

HUMAN GEOGRAPHY
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EUNFINISHED, WAITING FOR GODOT:

*Reflections on 'l'avenir' of Europe and
the Western Balkans*

by

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Figure 1: "Welcome to Europe"; picture on the streets of Sarajevo. April 2017, (Jaupi 2017)



Figure 2: Picture from the protests in Tuzla, Bosnia. (Born in Flames, Died in Plenums 2014)

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Abbreviations

ACC- Abrasevic Cultural Center

BiH- Bosnia and Herzegovina

BIRN- Balkan Investigative Reporting Network

CG-Critical Geopolitics

DK-Dubioza Kolektiv

DPA-Dayton Peace Agreement

EC-European Community

ECSC-European Coal and Steel Community

EEC- European Economic Community

ENP- European Neighborhood Policy

EU- European Union

ICTY-International Criminal Tribunal for ex-Yugoslavia

NDC- Nansen Dialogue Center

OECD- Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

OHR- Office of High Representatives

OSCE- Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

USA- United States of America

WB- Western Balkans

WE-Western Europe

For Selena, who always supported me,

and

For my beloved family, who give me so
much but always received so little .

“In general, I try and distinguish between what one calls the Future and “l’avenir” [the ‘to come’]. The future is that which – tomorrow, later, next century – will be. There is a future which is predictable, programmed, scheduled, foreseeable. But there is a future, l’avenir (to come) which refers to someone who comes whose arrival is totally unexpected. For me, that is the real future. That which is totally unpredictable. The Other who comes without my being able to anticipate their arrival. So if there is a real future, beyond the other known future, it is l’avenir in that it is the coming of the Other when I am completely unable to foresee their arrival.”

— Jacques Derrida

Executive Summary

The European Union does not know what it is and what it wants; where it begins or ends. A reputable French philosopher, Etienne Balibar, contemplated on the ambivalence of the European Union by calling it a dead political project. Other noteworthy persons followed like the anthropologist Zygmunt Bauman, calling Europe an unfinished adventure. The former elucidation inspired this research to analyze and deconstruct the concept of Europe and the European Union while the latter pushed it into more pragmatic inquiries with regards the future of EU with the Western Balkans in it. This thesis contains a historical reinterpretation of Europe throughout a literature review of borders and identities using the field of critical geopolitics of borders, Europeanization, democratization, Balkanization. The theoretical part is used as a lens to understand the foundations and foresee the empirical part with semi-structured interviews that aim to unravel the reality of the relationship between Europe and Western Balkans, Europe with itself and Balkans with itself. The whole array of this self-reflective criticism serves as a power bank to the idea that this thesis offers on the reflections on l'avenir of Europe and the Western Balkans. Europe is yet unfinished in the words of Bauman but not dead yet as Balibar suggests. However, there is an immediate need for change as much as there is for Europe as for the Western Balkans. Today we are encountering a veritable earthquake of the EU project and Europe as an idea. EU is at its crossroads facing two divergent splits between neoliberalism and renewed nationalism. Anyhow, the fallacy of the ordoliberal paradigm to address socio-economic problems has been more of a mere reflection of the current anatomy of the crisis than an effective panacea. Brexit, economic crisis, the rise of populist nationalist ideologies and political parties, the migrant crisis, Russia's geopolitical influence, are amongst the severe quakes that constitute this earthquake, whose intent is to dissolve Europe's foundations and cripple it. So far, not only the EU has done nothing, but has been a co-producer of its own belligerent ending. A Latin phrase comes in mind: 'Ducunt volentem, nolentem trahunt fate!' (Only those who are willing are guided by fate; the unwilling ones are dragged). Europe seems to be unwilling. This research paper will explore past, present and possible other headings of future Europe in offering probable solutions that come from within, and from the voices of the people.

Introduction

In a lecture during the Geopolitics of borders class Professor Kramersch concluded with the following remarks: “The house of EU is on fire and it is up to you, the future generation, to save it.” (Kramersch 2016). However, he was not simply transmitting gloomy thoughts, but rather instilling us with a feeling of self-awareness and critical thinking as the only way “to avoid falling again and again” and contribute to the immediate necessity for change in the European Union (Hooper and Kramersch 2007, p.532). That the house of EU is on fire is a widely accepted fact, by politicians and public opinion. A crisis of vision, a legitimacy and loyalty impasse have grappled the EU. The geopolitical conundrum has risen into a web of complex problems, which have inflamed the foundations of the European Community. This research flourished also as a result of my interest in the situation in BiH, with which we were presented in the field during our excursion trip. It evolved into a more comprehensive argument when a previous research done by Rodrigo Bueno Lacy in 2011 came into my attention. He persuasively argues that the EU can serve as a conflict resolution mechanism, but it is inherently failing to do so, falling prey of egocentric self-interest:

EU’s use of this conflict resolution model all around its periphery is not only promoting the Union’s egoistic interests but also indirectly developing stronger and less illiberal states as well as inadvertently laying the foundations for future enlargements (Bueno Lacy 2011, p.14). Europe’s future need not to be intrinsically Eurocentric, but one of universality. In order to do so, nevertheless, social constructivist need to create/develop a theory of European society, where the society of the future will be a learning society with communication as the foundation of the cultural form of social reproduction. Delanty and Rumford (2005) take upon such quest in ‘Rethinking Europe: Social Theory and the Implications of Europeanization’, where they argue that Europe should seek meaning in addition to usefulness. This research paper takes into scrutiny the importance of saving Europe and democracy in the backdrop of the nationalistic and exclusionary geopolitical narratives that are being promulgated nowadays in the main discourse. It takes inspiration from giving the EU not just meaningful purpose as the forefathers predicted, but into making it useful in dissolving the dichotomy of the superior center and subaltern periphery. United in Diversity cannot be a mere project, or a farfetched idea, but a process, a need for cooperation

and communication, dialogue and resolution. Europe as a culture needs to be created, socially constructed, and European identity cannot be a resemblance of essential schizoid or paranoid desires, but a self-understanding need for a cosmopolitan community. Hence this research will form a link between the alternate voices of the people of the Western Balkans, specifically BiH, and their experience of the EU, asking the main research question of: How do people in the WB experience the EU and consequently what idea of Europe they offer as a mediating result of different Euro-logies, the latter being Eu-skeptics, Eu-centrics, EU-nationalists, etc. “Will the European project trespass the neoliberal economic foundations to shift to a transnational idea of social justice and belonging, or is that too much of a socialist utopia” (Amin 2002, p.14). It will find its inspiration in the content and context of numerous talks with interlocutors from across the Balkan Peninsula and their reflections on Europe.

In order to address the main goal of revitalizing the European home and creating a meaningful and useful Europe (a Cosmopolitan Europe), which allows for multiple perspectives and moves beyond the ‘us vs them’ binary, EU needs to be reconsidered as a geopolitical and cultural concept, through a historical reinterpretation of the past and present in what becomes another important goal of the thesis, that of deconstructing Europe. I argue that, in order to revitalize the decaying European project, EU ought to undertake a holistic interpretation of its colonial past, which is still present today and let go of its supranational ideology of fabricating banal EU-ism. The claims of superiority in enlargement policies, cultural and political imposition of Europeanness in its peripheries are hindering the creation of a cosmopolitan democratic citizenship, where everyone beholds equal status and rights. Bhambra argues that a true cosmopolitan Europe would be one that its historical composition in colonialism cannot be solidified to the past by denying that past. Therefore, it is a quest of this paper to undertake a historical reinterpretation of the past as Bhambra states that: “the re-interpretation of history is not just different interpretations of the same facts (modern Europe) but the bringing into being of new facts (postcolonial Europe)” (Bhambra 2007, p.15). In doing so, I aim at reconsidering Europe as a geo-cultural and political concept to reinterpret its forgotten frontiers and influences. I present the theoretical groundings for a cosmopolitan Europe with a reinvigorated vision and with the Western Balkans in it as a result of the experiences and viewpoints of my interviewees.

What is Europe? What does it want? Where does it begin and end? 2000 years ago in the Roman Empire the avowal was ‘civus Romanus sum’, after the fall of the Berlin wall Kennedy’s famous phrase came back to be symbolically used as: ‘Ich bin ein Berliner’, whereas nowadays why not ‘Ja sam Sarajlija’ and inexorably in the near future: ‘I am a cosmopolitan, conscious world citizen’. We should move away from the ‘fictive ethnicities’ towards a collective egalitarian model. From geographies of exclusion and labels towards the ‘geography of the heart’, where home is a sum of people and experiences, where identity is a conceptual ever-changing fluid of self-recognition and self-understanding. After all, we are more than the names that we are given, and being European should be a reflection of an acknowledgment that we live in a world that does not belong to a specific people (Rumford and Delanty 2005).

“Building a house is not the same as establishing a home”

Polish social scientist Piotr Sztompka makes use of a brilliant metaphor in contrasting the terms of house and home as fundamentally different. The former he writes is only the shell, the empty framework; it is a concern for architects. While the latter is the living arena of social actions and interactions (Sztompka 1996, p.117). It is a substantial difference that the European Community is understandably lacking and what this research will attempt to discern. What the EU is desperately trying to build is a house, representing a multi-cultural society with values of liberal democracy, while forgetting that people in a house cannot feel the same, unless they interact and experience each other as equal and free. This was the foremost sensation I got from talking to people around the Balkans, and it is indeed a perception that I myself as someone who comes from the Balkans, share. It is the concept of home that brings people together regardless of their identity differences. Integration, Democratization or Europeanization, do not have to be about absorbing, mentoring, imposing, ruling, changing, but rather need to adopt a methodological reflexivity, which allows for multiple perspectives, letting the subaltern speak as well. Any other attempt of resolving to these colonial patterns will simply reproduce EU’s desire to dominate (Krajina and Blanuša 2016, p.44). The deep instilled social construction of identity and borders cannot escape its ontological seduction of having a fixed feeling of belonging, without establishing a home, rather than just building a house.

