Citizens of an Empty Nation: Youth and State-Making in Postwar Bosnia-Herzegovina. By Azra Hromadžić. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015. 239 pp. Epilogue. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Acknowledgements. $59.95, hard bound.

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Citizens of an Empty Nation is an ethnographic investigation of the effects of postwar peace-building and state-making on everyday people, especially youth in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Azra Hromadžić explores international and local political forces of simultaneous ethnic integration and segregation, and how they play an important role in *emptying the nation*— "detachment of citizens from a common state" (61). During her fieldwork in a segregated town of Mostar, divided into the east (Bosniak) and west (Croat) sides, Hromadžić finds *empty spaces* in the streets, schools, and other public places that used to be sites of interethnic mixing before the war. Now these sites stand empty as "ghostly remains of shared history [due to]… postwar institutionalization of ethnic nationalisms…" (8). This pervasive ethnicization of politics and everyday life created strong ethnic, cultural, and religious identification among Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs in Bosnia-Herzegovina that is limiting the "opportunities for transethnic social order to (re)emerge" (88). However, amidst this polarized life, Hromadžić finds "cracks between ethnic territories" (102) that provide us with glimpses into reconfigured practices of mixing among youth in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

In the first part of the book, Hromadžić shows how ethnic divisions manifest themselves in a high school called Mostar Gymnasium. At the time of her fieldwork the high school was going through a process of "reintegration," meaning that both Bosniak and Croat students would attend the school together. The international Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe attempted to make the school fully integrated, however, after long-term negotiations between international actors, school officials, local ethnopolitical elites, and the community, the school became only administratively unified but remained separated by ethnic curricula. According to Hromadžić, this signals the political reality of Bosnia-Herzegovina "torn between integration and segregation, and between ideologies of cultural homogeneity and political plurality…" (61).

Further, Hromadžić illustrates how students, teachers, and high-school management constantly have to negotiate "calls for integration and pressures for segregation" (58). Hromadžić shows the paradoxical nature of international brokers that promote integration on the one hand but end up adopting the fundamentals of ethnonationalist politics of segregation that demands a spatial solution to country's ethnic problems. Here, Hromadžić turns to postwar spatial

governmentality and shows its effects on spatial mapping of ethnic difference at Mostar Gymnasium. Visible spaces in which interethnic contact could happen stay empty, since mixing is limited by spatial organization of the school and discouraged by most professors. Nevertheless, Hromadžić finds in-between spaces created by youth in an attempt to resist such rigid separation. One example is youth congregating in school bathrooms at recess, sites of illicit smoking and inter-ethnic mingling. According to Hromadžić, bathrooms become spaces of "dynamic cross-ethnic citizenship" (24). However, she also claims that these new interactions among youth "do not destroy the barriers between [them] and do not create a long-lasting sense of groupness" (102), but they do provide a "minimal but promising prospect for the acknowledgment of 'the other'" (102).

In the second part of the book, Hromadžić examines the postwar meanings of statehood, nationhood, and citizenship to youth in Bosnia-Herzegovina. She finds that youth living in an environment of forced unmixing for the last twenty years created a considerable social gap between them. Hromadžić concludes that youth, "lacking identification with a cohesive nation, became alienated from the state and its institutions…" (108). However, Hromadžić again notices in-between spaces where transethnic *narod* (peoplehood) exists as a discursive category beyond ethnic divisions. This category is evoked when people talk about problems transcending ethnic identification, such as increasing poverty, lack of social justice, and blatant corruption of the political elites. As such, transethnic *narod* becomes a "counter-discourse" against current politics of ethnonationalisms in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In the last two chapters, Hromadžić focuses on the struggles of those who do not fall neatly into the Bosniak, Croat, and Serb ethnonational box. She calls those who dare to mix across ethnic lines, invisible citizens, who become spatially unmappable in the context of ethnic purity and therefore pushed into social and political marginality. Lastly, she discusses the ways discourses of corruption and postwar "decline in morality" among people in Bosnia-Herzegovina "function as a diagnostic of anti-citizenship…" (156) and consequently contribute to a mixture of "cynicism, abandonment, resignation, and detachment of youth from their state…" (156) and so contribute to *emptying of the nation.*

Hromadžić's unique perspective as an anthropologist trained abroad and a child who lived through war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, gives this book a deep understanding of the socialist "past," the war, and their effects on the postwar present. Paying great attention to detail, Hromadžić carefully shows that life in Bosnia-Herzegovina is neither a product of ancient hatreds nor a multicultural heaven, but a place of "messy everyday negotiations and identifications" (13). Although the book is of great importance for the anthropology of Europe and beyond, the readers should remember that Hromadžić's conclusions come from her fieldwork in 2005-2006 in a town that has been through a process of extreme spatial segregation after the war. Although a general argument about pervasive ethnicization of politics and everyday life in Bosnia-Herzegovina as a whole can surely be made, we also need to consider the extent of ethnicization through time and

space. In these nine years since Hromadžić's fieldwork the cracks of in-between spaces have been widening, as she herself recognizes in the conclusion and epilogue. Hromadžić briefly mentions the February 2014 social uprisings that brought many people all over Bosnia-Herzegovina to the streets, protesting against social injustice and corruption in politics. She claims that these uprisings transformed ethnicized anti-citizens into Bosnian citizens of all ethnic groups claiming the street together, without recognizing that this process has been smoldering for several years before 2014 through other protests and informal activist initiatives challenging postwar spatial governmentality. Nevertheless, Hromadžić's book is extremely valuable to track change in Bosnia-Herzegovina and should be appropriate for undergraduates as well as graduate students and scholars in anthropology, sociology, international studies, and political science.