strengths of ethnography come into their own, I contend, we must account for how instances of such reaching into the future are themselves situated and can therefore be studied as such. This includes an eye for how any hope can be re-articulated in relation to other hope(s). Work in this vein can focus on different scales. Some anthropologists have investigated, for example, the determinations involved in the unequal distribution of hopefulness and of certain hopes within a social configuration. Others focus on majoritarian phenomena, detecting shared concerns in order to reconstruct a broadly present historical sense (Berlant 2001): in that way, I have focused on factors that determine the relative prevalence and dynamics of hopefulness and of particular hopes in a social configuration.

Third, if replications of hope are concerned primarily with *taking hope out of its history* (that is, preventing it from being captured by determination), studies of the political economy of hope are concerned primarily with *putting hope back into its history*. My interlocutors felt that the place and time in which they lived constituted a predicament in itself: it was *living-in-Dayton-BiH*, they argued, that prevented them from living "normal lives". They themselves thus historicized hope. I followed them in this, conceiving of particular forms of hope as always embedded in social relations in historical time. The study of the political economy of hope shows that anthropologists do have ethnographic tools to investigate factors that determine the presence, volume, intensity, spread and resonance of hopes in the spatiotemporal configurations and imaginings where they shape up. Authors who favour anthropological replications of hope consider this to be a form of undesirable analytical closure, killing off the spark of indeterminacy that, according to them, makes hope into hope. They believe that hope can only be grasped in replications of that indeterminacy. Personally, when replicating hope is my priority, as it sometimes is, I do not turn to ethnography. I believe there are other, better channels for this. The strength of ethnography, I suggest, is that it allows the *study of* how particular hopes are in fact channelled, including how they are "closed off" in particular dynamics that can be studied. We can identify, understand and perhaps help to overcome these closures. Hopes have their histories—and their contents, objects, directionality and intensity are always the product of activation in a

specific historical configuration. So is its precise relation to, and potential valorization of, indeterminacy.

In this text I have purposively used the term "determination" to spell out the terms of prioritization. While characterized by a degree of indeterminacy, the nature and force of hope, I suggest, just like that of any other phenomenon, is also subject to determination by a vast array of factors. Of course these factors never *fully* determine any particular form of hope. Historicization does not mean losing sight of contingency. Quite on the contrary: it allows us to *foreground* contingency by investigating the conditions of existence and possibility of particular instances of hope as relational phenomena in particular historical moments.

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## End notes

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<sup>1</sup> The BiH team go on to beat Iran 3-1, but this occurred after hope.

<sup>2</sup> While I normally tend to phrase this point as hope being "situated", "historically specific", "shaping up in particular conditions", etc., here I purposively use the term "determination" to crystallize key points in dialogue with the valorization of "indeterminacy" in replications of hope.

<sup>3</sup> For a critical assessment of this claim, see Jensen (2014, 342).

<sup>4</sup> In an analysis of practices focused on endurance by other inhabitants in Hoyerswerda, Ringel explicitly differentiates his approach from Deleuzian interpretations (2014).

<sup>5</sup> For a discussion of this point in relation to the study of affect, see Jansen Forthcoming.

<sup>6</sup> This is facilitated by the widespread, unacknowledged muddling of the distinction between what I have called transitive and intransitive modalities of use of the term hope.

<sup>7</sup> Miyazaki only touches on Bloch's Marxism in a mention of his support for Stalin, tucked away in a footnote and rendered as a criticism raised by *others*.

<sup>8</sup> Clearly, Miyazaki's work has normative underpinnings too, yet, unlike Bloch's explicitly Marxist hope, his "hope for anthropology" is described negatively (e.g. a preference for a "nondirectional stance"). It remains vague to me. Moreover, how does one hope for anthropology? Whose anthropology?

<sup>9</sup> Using emic terms, a common strategy in anthropological replications of hope, does not eliminate the issue of linguistic convention, for whatever it is that these terms denote is still incorporated into texts that enter in non-emic conversations on hope as understood in the English language.

<sup>10</sup> Crapanzano (2003) also warns that hope can paralyse. Yet for that phrasing to work, he seems to equate hoping with waiting ("One hopes—one waits" (2003, 18)). While the two may be closely related to each other (Čelebičić 2013; Hage 2009), I see no advantage in collapsing them into each other. Notably Crapanzano himself opts for "waiting" as the more appropriate term elsewhere (1985).

<sup>11</sup> This does not mean, of course, that people do not use the register of hope even when they have a very high degree of certainty of outcomes.

<sup>12</sup> These four dimensions also seem to underlie writings on similar questions that do not use the term hope (e.g. Appadurai 2004; Auyero 2012; Ferguson 1999; Guyer 2007).

<sup>13</sup> The sections below briefly summarize some key findings from Jansen 2015.

<sup>14</sup> For a more detailed discussion of "yearning", see Jansen 2015, 54-57.

<sup>15</sup> Regarding ethnonational divisions, many inhabitants of BiH invest their hopes not in this country's team but in that of Serbia or Croatia, both of which include players from BiH as these are the preferred destinations for many Serbian- or Croatian-identifying footballers from BiH. Some commentators went through the names of the *Zmajevi* (mostly identifiable as Bosniak names) to stress the ethnonational non-representativeness of the BiH team, but this did not seem a major concern either way amongst those who shared in the buzz. Probably they would like to see some of the Bosnian-born stars of the Serbian and Croatian teams to play for BiH instead (and this reminds us that hopes for the BiH team always shape up in relation to those of specific others for specific other teams). Yet more important to them, I suggest, was the fact that the BiH team in Brazil consisted overwhelmingly of children of the BiH diaspora. And while this sometimes drew mockery of their language skills, again it reinforced a pattern in questions of hope in BiH: this generation of diasporic Bosnians was portrayed as embodying a promise of professionalism, dedication and success, untainted by the hopelessness in BiH itself (as exemplified by the BiH Football Association, for example, widely considered a nest of corruption and incompetence).

<sup>16</sup> As for "mutual reinforcement", I do not aim to detect political hope in the buzz around the BiH football team. I am interested here in understanding the political *conditions* in which particular forms of hope came to be centred on the *Zmajevi* in particular ways.