Deleuze's philosophical idea to present an ontology, which entails a shift from borders between sovereign states to the idea of margins, between a plethora of communities that are always exposed to modifications of identity and coexistence, might embody some actual pragmatic relevance to the Union's border paradigm and future headings (Parker 2009). The EC has inherently failed in understanding and adapting to the global trends that is why it is facing as many internal as external pressures, which brought its house on fire. I believe that the best possible way of saving a burning house is to start anew by establishing a rock solid home, where all the people of Europe can finally freely accept one another on equal terms, a French, a Brit, German, Bulgarian, Romanian, Bosnian, Serb, Greek, etc. Democracy is not perfect, nor it can be, but it is the best option we have so far, therefore, the EC needs to act fast in order to save it and save itself. As Bhabra (2016) argues, a true cosmopolitan Europe should be one rooted on critical realism, one that understands the historical composition of its colonial past through acceptance of it, rather than denial. European politicians and policy-makers' sophistry of blaming the postcolonial present to exogenous dynamics (migrants, Balkans, underdeveloped and undemocratic South and East) is an archetype of hegemony in Gramscian terminology. EU needs to understand that the external threat it is fighting its own existence. Without revisiting and rethinking Europe, even the cosmopolitan project entangles and spoils in the midst of the neocolonial liberalism policies rendering it a neocolonial cosmopolitanism at best, an issue, which we shall consider on greater lengths.

Research Question and Sub-questions

A hysterical European politics is not just a burning house, but also a melting pot whose flames might burn to ashes once again its most fragile area: The Western Balkans. It is for this reason that I decided to develop this research into seeking to present a valid argument that Europe can save itself and its people throughout the realization of what does Europe want to be: 'a burning house' or a 'welcoming cozy home' for all its people. The enlargement policy and the promotion of democracy stripped off the neocolonial entanglements, which have lost ground to other ideological flows are thoroughly necessary now more than ever. And what better way to restore the public opinions trust in the Union and democracy, than to start off with the most problematic conflict in its territory: that of BiH. A European Bosnia with liberal democratic values might resolve the perennial tensions there, and epitomize a strong democratic European Union.

BiH is a typical representative of persevered tensions in the Balkans. A multi-ethnic society comprised of three ethnicities, whose atrocities of the civil war are well known. Ethno-nationalist plans to carve up the country demographically into homogenous ethnic spaces to insure security through separation have not worked, as during uprisings people unite regardless of their ethnicity in demanding social equality and economic prosperity (Dahlman and Tuathail 2005). A young man from Sarajevo was recorded saying in a riot against the government: “I am a Catholic, I am a Jew, I am a Muslim, I am all the citizens of this country” while another added, “If I am a Muslim and he is a Serb or Croat, and if we are all hungry, aren’t we brothers? At least brothers in the stomach.” (Horvat 2014, p.185). BiH could be the starting point of EC showing the world that democracy and the Union are still alive. Civil and political unrest in Bosnia have been ongoing since the DPA and the paroxysm of another war might be yet again in Europe’s backdoor, showing its inefficacy and theatricality as a supranational organization and regional power, let alone global. The EU is failing to act as a normative regional power, which promotes democracy, rule of law and human rights. What makes the probability of a conflict even more realistic is the ‘White Paper, on the future of Europe’ (2017), a document recently published in commemorating the 60th birthday of the Union, in which enlargement of any kind was not even once mentioned. Such indifference may give the national narrative the long-awaited propulsive impetus in taking action in their own hands, and we have all witnessed what are the consequences of that. Needless to say, the EU is promoting once again the geographies of exclusion by including and excluding, throughout what Said called the imaginative geographies of power in constructing the antagonistic Other (Said 2003). The Europeanization of a democratic BiH and the reinventing of a new European identity as an egalitarian regional power can constitute solid grounds for a well-established multi-cultural home. The best chance Europe has in overcoming the increasing threats is by resuscitating its legacy of universal equality of a free and united in diversity Europe through integration of all its parts. Finding a home in the Balkans might be the starting point for a forgotten agenda of Europe in the rise of Euroscepticism/ Eurocentrism and expansion of other global powers.

However if so, how pragmatic is such a quest, or is it too idealistic and utopic to think of system that promotes and shares humanistic social values rather than our faulty economic value system disorder. Inequality, be it economic or social has become the driving force of the system, where socially negative elements of our society have become the benchmark for corporations and

their profits. Structural classism and social dystopia are the results. Just look at the refugee crisis, the conflicts in the Middle East, terrorism, xenophobia. These are clear signpost of a dysfunctional system. Unless we reshape our understanding of the system we have built and try to fix it there is no doubt that things will get worse. Nationalism will reoccur, and in the words of French President, Emmanuel Macron, “Nationalism is war and history is our main witness” (Deutsche Welle 2017). This is how this research shapes its initial argument and focuses on the primary research question:

Primary research question:

How do people in the Western Balkans(especially in BiH) experience the EU and what idea of Europe do they offer as a mediating result of different Euro-logies?

Some of the possible sub-questions that arise and this research will seek to answer implicitly are the following:

What is the European Union, and the European family in essence, its core values, history and influences? Where does Europe come from and where is it headed? Can the EU save itself through an active participation of collective citizenry to promote democratic values and halt the spread of nationalism, xenophobia, racism? Can we have more Europe and less EU? What does the Balkans and Balkanism represent as an ideology and a geopolitical, cultural concept? How important is the area to the future of the EU? Can the EU find a home in the Western Balkans and vice versa?

The abovementioned questions are derivatives of the main goal of this research. In trying to answer the principal question, it becomes necessary to engage in a theoretical debate in the literature with regards to the sophistry of the EU envisioned ideals and its unresolved issues of the colonial past, which have inexorably contributed to its demise and problems in the present. The Euro-logies are ascertained throughout the chapters of this thesis and scrutinized from the academic literature, in order to understand the theoretical groundings of Europe and its relationship with itself and its immediate influences. Of a particular importance becomes the geographical area lying inside of Europe, the Western Balkans, a place long neglected and depicted as the other within. In order to depict a brighter picture of what the Balkans really is, it is obligatory to answer the other subquestions with concern to Balkanism, the construction of identities, geographies of exclusions, so that by the end of the research both Europe and Balkans show up naked in the eyes

of the reader, fully deconstructed. What Balibar (2009) has addressed to as a ‘European Apartheid’, in creating racist discourses and behaviors towards immigrants, is backed by xenophobic reactions of inflammatory political rhetoric. Hence, another one of the themes of this research would be to audaciously consider if and how can we co-create altogether as a demos a European Europe, free from the shackles of imperialism and nationalism. In doing so, I need to recur to a deconstructive paradigm of debunking popular myths of Europa and its consecutive effects in postcolonial history. As well, I focus on overcoming borders as socially constructed imaginaries of belonging, incapacitating the prerogative of the nation trap, shifting to the cosmopolitical democratic governance paradigm, which requires for active participatory democracy (Balibar 1996).

My foremost playground in trying to answer the question of whether we can have more European Europe and less EU is a very delicate controversial field: that of BiH. I recur to the Bosnian case because during my field trip and internship there, I understood a very simple thing: There, in the forgotten Europe within, in Europe’s own courtyard, in a political and economic uncertainty and mess, lies the true values of Europe; there lies hope. The history of ethnic war in BiH and the perseverance of its consequences due to EU’s inability to protect (of which we shall talk later) are omnipresent in the deep societal divisions in BiH. Nevertheless, the dream of joining the European family is regarded by most of the people as the last hope of remedy and redemption in a country torn apart by conflict. ‘Cosmopolitan Europe’ starts in the streets of Sarajevo, a mixture of West and East, a true amplifier of shared values and differences, a city as much as vibrant as hopeless, a cultural amalgam. Thus, I decided to undertake a journey of proving to myself and the readers of this research that if Europe wants to become more meaningful, useful, free from the shackles of nationalism and xenophobia, it needs to start in this ‘No Man’s Land’, where people nowadays believe more blindly in European values than Europeans themselves.

‘At the Borders of Citizenship: A Democracy in Translation?’, Balibar argues that what is stopping the new value system of cosmopolitical democratic citizenship from evolving is mainly the inability of EU to grant equal status to migrants (Balibar 2010,p.317). Thus, structural classism and claims of superiority are inherently propagated. I stand by the belief that cosmopolitical democratic citizenship is possible and a meaningful EU is the only powerhouse that can turn it into reality. So far, the odds are infinitesimal and as I shall argue, later on, the EU is doing all, but the contrary. This project of an adventurous EU unfinished will take us upon a bumpy ride, an impasse,

full of ups and downs, but in the end the message ought to be loud and clear: Europe and democracy need to be saved from plutocracy, nationalism, fanatic populists and only we the demos, people of the world, in the EU or not, can contribute in doing so. We lack a shared sense of collective citizenship, and this is what makes us grow far apart. We need more communities and less national or individual egoisms. This research is a call for action towards everyone out there who feel the cosmopolitan democratic urge in them, who believes in humanity and its values, while there is still time. It encapsulates the voices of the people I spoke as they represent the true spirit of this research. It is because of their passion and commitment to a better future and Europe with the Balkans in it that I decided to write about how they experience the EU and what idea of Europe they suggest. It all started in Sarajevo, BiH, and went on everywhere in the Western Balkans, Serbia, Albania, Macedonia, where I witnessed that there are still people who believe and hope in a better future, whose dreams of an European Europe (with the Western Balkans in it) are the drive of their daily sacrifices at work for the future of their children. As odd and utopic story it may sound, this research is based on shared and personal experiences, sporadic dialogues, intense conversations, cries and laughter of people to whom I have had the honor to meet and talk.

Methodology

This audacious question and quest of bringing Europe into the meaningful ideas and significant project it started off with, has its beginning in its most troubled region the Balkans and more specifically BiH, where I did my field work and analyzed the results of vivacious communications throughout qualitative methods of research. Semi-structured interviews and group interviews as well as mostly informal conversations in coffee lounges or pubs, bus stops, etc. (surprisingly those ones turn out to be the most interesting ones almost all of the time) form the methods used in this research.

Balkan Insight, the organization I interned at, wrote recently portraying the fears of the political and social tension in the area: “Without a clear EU perspective, at least some Balkan countries are likely to lose interest in EU accession. That would inevitably push the region back in the direction of the old nationalist dreams - or rather nightmare” (Balkan Insight 2017). I believe the social relevance of saving Europe and democracy in promoting long-term peace and stability in the world is what everyone is striving for right now. This research however will not be its savior,

but rather hopefully a wittingly stimulator of the need for adaptation in an ever changing “time-space compression” globalized world (Harvey 1999). It will offer a comprehensive perspective of how the EU can revive its proto-identity and principles and the need for immediate strategic integration of the WB, starting with BiH, into its renewed family. Deriving from the principle question, many other conceptual and contextual questions arise, which I audaciously attempt to offer an answer to, but be aware that there is no absolute truth and my selectivity of information is just as the photographers, politicians or whoever’s chooses the information that best suits their argument by zooming in and out deliberately. My subjectivity, however, does not make me objectiveless, but on the contrary – critical and self-aware of my limits in finding concrete answers.

I will look into the historical and archival research done before, evaluate, and build upon the several academic debates that already prelude my research. This research attempts to establish a link between theory and practice using theoretical groundings as a lens to my project. I seek to use different narratives from academics regarding the topic, in order to discern some concrete findings. By trying to build up a dialogue between theory and empirical evidence, the basic goal of this research is to answer the main and the sub/questions. Analyzing the data through unbiased interpretations shall serve as a core of my data analysis process. Additionally, I will use other sources such as letter exchanges, newspaper articles, media and websites information, publications and conduct informal interviews. I understand that the reliability of these sources might not be highly academic, thus I try to be careful in gathering and analyzing that type of data. However, they might be important in extracting necessary information. Moreover, I believe that interning at an electronic newspaper such as BIRN was truly an unforgettable beneficial experience that helped me lay the ground and shape my research. Access to archives of the newspaper and specialist acquaintances, investigative journalists’ ideas and my position of analyzing the progress of BiH in the EU integration process, did construct solid grounds and relation between my research and the internship organization. It also helped me establish several connections for my semi-structured interviews to get a more in-depth insight of the feelings the Bosnian people have towards EU, European integration and vice-versa with some representatives of the EC. All of the selected pool of interviewees were chosen because of their affiliation with the research and their provocative thoughts, which represented an alternative viewpoint on Europe, the status quo, crisis and all the issues discussed. Local institutions such as NGOs, Nansen Dialogue Center and Abrasevic Cultural Center, present the bottom up approach to democracy and peace building in Bosnia,

whereas OSCE and OHR present the top down position of supremacy and power towards Europeanization. Students and professors are selected because of their academic familiarity with the case as well as their critical assessments of EU, Bosnia, Balkans, etc. The sides swing between EU skepticisms and EU optimists, but the mediating point of all of them is the middle ground of EU opportunism, as the only possible way of addressing the current geopolitical and socio-economic problems.

Interning at BIRN served as a building block in establishing relationships with most of my pool of interviewers. It also contributed to my full exposure to the problems BiH is facing and its relentless efforts to become a part of EU. I had numerous talks during my long stay in Sarajevo and with the help of my supervisor at BIRN, Katarina Jankovic, I was able to establish contacts that served as my main respondents. I selected them on the basis of their knowledge and experience as well as their dedicated work in trying to prosper Bosnia's society. Most of them worked in NGO-s in peace building, democracy promotion and consolidation, academic institutions, and other cultural movements. I also included students and unemployed persons, in order to diversify my data pool. In addition, discussion panels I attended in the premises of OHR, OSCE, are chosen because they specifically address the issue of Bosnia's development after the war and integration process in the EU. Data analysis was done on the basis of selecting the essentiality of the contents that I collected from the interviews and informal conversations. The interviews and conversations do not represent the whole dialogue in its entirety but rather the more important and relevant parts to this research. In assessing the most recurrent themes that we talked about with my interlocutors, I believe that the contextual foreground was with regards to how do they perceive EU and what suggestions do they have in mediating Europe in a time of crisis. That is how my research question evolved into how do they perceive the EU and what suggestions do they give to counterbalance the liberal EU, the banal EU, the xenophobic EU, the frozen in time colonial EU? Thus, evaluating the data from the interviews was done on the basis of their shared experiences towards the EU and their shared vision of the future of the EU. While I have to admit the selection process was not random as I conferred possible persons with my internship organization and managed to arrange meetings thanks to the position I held at BIRN, some of them were a product of unplanned events and chance in bars, tours, bus stations. Nevertheless, the results the interviews yielded were surprisingly similar in their essence from the most qualified experienced persons, journalists, academics, and knowledgeable students and practiced interns, to

simple people. The musical group Dubioza Kolektiv is also integrated into the analysis as their lyrics hold agency as much as my interviewers' words do. It is also an unconventional method of researching but the importance and relevance the lyrics bring to this research are remarkable to be left out just because of conventional tradition. Their powerful music holds agency and addresses socio-political and economic concerns, which might bring people together in a collective action.

Additionally, the traditional scholarly framework of going with the flow is worth exploring. The parochial mindset of ambition and success in career, rather than actually making a difference with their insights, forgetting self-criticism and awareness of limitations. Some genuinely argue that it is the academia system that pushes them towards such often-blunt observations and therefore, they have fallen prey of a fixed system of peer-reviewed strict regulations, which requires following rules. As with the debate on the democracy of Europe, or EU, scholars have engaged in an existential narcissistic war between them in critiquing and attacking it. Again, the binary ideological split in-between Eurocentrism or Euroscepticism in the European Union case takes over with very little debate on a more holistic universal future for Europe. Ian Shapiro in 'The flight from reality in the human sciences' writes: "academic scholarship tends to focus on manufacturing esoteric discourses with high entry costs for outsiders...all the better if they involve inside-the-cranium exercises that never require one to leave one's computer screen." (Shapiro 2009, p.178-9). Academic writing in itself has become a battling for existence in a 'survival of the fittest' or the 'fattest', if you would prefer, type of way, and most of the academic writings fail to connect with readers outside their community. Communication and public engagement seems to have lost its tide, as more and more peer-reviewed articles are almost impenetrable and targeting a specific audience. Korf (2006) in his article 'Cargo Cult Science and Armchair Empiricism' is disengaging social science from the tradition of doubtful statistics and casual relationships with social conflict, as not being reflexive of the real issues and problems. He opts for greater critical realism where ontological realism and epistemological skepticism cohere to refine theories rather than reinvent the wheel. I will base my approach and style on Korf's methodology by asserting that this research is just an added contribution to the academic world and it is up to its reader and critiques to define its value. I intend to rely upon the simplicity of my argument as the method of my ultimate sophistication in this thesis, seeking to address a much wider audience and perhaps influencing public engagement in being more participatory and active, and policy-makers in taking the right decisions. I do not intend to attack such scholarly work, but it is expected of them and

their work to be more ‘reflective, representative, reactive, reliable, replicable’ (Korf 2006). The work of social science should be based on a reflexive critical realist epistemology. My ambition in achieving such consistency in my research is overconfident, and far-reaching, so the research will indeed have flaws and be limited analytically, as well empirically. However, that is the point of social science, leaving space for refinement. As it is my aim to provide a refined personal insight on the question in hand, not attacking and critiquing others’ interpretations, but building upon and understanding theirs. I hope that the academic relevance of this research would be to add to the literature a critical realist perspective, on the promulgation of democracy by the EU into solving issues in BiH, through incorporating not only Bosnia, but also other parts into the “family”. This might yield a more harmonious geopolitical and social stability throughout the world, and a cosmopolitan Europe, as a global power promoting true liberal values.

This strategy is by no means exhaustive and is a subject of change and disorientation later on throughout the research, as the role of adaptability while researching is fundamental as Darwin put it: “It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent that survives. It is the one that is most adaptable to change.” However, it shall serve as a foundational basis for my methodological approach into answering my research question. Insofar the structure and the content might seem fuzzy and chaotic, however I hope that somewhere in-between these lines the reader will evaluate and understand my questions and results. I understand the task is as inspiring as demanding, but in the end that is the researcher I want to be, that is the positionality I choose and I believe in and in the work that I am willing to undertake as: “The most useful equipment [for engaging in research] is a stout pair of boots” (Connell 2010, p.206 in van Ingen 2014). The research question developed as a result of conversations I had mostly in informal settings during my stay in Sarajevo and visits in Mostar, Belgrade, Nis, Skopje and Tirana. While talking I discerned the concerns people were showing for the socioeconomic and political situation of their respective countries as well as the troublesome environment they saw in EU. That is how I recognized how important a cosmopolitan Europe is to Bosnians, Serbs, Macedonians and Albanians. Even though my interlocutors do not represent the whole narrative, maybe even they are the minority narrative in a predominant nationalistic narrative; they offer a different perspective, one that is meaningful and useful to the ideals of the EU and WB, one that deserves to be given voice to. I begin by offering some theoretical groundings of some concepts that I believe will serve as a backbone in understanding and analyzing core premises. I make use of the

critical geopolitics of borders to understand the concept of border and identity to move onto the paradigmatic explanation of Europeanization process. The second chapter “Whither goest thou Europe” is a time-machine which travels back in time to confront Europe with its past; comes back to the current debates and travels forward in time once again towards an envisioned model of a cosmopolitan Europe. The third chapter attempts to deconstruct the social construction of Balkanism and makes use of the critical geopolitics to offer an insight of the conflict in BiH and Europe’s claims for liberal peacebuilding after the war. The last chapter dwells completely into the Bosnia case study and makes use of the collected qualitative data to assert the current situation in BiH and give voice to the public opinion and experiences throughout interviews, meetings, discussions, projects, music. In corollary, I offer some personal recommendations and concluding remarks with regards to this research paper’s main question and themes.

Chapter 1: Theoretical framework

Overview and conceptual framework

The main goal of this thesis is to understand if and how we can create a meaningful European Europe, a cosmopolitical reality, which moves beyond imperialistic designs of economic gain, power and superiority, as a result of mediating Europe and the Balkans in times of crisis as a response to WB experience of the EU. The problem is existing Europe while the solution I offer is a new democratic model of cosmopolitanism. Hence, it is imperative that we understand some deeply instilled discourses in Europe's narratives, which constitute its agenda. In addition, it is quite vital for Europe to face its colonial past, if it is to prosper its intrinsic values. This part connects the dots with the existing knowledge and scholastic work related to this research stimulating a critical discussion of the theoretical groundings into a tendentious debate. It will also offer a conceptual framework of the main concepts associated with the debate.

Literary review of notions such as borders, democratization/Europeanization, post-colonialism and banal nationalism with a focus on Europe will be, hereafter interpreted. The thesis eventually transmigrates around a particular geopolitical entity such as the Balkans, as to emphasize the conditionality that in order for Europe to become meaningful, the Balkans should be hastily integrated into the new European family. The first part will try to conceptualize the border relations between Europe and the Balkans (mostly BiH) to assess the relationship and understand the claims of knowledge and superiority made by the EU. I will argue that post-colonialism is part of the European reality nowadays and an unescapable one, which we shall deconstruct with the banal nationalism used into Europe-making and inexorably alienating the other. One of the founding backbones of the theoretical groundings which will serve as an analytical lens for the empirical part is the subfield of critical geopolitics of borders. Critical geopolitics questions the way in which geography affects politics and how geographical claims enter political practices and debates. It is a revealing domain that deconstructs the reality of borders and identities with relation to power, constituting an enormous influence on the formation of this research.

Critical geopolitics of borders

What is a border? What are the borders of Europe, those of the Balkans? Defining something specifically would entrap us into giving it a particular meaning, thus allow our brains to think that is the only truth, and that is dangerous. “Freedom is a natural condition, yet we are alienated, fixated, disciplined, subjectified by the emptiness of the Truth that society commonly offers us.” (van Houtum 2010, p.292). In the words of van Houtum in the abovementioned passage, I deduce a very essential cognitive meaning that almost everything is a social constructed phenomenon, of which we become intangibly enslaved. I admire the nerve of scholars who challenge traditional meanings and adhere for intellectual openness, critiques and reflection. Border studies is a vibrant and evolving field, thus as such it deserves special attention and more academic research in understanding it. There is a lot of valuable theoretical work which has been done over the years by distinguished borders scholars such as (Newman and Paasi 1998), (Houtum, Kramsch and Zierhofer 2005) (van Houtum 2000; 2005) and (Kramsch 2004) etc., but what is needed is more field research in border studies to essentialize border epistemology. The pioneering work of the abovementioned scholars should serve as the backbone of borderology. A border can be many things, physical and social, hence it is a fluid projection, an ongoing volatile discourse that constitutes the basis of our identity. ‘A border is made, and it makes’, thus making it a verb, not only a noun in the semantic syntax (van Houtum 2010). It is a social construction, but in the end, it remains a product of our desires and fears in our minds, and what better way to understand its implications and consequences than to talk to people. The empirical part later on does just that in aligning the dots between theory and empirics.

The anthropologist Zygmunt Bauman in his book ‘Postmodernity and Discontents’ writes that “all societies produce strangers, but each kind of society produces its own kind of strangers, and produces them in its own inimitable way” (Bauman 1997,p.17). Once a true marker of identity, scholars nowadays argue, that modern postinternational politics with the disappearance or “death of the nation state” as they call it, borders have started to fade away. Just look at the European Union and their border regime, the physical border is quasi inexistent. Doubtless, about that, I still have to disagree with the notion of death of nation states. I am a firm believer that we will always need strangers in our life; we need others to make us feel secure about our identity and us. It is a

deep instilled human instinct, a paranoid desire to be recognized and belong in a certain society, which the border as a social construction feeds us throughout culture, tradition, language. According to Bourdieu (1984), all societies are based on this fundamental principle of recognition, which relates to status, wealth, possessions (in Delanty and Rumford 2005, p.121). Thus, border and identity become unescapable traps for as long as the discourse propagating them exists. A “territorial trap”, Agnew called it, which nation states and politicians use to influence the public’s opinion to withhold power. It all comes down to power. Borders and power are intrinsically interconnected. Agnew describes critical geopolitics as an investigator of geographical assumptions that contribute to the making of world politics (Agnew 2003, p.2).

Classical geopolitics was interconnected to the expansionist claims of power and territory of European states. Ratzel’s ideas of living space “*lebenstraum*” demonstrate the desire for possession of space by Germany in Europe (Smith 1980, p.52). Territorial expansion was incremental in German imperial policy and classical geopolitical scholarly thought. The same attitude is to be found in Mackinder’s heartland theory, regarding Britain’s ambitions and anxieties (Mackinder 1904). On the contrary, CG does not intrinsically connect politics with territory, in which nations combat for spatial territory and resources, but rather critically analyzes geographical knowledge as part of the modern discourses of power. CG shows that state power is not delimited or contained within its own territory but is also wielded outside of it (Kuus and Agnew 2008, p.98). Thus, it is a subfield, which helps us contextualize borders in the postmodernity of the globalized world we live in, an essential tool in the work of a social scientist. In this research CG is a necessity to understand Europe’s border relations, identity formation with itself and the neighboring Balkans.

In this line of thought, borders are just imaginary productions of the politics and media production of narratives, which fuel the people with seemingly trustworthy information. It is quite a challenge to escape the epistemological seduction of the attractive idea of the border, the requirement for the distinction of borders, the comfort and security sensation they offer (Parker and Vaughan-Williams 2009, p.584). Bordering time-space serve as marker of here and there, “us” and “them”; claiming and producing difference; including and excluding. Ordering is the essential tool used in narrating and constructing our identity through containerization, narcissistic identity, selective remembering and banal nationalism. And lastly, othering time-space is used to narrate the other identity through antagonistic feelings, chrono and biopolitics, demonization (Houtum et al, 2005, p.3-4). Borders make of nations geographical containers in a homogeneous socio-spatial

territory, the construction of which occurs as a collection of certain selected narratives. Therefore, national borders and in our case too, are part of large discursive scene of social power and control, implemented throughout the use of media, political rhetoric and literary landscapes (Newman and Paasi 1998, p.200). That is why it becomes fundamental for nations to construct narratives of belonging and historical continuation, glorification, etc. and for CG to deconstruct and understand the implications behind such narratives. As marking spatial borders is nothing more than an intentional political aim, critical geopolitics involves itself into understanding these geopolitical claims.

Concerning border management, re/bordering Europe cannot be a process of border control and movement which coproduces the same legitimacy issues the EU is trying to overcome, but more an analysis of borders which “overcomes the trap of either falling into an exclusively ideational or material cleavage, an unhelpful epistemological dualism that continues to suffuse much of geography” (Keith Woodward and JohnPaul Jones III in Houtum et al 2005, p.11). Paasi argues that the principle task of a critical geographer is to deconstruct and show the ideological, accepted assumptions of spatial categories (in Houtum et al 2005, p.22). Kramsch argues that EU has an acute “crisis of vision”, where the inward boundary problems are being transposed and projected onto its outer frontiers, thus the Balkans being the pawn in the game or the Middle East or North African countries (Kramsch 2011, p.196). The neo/imperialistic method of remote border control explained by Deleuze is a product of the society of control, which transfers inner European fears to outer borders (Deleuze 1992). Such calamity of inner/outer border is also related to the unresolved issue of eastward enlargement of the EU. I believe EU with its border strategies is coproducing already existing antagonisms in the Balkans, which might escalate once again to unforeseen consequences. The necessity for a stress free borderland is ubiquitous in order to restore the communal sense of belonging to a much bigger community that is a cosmopolitan EU, which does not differentiate, subordinate, and impose.

Paasi (1998, 2009) argues that the narrative is an ontological condition of shaping social identities and that borders epitomize a significant part of this identity. He goes on to represent boundaries as part of “discursive landscape of social power”, essential in storing social control and order. Truly, it is a critical representation of the reality of borderlines in shaping social life; nevertheless, the blurring of such lines is occurring fast track in the advent of globalization. This

new trend is creating a “borderless world” where capital and information are fast-forwarding unpreoccupied in the world of nation-states. What about people, though? With them, it is a completely different story. That is how the geographies of exclusion have been taking shape and deciding whether or not you can pass a border. Is the nation-state dead or it has just recreated itself with a newer face in the globalized world. It is crucial in my analysis to prove that the European Union is trying to recreate itself on this blurred image of nation-state throughout egocentric desires, “cartopolitical cleansing”, neoliberal/colonial policies and strategies in a post-national society where borders are losing its ferocious mark on identity. Ipso facto, the imperative proviso here becomes the unequivocal revisit of Europe and its claims and the prerequisite to start drawing lines in the sand between what is meant and what is being done.

Democratization= Europeanization = Neocolonialism

In “Europe’s Border Disorder”, Bueno Lacy and van Houtum ask some appealing questions:

Why is the once romantic dream of a united Europe steadily acquiring the anguishing undertones of a disturbing flashback? Where are the Monnets and Schumans of our time? Where are the long-term political visionaries laying out the grand schemes for a future prosperous Europe? (Bueno Lacy and Van Houtum, 2013).

Why do we hate democracy and politics? Why are we afraid of immigrants? Why do we border ourselves in our daily lives? What are borders, what is democracy, what is the EU in the globalized world? All these socially constructed phenomena will be explained in a detailed account using theoretical grounds as a lens in understanding and analyzing their importance in upholding the EU and the integration of the Western Balkans in the Union. The abovementioned questions will be studied in attempting to receive insights on the causes, consequences and possible solutions. It is essential however to realize that problems occurring in EU right now are consequences rather than the crisis stimulators in itself. Ontological insecurity, the anxious senses correlated to the ontological lack has brought us to look for new grounds in which we can feel secure. In the geopolitical framework and debate, these insecurities have resulted into a transposition from a healthy skepticism to an eroding cynicism of EU and democracy, rising up from the scholarship work, media, politics, and society in general (Agnew 2003, p.116).

The impact that the dangerous skepticism rhetoric has had on the reliance of the public opinion on democracy has been immense and has given rise to dangerous narratives of populist/nationalist ideologies, also influencing Eurocentric local and foreign policies, as with the ENP, border policing etc. (Kramsch 2011). The narrative is a fundamental ontological condition of a society to absorb its social identity and such preposterous mythical discourses fueled by ethnopolicans and populist are charming a distressed public opinion (Paasi 1998, 75). The essentialism of exotic places such as urban Western cities Paris, London, Amsterdam, Berlin being on the top of the civilized apex in contrast to Sarajevo, Belgrade, Sofia, Ljubljana is also a usage of a colonialist mindset in retrospective (Agnew 2003, p.47; Soja 2005). Europe needs to confront 'the post-colonial phantasmagoria of the empire' with a solid strategy to overcome and settle the transcending borders of its member states with an overarching European cross-border politics (Kramsch 2007, p.1592). On the contrary, the existential crisis which is projected as having external causes will lead to more extreme national right wing parties, more xenophobia, more racism, more Golden Dawn-s like in Greece. Not that the current condition is not hectic. It is indeed one of chaos, where the EU is being projected as a "neomedieval empire" or a "Westphalian super state" (Zielonka 2013). In both projections, the ambiguity of EU is palpable and Europeanization represents nothing more than a "white-Christian-technocratic" fortification with a constructed spatial hierarchy of center and periphery, north and south, west and east. Consequently, democratization that upholds values such as rule of law, legal rights, representation of social interest etc. has become monolithic with Europeanization and neocolonialism. There is no distinction with the colonial psychology of ordering, imposing, ruling, enlightening, with grander claims of knowledge as being a civilizational superiority.

Europeanization depicts a neocolonial project, referring to the formation of a nation state on the European standard norm. It is a process of becoming and preaching European norms and values through conditional policies toward candidates and neighbors. It is not what Europe's forefathers had in mind when they envisioned the EU and it is not the right trajectory for progress. Europeanization and Democratization have come to mean the one and same thing blurring the dividing lines between democracy and Europe. Europe withholds democratic values and principles in theory but it shifts away from them when it implements them in practice with projects such as liberal peacebuilding, European integration and enlargement. Democracy is deteriorating and Europe is doing nothing to save it, on the contrary, it is contributing to its demise. Paris (2010)

argues that hypercritical writings on liberal peacebuilding are based on doubtful evidence and logic in a “pendulum swing”, which has shifted from initial exuberance to denigration. The distortion of democracy is happening right now in the country that used to be in the vanguard of democratic values: USA and the newly elected president Trump. It is happening in Turkey with severe measures taken against freedom of speech, media, Russia, China etc. These are the so-called “democratic” countries. Inexorably democracy is losing ground. According to Freedom House report in 2011, global democratic standards have faced a decline for the fifth consecutive year to the authoritarian threat (Flinders 2012, p.8). My relevance to the case of BiH is that EU needs to be stronger than ever in preserving its most valuable asset: democracy. In doing so, it needs to firstly start asking itself these questions: What does Europe want? What is a European identity? How socio-spatial inclusions and exclusions are constructed and reproduced? Saving democracy in ethnically divided BiH through its integration, which is at Europe’s backdoor, might be a good start in the pushback of the rising of populism, authoritarianism and dictatorship at Europe’s borders and frontiers. The EU itself has some conceptual conflicts regarding democracy and scholars have argued that it is a second-order democracy at best (Delanty and Rumford 2005, p.82). So how can we expect more democracy in the WB, where the initial exporter and mentor of it does not reflect full democratic principles? As a consequence there is an immediate need to address the democracy demise in order to restore the lost trust in one of the most influential and progressive methods of governing and the EU is the most plausible political union that can do so.

Just a few months back, the EU published a very controversial paper foreseeing possible scenarios for its future in a neither exhaustive nor very appealing document (White Paper 2017). What the white paper identifies, however, is the severe crisis of legitimacy the Union has from dealing with Brexit to Russia’s increasingly meddling in the apparent destabilization of political elections in its member states and the Balkans, whilst favoring far-right populist candidates, who support another “Nexit”. The destabilization of the region seems imminent and the Union is under extreme pressure in facing this “polycrisis”. I say controversial regarding the enlargement process, as it not even once mentions the word enlargement or the geopolitical problems in the Balkan countries. The long used “carrot and stick” policy of the EU towards retaining stability in a troubled region is what seemed to hold off the political and social balance on a grip (Juncos 2005). First, with no clear conceptual definitions of what does Europe want to be, a post-national federal state dependent on Germany, a West Atlantic oriented towards USA, or remain a conglomeration

of nation-states. Secondly, on the question of enlargement, how far is it willing to go in terms of territorial expansion and integration; the Brussel plutocrats are once again equivocally deepening the crisis of vision, legitimacy and loyalty. With no clear cohesive strategy of the EU regarding integration of its territories in the Union, such grip might inexorably break and in the Balkans, especially BiH the situation might re/escalate recklessly in another shameful showing of disregard and failed responsibility. Europe has a crisis of vision because of its inconsistency and ambiguity when it comes to fundamental elements such as democracy, enlargement, polity etc. It has no clear-cut strategy of democracy promotion and its best paradigm of Europeanization, imposing democracy and other norms in countries that are not yet ready, has resulted in negative consequences more than beneficial results. I believe the EU needs coherent strategies and assertive framework in implementing its projects.

Wetzel and Orbie (2015) argue that there is an inconsistency of a conceptual basis of democracy promotion of the EU, summarizing it as a “fuzzy liberalism” with no clear definition. Generally, the EU has emerged as a global civilian or normative power promoting democracy, rule of law, human rights etc. (Kurki 2010). Nonetheless, there is a notable number of case studies showing that often the EU disregards its democratic principles in shrinking civil and political freedoms, thus by assuming a hegemonic role of an imperial power (Held 2006, p.56-95). With regards to Bosnia, the most outstanding study is that of David Chandler in ‘Faking Democracy after Dayton’. He argues that the high dependency of the decentralized Bosnian state on the international community has raised concerns of the dubious policies of democratization adhered, questioning the assumptions of an imposed democracy. Said comes in mind when he offers a striking analysis of the structure of power based on the Foucauldian philosophy. He states that by asserting themselves with the claim of knowledge, the Western countries in our case the EU assume a role of a hegemonic power with the higher duty of teaching rationality and democracy to the less civilized (Said 2003). Chandler argues that more space has to be given to locals in Bosnia in choosing their own disputes and compromises, but he also gives a very detailed insight in how the critiques of liberal democracy go un/critiqued and how critical thinking stopped being self-critical, adding no scientific relevance (Chandler 2012). Van Leuwen and Verkoren (2012) reaffirm such argument when they talk about thinking beyond liberal peace in a heterotopia, as a challenging hegemony of the single utopia, and a more bottom-up approach of liberal peacebuilding. Woodward (1995) argues that the main fault line of conflict in post Dayton has

been between the Bosnians (all 3 groups) and the representatives of the international community, rather than in-between the ethnic groups (in Chandler 2000). Though, the cluster of critiques speed to yield pessimistic results regarding the EU intervention, it is crucial in such times not to enlarge the deficiency of an imperfect system, but emphasize it as the best alternative to sustain peace and stability, rule of law and human rights. While I most certainly agree with most of the critical arguments above, I refuse to resolve to skeptical cynicism and relinquish the idea and project of EU, rather I choose to revisit and reconfigure it to a better understanding and appropriation to the postmodern global world.

Equating the EU mission in BiH with colonialism and imperialism, mischaracterizing the records and oversimplifying moral complexity with a lack of a clear and cohesive argument has fueled even more the democratic and European pessimism, shifting it from a healthy skepticism to a dangerous cynicism. Have we simply taken the EU too much for granted (alongside, possibly, with other political accomplishments of the liberal, democratic post-war order)? The promotion of liberal democracy labeled as a new form of “Empire in Denial” by Chandler, which gives legitimacy of intervening to the strongest and wealthiest, but neglects responsibility, has therefore been under constant critique and attack (Chandler 2007). However, the critiques have not helped to refine the preexisting faulty prototype. And it is not a surprise that the EU is facing a legitimacy crisis as not only scholars but also the public opinion has lost its trust in the Union and generally on democracy, as we are observing with the rise of populism and nationalism. That is why I believe that the reinvention of the European heterotopia and not monotopia is necessary in reestablishing a new home with the reintegrated Balkans in it, starting with the most fragile territory of BiH, establishing discursive spaces for communication and understanding.

EU needs a stress-free borderland with the Balkans – the other within, and in doing so it will ultimately effulge the feelings of sameness and belonging that have long been subdued by the binary framework of ‘us vs them’ in what has been termed Balkanism as a parallel of Orientalism, with pejorative connotations as a barbaric non-European civilization. Todorova writes referring to the Balkans: “[they] have served as a repository of negative characteristics against which a positive and self-congratulatory image of the ‘European’ and ‘the West’ has been constructed” (Todorova 2009, p.188). Such Balkan stigma need to be deconstructed and debunked as just as imperial geopolitical continuity of knowledge-power relations. An important role in the propagation of this

myth has played the literary work which has constructed the dominant rhetoric of uncivilized Balkan people (Todorova 1994). In 'Culture and Imperialism', Said deconstructs some of the most well-known Western works of literature into labeling them as misleading literature, as artifacts of an imperialistic bourgeois society, geographically speculating about the unknown East as inferior people with subordinate cultures (Said 1994, p.9,71,103-4). The EU has been reproducing these border charisma traits over and over and with its neglecting attitude towards engaging in actual integration enlargement policies but differentiating, it will face itself with an increasing conundrum which might end up in a disastrous pogrom in BiH and not only. The double standards of democratic rights EU applies, the fallacy of the welfare state, the status of migrants as "harragas" (burning the border) to escape towards a glorious EU space, the denial of colonialism, xenophobia, American consumer capitalistic dependence, Russian geopolitical influences, among others are the tip of an iceberg which is slowly but surely melting and moving away, not only from the idea of a future heading towards a cosmopolitan democracy, but also from the geopolitical and cultural position of Europe as a global power (Kaiser and Thiele 2016, p.274-5). But how did Europe get to this point?

Chapter 2: Whither goest thou Europe?

No matter how much we are allured into the vortex of choice, the freedom of choosing our identity in the face of the pressuring other is restricted, and it is specific cultural beliefs and attitudes, language and tradition that become vehement determinants of who we are. Our identities are fixed by the social constructions and norms we experience and inhabit. Thus identity becomes a source of pride and confidence, strength and power (Sen 2007). In the words of Neumann “Identity requires difference in order to be, and it converts difference into otherness in order to secure its own self-certainty.” (in Connolly 2002, p.64). European identity construction and discourse have created differences and converted Balkan people into others. This part forms the locus of my argument that Europe will become meaningful and useful, but it needs to decide on which meaning and use wants to acquire (Bueno Lacy 2011). In order to create and build a cosmopolitan democratic Europe, home to all communities on equal terms, Europe needs to revisit and confront its past. That is why this part is a form of interpretative confrontation of whence Europe came from and whither is it going. It attempts to rediscover European historicity and influences and put the past in perspective. Moving on it explains how not doing such reinterpretation and realization of facts have brought Europe into a crisis of vision and legitimacy, prey of the nation-state paradigm. The last part offers insights of how other future headings of Europe (part of l’avenir) might produce better citizens, a better Europe, a better world, being more of a pathos of this research.

Revisiting Europe: Whence came Europe?

This part attempts to identify Europe’s forgotten frontiers and influences to back up the main claim that Europe could be made meaningful and transposed to a cosmopolitan spirit, only if it confronts its past and accepts its responsibilities heading towards the future.

Tracing back the foundation of the European concept of identity, we ought to go back in the times of Ancient Greece, the Homeric era of the city-states. Back then, the emergence of the European identity was linked with liberty and political freedom, the tenants of democracy.

Nevertheless, it was just a projection, a concept with no clear meaning or geographical belonging. The Roman Empire with the Roman citizenship criterion of imperial borders advanced the geographical concept of Europe as a territorial entity. It was with the influential wield of Christianity and the Carolingian Empire of Charlemagne, often considered as the “Father of Europe”, that Europe attained a distinctive geopolitical shape. Additionally with the rise of the Ottoman Empire and the spread of Islam, one of the most important catalysts of European identity proliferated: “cognitive paranoia”. Christianity would become the geopolitical boundary of Europe against other religions or non-believers. The conceptual and ideological boundary was to be drawn on that basis against the perpetual threat of ‘barbaric Easterners’ (Rumford and Delanty 2005, p.32-5). Yet it will not be until the ideas of the French Enlightenment that reinterpretation of the classical Greek principles would swift back to reconstitute the core of a new European identity; that of “civilizational superiority”. The ideological debate of advocates and opponents of revolutionary ideas would produce the zenith of nationalism and colonialism. With the formation of nation-states, Western European countries start practicing their long-attributed claims of superiority and knowledge. Economic and industrial superiority became the manuscript of an evolving European identity until the brutalities of WWII. In its aftermath, Europe assumed a more regional corporation role in trying to deter any possible conflict and ensure peace. The ECSC became the EEC and what we today call EU (Rumford and Delanty 2005, p.40-5). However, with the fall of the Berlin Wall and that of the Iron Curtain, in the eve of globalization, Europe once again transformed its political strategy from confederal to increasingly federal with the EU enlargement policies and its normative global influence.

These stages of European identity development and their subsequent major spurs describe the evolution of an overly assertive discourse and notion that Europe is the birth of democracy and human rights, thus attributing it with the superiority claim that it makes on knowledge, which consequently asserts Europe’s power. From just a vague notion to an idea, from endless wars and atrocities, as Churchill ambitiously said: “We are asking the nations of Europe whom rivers of blood have flowed, to forget the feuds of a thousand years”, to a “smouldering EU” which relentlessly seeks for a seat in the World’s major players. I use the term “smouldering” because Europe is burning flameless, whilst smoke is all over the place inflicting great damage to its lungs. The crisis of legitimacy is an effect of Europe’s own denial of its colonial past and it is shrouded in the myth of civilizational superiority. As we have seen European identity has come a long way,

nevertheless European policies fail to address all the way, but rather indulge themselves and its people with selective history and information, so as to withhold to the claims of superiority. When I say selective I refer to the hidden images of the Islamic-Turkish and Russian-Slavic influences on Europe. Rumford and Delanty argue that Europe is shaped by not only its western Judaeo-Christian civilization, but it is also an amalgamation of all three – including Russian-Slavic and Arabic-Turkish. Europe, they say: “must be seen as a constellation consisting of links rather than stable entities or enduring traditions or an overarching idea that can be basis of a political design” (Rumford and Delanty 2005, p.38). There was a time indeed when Europe was polycentric, multicultural and much of this is a tribute to these influences. Egyptian influence on ancient Greece, Christianity’s Asian origins, crusades and inquisitions, Arab and Ottoman trade and knowledge of mathematics, geography, colonialism, slave trade, etc. (Bueno Lacy 2011, p.57). These influences and historical events are mostly left out, not because of mere ignorance, but the ingenuity of the architects of modern European identity to manipulate the predominant narrative and alter its effects. Bueno Lacy argues that in doing so, the EU is leaving out of its maps Europe in Asia, Africa, and South America; re-b/ordering Europe with a clear nationalistic ideology committing a “cartopolitical cleansing”. In sum, this has brought Europeans to identify primarily with their nation states rather than European Union and to tackle such thing the EU has brought forward the strategy of banal nationalism translated to a banal EU-ism, where it constructs a European nation-state resembling a neomedieval Empire in the words of Zielonka (2001, p.509-10). It comes as no surprise to see that the core members of the EU that hold the real power are the same imperial countries of a few decades ago. This reflects the transposition into a neocolonial rule, in which Europe continues to partake with the same colonial ideologies of the past, unreflective of its true inherited past influences and frontiers. Boedeltje and Van Houtum (2008) argue that Europe as in Greek mythology is once again being abducted, but this time from the EU’s nationalist agenda which is in a conflictual tension with the building of a stronger and representative democratic EU. Their claim has also become mine and in the next part, where I argue in favor of more Europe and less European Union.

Abduction of Europe

In nuce, the abduction of Europa according to Greek mythology refers to the mythical tale of Zeus dazzled by the beauty of the Phoenician woman named Europa. He guised himself into a

white bull and fascinated the young girl, whilst abducting her to the island of Crete, where they would give birth to children. In modern Europe, this myth is used as a powerful ideological tool to demonstrate the origins of Europe and an ongoing primordial tradition from the antiquity of ancient Greece. You may face this symbol as a statue in Brussels buildings, in Euro-coins, portrayed in pictures and monuments all over Europe.



Figure 3: “Europa riding the Bull”, sculpture in the European district of Brussels (among the numerous statues depicting it around Europe). (Europa and the bull: The significance of the myth 2011).

Nevertheless, the myth has been subject to several ambiguities and interpretations. According to Manners (2010), there are three different versions and implications of understanding the myth of Europa, which go as follows below:

1. Zeus abducted the beautiful maiden against her will and ‘raped’ her, so the bull symbolizes the extreme forces of nationalism, radical religion, violence and subjugation. In this parallelism, Europa is victimized and thus ‘spontaneously submitting’ in Gramscian terms to the ferocity of forces such as Nazism, Fascism, Nationalism. It is this interpretative

approach to the myth that has served as a foundational backbone of how essential European Union and integration have become to undermine such brutal forces.

2. The second interpretation supports the idea of a 'seduction of Europa' by the white bull. The bull here is seen not as a captivator, but a liberator that comes from west of the Atlantic: the United States. USA is seen as the vanguard of freedom and democracy and the ultimate savior of Europe from its devastating wars: the true Godot Europeans have been waiting for.
3. The third one is a more tangible story, which depicts the transition of Europa from a naïve beautiful maiden either raped or seduced, to a strong, independent, self-reflective mother and queen. The last interpretation I believe sustains a more utopic vision of Europa, because it is far from the truth. According to Manheim (2013), "a state of mind is utopian when it is incongruous with the reality we live in." Thus, the intuitive counterpoint here is that Europe is far from being a strong, reliable community of shared democratic principles and values. It is more prudent to say that Europe is once again prey of the bull; hence, the first interpretation of the myth as even the USA's role in global issues is slowly diminishing. However, there is also an intrinsic addition in modern day Europe. Europe is not only being abducted by the driving forces of nationalism, populism and xenophobia, but also by itself, by the European Union. The Union is inherently manipulating the predominant narrative throughout the selective remembrance of collective history and construction of a fictive EU-identity using banal nationalistic methods.

You could of course be forgiven for the myth analogy, after all, our very name is rooted in mythology – Europa being a beautiful maiden carried off by the God Zeus in the guise of a bull. But today's Europe, beautiful though she may be, is no longer that kind of girl. (Ferrero-Waldner, 2007, p.1).

In the words of European Commissioner for Foreign Policies and ENP in the passage above, Europe is no longer a naïve flimsy girl, but a global actor in foreign policy: a game player in international politics. Nevertheless, the analogy made refuses to acknowledge the implications of the ENP, for instance, as a strategic control tool of keeping the power balance intact, a resurgence of colonial ideology of subordination. The irony in the symbolic of the bull is that

Europe has learned from it and through time has become it; an archetypal articulation of power and domination.

So what is Europe? What is Europe becoming?

DRAWING INSPIRATION from the cultural, religious and humanist inheritance of Europe, from which have developed the universal values of the inviolable and inalienable rights of the human person, freedom, democracy, equality and the rule of law (European Union, 2007, p.10). [Lisbon treaty preamble]



Figure 4: Europe depicted as the Tower of Babel (gate of God) mythology in a poster by the Council of Europe in 1996, left ¹; Resemblance with European Parliament in Strasbourg, right.

¹ “This picture, which originally appeared on a poster published by the Council of Europe, was taken from the famous painting by the 16th Century Flemish artist Pieter Brueghel depicting the well-known Tower of Babel scene from the Book of Genesis (chap.11, verses 1-9). This poster was reprinted in the Autumn 1996 edition of International Currency Review, a journal of the world financial community, which perceptively noted that the European symbol of twelve stars above the tower are mysteriously inverted to resemble upside-down pentagrams -- a well-known occult symbol.”

European Union is an audaciously tenacious idealistic project, an inspired force of liberalism, which resembles a Weberian state with considerable global power, yet with no executive one. A meta-state with overarching tensions between fixity and mobility, accessibility and connectivity, monotopia and heterotopia, autonomy and fragmentation, unity and diversity. Whilst a state serves as a territorial container of social life, there exists no ample evidence to suggest that the EU has an inherent state form (Rumford and Delanty 2005, p.137). The EU is an instrumental project of *Realpolitik*, an international development and one of necessity after WWII indeed, which has focused its primary policies around a generator of economic profit-making rather than a pious foundation for the needy and poor (Zielonka 2008, p.74-6). On the other hand, Europe is a conspicuous composite of geo-cultural conceptions with a much wider and deeper history and influence than just the European Union suggests. The EU has chosen to address its existential crisis with the construction of a fictive nation-state alike model. This is discernable in the adoption of a common flag, anthem, history, monuments, identity, heroes, administration, currency, etc. It is an archetype of Billig's banal nationalism, an everyday manifestation of symbols and rhetoric of shared memory throughout these banal forms described by Robinson and Pobric (2005, p.249) as "landscapes of nationalism". They try to propagate a European identity based on fictive ethnicity and banal EU-ism. Just a closer look at Euro notes and numismatics, which discover some very selective images: "images printed on money support the production and maintenance of national narratives, thus help-ing to legitimize power structures in the finest tradition of 'banal nationalism' [...] controlled by political elites" (Raento et al. 2004 in Bueno Lacy 2011, p.59). Most of the banknotes or coins are representative of Greek and Roman periods and influences, architecturally or politically. The five-euro note portrays Greek antiquity architecture and motifs while the ten the Romans, and Gothic for the twenty banknote. Other forgotten influences are not represented in European symbolic whatsoever.



Figure 5: 5, 10, 20-euro banknotes (Euro Banknotes 2018).



Figure 6: United in Diversity, 9th May Europe Day poster (Europe Day 2018).

Another element is the United in Diversity motto (picture above) adopted in resemblance to Monnet's famous statement that "we are not bringing states together, we are uniting people". It is a symbolic representation of a safeguard of the diversity of European cultures. Nevertheless, the irony of this maxim is ubiquitous in the face of the legitimacy crisis the EU is facing and the reaction it has undertaken towards it. We may as well label it as 'Disunited in Diversity' in the face of an inescapable future as in a report put forward from the Royal College of Defense Studies:

The EU may not be in its death throes, but its future direction is uncertain, and a failure to adapt by the EU, as the Eurosceptic trumpets of democracy continue to blow, will inevitably make the integrationist Walls of Jericho ever more disposed to crumble. (Royal College of Defense Studies Seaford 2009, p.3).

The dictum United in Diversity also presents several conceptual tensions in itself. The term unity is foremost an indicator of a specific cultural denominator whereas the true European is to be found in the diffusion of cultures, and not specific cultural content. The motto itself is closer to the resemblance of the popular national narrative which effulges in the xenophobic discourse as it gives unity a dividing character in the separation of different people in different cultures (Rumford and Delanty 2005, p.66). It is a clear trait of the nation-form that it must produce difference, which it subsequently must defend and in the words of Balibar "everywhere that nations exist, nationalism reigns" (Balibar 2009, p.23). In this perspective, EU has become entrapped by the nation, thus being ruled by nationalism, which is inherently dangerous and far away from the envisioned prospect of Europe. What banal EU-ism is doing to the people of Europe is subconsciously feeding them with the idea that such thing as an European identity exists and it is instilled in the flag, motto, monuments, banknotes, etc., not accounting for the entire historical pendulum of Europe which swings further away than it is depicted in these banal forms of nationalism. Nevertheless, this strategy is proving futile as more and more Europeans identify themselves with their nations, governments and institutions, as a requirement for social existence of belonging in the midst of an uncertain EU. Europe is not confined by a specific borderline even though it has adopted a precarious border regime with the Frontex agency. Europe itself is a borderland, a superposition of borderlines, hence of cultural amalgamations and *mélange* relations, as its history shows (Balibar 2009, p.219). In the end of their article, van Houtum and Boedeltje write referring to this superimposition of border that:

It is precisely for the intrinsic openness of the idea of Europe, without definite beginning or end, hence a superposition of border lines, that Europe cannot be imagined as finite or restricted. Europe is not a people. Europe is always more open and indeterminate than any bordering can do justice to. In this sense we must have the courage to be critical and reflexive, to desire both less banal EU-ism as well as less banal nationalism. Instead, we need more openness and inclusive internationalism.” (Boedeltje and Houtum 2008, p.364-5).

It could have not been better encapsulated in words indeed the need for more Europe and less European Union. The European Union has adopted policies of the so-called “Taliban neoliberalism”, a collection of discriminatory strategies where “capital has become the rider and society the horse” (Horvat 2014, p.xi). In the European Union, the predominant prerogative has become that of an economic nature, which is inherently eroding the ethics of democracy. Europe has committed itself upon the idea of enlargement with an unwavering loyalty to democracy and the market economy. Nevertheless the more it explores the latter, the less the former has become relevant. The EU with its ambiguities and uncertainties has become a monocentric nationalistic economic EU, marginalizing the social and the periphery perseveringly. The social welfare state is slowly plummeting into individualistic consumer capitalistic grounds as liberal communitarianism is losing grounds in a crisis bequeathed EU. Simultaneously the “Taliban neoliberalism” entails xenophobic attitudes toward transnational problems such as immigration. Enlargement has become the most important ideological tool of EU’s imperial control, especially in the less developed East part. Ordoliberal economic policies have stagnated the economy and Germany’s migration policies have proved ineffective regardless the goodwill (Zielonka 2004). Adding on to the chaos, however, Zielonka (2017) makes reference to Herman van Gunsteren (1998): “Where one person sees plurality, the other one sees rubbish. Where one person sees variety, another sees disorder. Where the one sees monsters (unacceptable combinations such as centaurs), the other sees fascinating novelties.” (Zielonka 2017, p.651). In this sense, order and chaos he explains are relative as is Europe: perspectival and hybrid. Zielonka see the EU as a “neo-medieval Empire”, acting as a civilizer, regulator, spreader of enlightenment and reason, protector of freedom and rights (Krajina and Blanuša 2016, p.35). He argues that the only way for the candidate states to entry in the Empire’s realms is through compliance and absorption of its values. Such structural asymmetry of superiority and inferiority is the same one the EU applies to

the Western Balkans and its other neighbors. A Euro-polity, multi-leveled, supra-state complex with a powerful bureaucracy in the Weberian sense sharing with its members its neocolonial projects in a form of neo-medieval Empire, which holds a claim on knowledge and civilizational superiority. Using imaginary geographies and selective memories, nation-making paradigms and propagandistic banal EU-ism, the EU is becoming as meaningless as useless. In the last part of this section, I propose several suggestions based on a logical rationale of our moral responsibility as citizens of the world for a solution found in a new envisioned democratic model of cosmopolitanism, which can only happen through social change.

Towards a Cosmopolitan Europe

The EU expansion trajectory has been one of ambiguity and uncertainty. Since the “big bang” of 2004 and the controversial entrance of Romania and Bulgaria in 2007, only Croatia was accepted to the Union in 2013 in what has often been labelled as the “enlargement fatigue” (Borzal et al 2017, p.157). The enlargement perspective especially towards the WB has been vague and one of carrot-stick diplomacy (‘where the donkey ultimately gets the stick’). The place of the Balkans in a changing Europe is that of “haragas”, of a clandestine status in a limbo stage, where the applicant members are dependent of the indirect hegemony of the EU, which is a mnemonic of the colonial history. Attempting to construct the welfare state of EU, the crisis has deepened as a result of loss of faith in democracy, EU itself. The most indicative failure is that of the system indicating an EU centric phantasmagoria of the colonial past with a commitment to market economy, with the morality of the economy taking over that of democracy. The delusion of EU is obvious when we see that migrants can find job with low salaries but hold no citizenship, whereas youth unemployment in Greece, Spain or Italy soars (Krajina 2016 in Krajina and Blanuša 2016). Zizek called this economic liberalization of borders a form of post-politics, in which economics is depoliticized and politics is economized. In ‘What does Europe want’, Zizek and Horvat claim that Europe’s future is already envisioned as one with happy bankers and unhappy societies. They argue that this has brought an immediate class conflict between the domination of capital and European democracy and social needs.

Such trajectory is ubiquitous, as we observe ever-growing gap in-between social classes. The protests in Tahrir square, Occupy movements, Puerta del Sol, Jasmine Revolution, Arab Spring, Greece austerity measures, WB indignation and popular uprising in WE with nationalistic and xenophobic tones, roaring unemployment in Southern Europe, rising crime as a derivative of poverty, stagnating economies, German and French monopolies, are mere effects of a European Union in decadence. The EU has become a conglomeration of national egoisms, which opts for utopic ideas of cosmopolitanism and democracy, but acts as a tenant of nationalism. Neocolonialism is guised as cosmopolitanism in a vortex of utopian chaos and engineered vagueness, where the underlying philosophy is one of marginalizing the social and the subaltern (Zielonka 2013). The “constructive ambiguity” in de Boisgrollier words, of the EU project is paradoxical when it comes to enlargement perspectives, as it circumvents the EU’s ontological conditions. EU has enlarged prior to agreeing with its nature – federalist or sovereign, economic or political, etc. There are several on routes that the Union can choose on taking: an Old Europe as a combination of selfish nation-states; post-nationalist federalist new Europe, what it currently looks like with the Habernas model of the welfare state and ‘constitutional patriotism’, backed by the German powerhouse and French ideals; occidental Europe with close alliance to the USA; and the cosmopolitan Europe which rediscovers its influences and frontiers and is more self-reflective, opened, just and essentially democratic. This part claims that the latter Europe is possible and it can serve as the savior of Europe and contribute to re-constitute a collective egalitarian power back to the people (Rumford and Delanty 2005). In Miliband’s statement Europe need to become more of a model power rather than a superpower, moving away from the control fetishisms and its superiority complex (Zielonka 2008, 473). It is also this Europe that my interlocutors strive for deep down in their hearts and they believe in genuinely. What Europe lacks is true democracy and hybrid forums, where its demos can rise questions and take collective decisions. Zielonka argues that the challenges of EU enlargement and the EU in general are abundant when he asks questions such as:

Are democratic practices in Eastern Europe up to Western standards? Does the Leninist legacy persist despite all constitutional changes? Will enlargement provide an avenue through which paternalism, populism, and corruption can enter the Union? Can democracy at the level of the Union as a whole do any better? Will new members impede progress in shifting democratic governance from the national to the EU level, where ever more

decisions affecting citizens in individual member states are being made, and typically under conditions that at present are dubiously democratic? (Zielonka 2004, p.30)

Democracy is in serious trouble. It is being amputated by a rising neoliberal ideological epistemology, which promotes power and profit because of ontological insecurities of the few in power when they look down the class pyramid. George Carlin, a master of words and satirical comedy once described the divisiveness of our class structure:

The upper class: keeps all of the money, pays none of the taxes. The middle class: pays all of the taxes, does all of the work. The poor are there...just to scare the shit out of the middle class (Carlin 1999).

We have already established that democracy is imperfect, but it also is the only viable force against the dangers of other political ideologies. In order to regain the loyalty of its people the EU needs to re-establish legitimacy, trust and strengthen the role of the community. Europe's future can be neither Eurocentric nor Eurosceptic but "EUniversal" (Rumford and Delanty 2005, p.61). Citizenship is not just a mere operator of civic, political and social rights but also cultural rights and participatory inquires (Rumford and Delanty 2005, p.87). Balibar describes European citizenship possible only if our understanding of it moves beyond "fictive ethnicities" to a collective egalitarian power (Balibar 1996, p.369). Nationalism should be encapsulated in the past as it has proven to be a perilous condition of social life.

Cosmopolitan, from Greek etymology, meaning cosmo- world and politan-citizen, a world citizen is a conscious global citizen who is an active participator in democratic forums, questions and decisions regarding every aspect of our socio-economic, political and environmental life. Rumford and Delanty argue that a cosmopolitan Europe is a salvage of the diversity of Europe and can help theorize society in the present context (Rumford and Delanty 2005, p.170). They propose cosmopolitan sovereignty that is not based on a concentric circle with power in the center, but shared in all of its parts. A European demos which denotes the very values of democracy and fights injustices. It bases its philosophy on methodological reflexivity and critical realism, always opened to different interpretations and communication as the new cultural form of social reproduction. "An individual is never one, but many in one" (Balibar 2009, p.26). Community building with its foundations on confidence and solidarity needs to substitute for national identities and idiosyncrasies. Delanty and Rumford argue that there are three main advantages to a cosmopolitan

Europe: “the chance of positioning Europe in the world and globalization; cosmopolitanism does not fear social change like nationalism does; and finally it constructs new forms of connectivity with shared history, identity, culture etc.” (Rumford and Delanty 2005, p.189). Cosmopolitanism is a pragmatic societal vision, which addresses palpable issues such as environmental responsibility, human rights and development, social awareness, moral and ethical questions, democratic decision-making etc. rather than promoting fictive intangible belongings. It is in my viewpoint and based on the findings of the interview results the only possible solution for Europe. It does not offer neither an EU-skeptical nor a EU-optimistic approach but an EU-opportunistic one, because it believes in the power of the Union as well as its people for change.

So far, EU has promoted a pseudo cosmopolitanism, a mirror of neocolonial cosmopolitanism, guised as a cosmopolitan Europe. This disguise has raised national front parties throughout Europe, xenophobic narratives and behaviors and loss of trust in and out of the Union. The banal EU-isms and the projection of the Union as a conglomeration of national egoisms cannot allow for a cosmopolitan Europe. A true cosmopolitan Europe needs to redeem its colonial past and contextualize it to its postcolonial multicultural present. In Bhambra’s viewpoint, the negligence of a postcolonial encounter and awareness brings a sheer ideology of neocolonialism (Bhambra 2016). Bueno-Lacy’s aphorism in order to revive the European dream, “the killing of the European” one needs to occur, seems righteously adequate (Bueno Lacy 2011). The breaking of social apathy and irresponsible logic of profit making of an economic EU requires a European demos, “a group of people, the majority of whom feel sufficiently connected to each other voluntarily commit to a democratic discourse and to a related decision-making process” (Cederman 2001 in Innerarity 2014). The civilization slope which measures Europeanness on the horizontal axis, also takes into account class disparity in the vertical axis. The liberal-humanitarian ideology does not account for consequences rather just determinants of the project. The more European ones become on the graph, more the gap between upper and lower class deepens. Thus, integration by becoming European will not necessarily bring economic or social prosperity to all. In the 19th century, a Russian nobleman was considered more European than a French worker. So is it becoming European more connected to wealth and status or to egalitarianism and equal opportunities for all. It is through these vertical inclusions/exclusions that the true nature of Europe can be observed from that of an ideological construction and lived experiences. Imagine a rural peasant, a home producer of milk. How will EU influence their small business when European

companies take over the industries and monopolize them? The rich will get richer and the poor poorer. This is the sophistry of the system. There will always be excluders, regardless of EU accession (Obad 2016 in Krajina and Blanusa 2016, p.192-5). The European social model is underdeveloped or that is how it was chosen to be. What is required is more active participatory democracy and not just representative democracy once in four years. We are deceived by the illusion of choice as Giuseppe Tomassi di Lampedusa put it that: “Everything must change so that everything can stay the same”. Cosmopolitan Europe is a model power of collective egalitarian power of shared values and principles, decisions and mistakes, responsibilities. In ‘Other Headings’ Derrida promulgates that:

Europe takes itself to be a promontory, an advance – the avant-garde of geography and history. It...will have never ceased to make advances on the other: to induce, seduce, produce, and conduce, to spread out, to cultivate, to love or to violate, to love to violate, to colonize, and to colonize itself (Derrida 1992, p.49).

More movements like the OccupyWallStreet in 2011 in New York City, more like Tahrir square in Egypt, Los Indignados in Spain, Jasmine Revolution in Tunisia, or the protests in BiH in 2014, are necessary momentums, apolitical and in the democratic spirit, which adhere to social change as the only solution to the EU crisis. The top-down self-critical and reflective good leadership and institutional policies needs to complement the bottom-up participation of local people and social organizations. Cosmopolitan Europe does not induce, seduce, produce, as a hegemonic leader, but it understands, communicates, shares, and reflects, as a true humble servant of democracy and its people and of the world. In the American-European hyphenated illustrious words of T.S. Elliot, “Europe needs a sectarian split: by cutting itself from the decaying corpse of Old Europe, can it keep the renewed legacy alive” (in Horvat 2014, p.75). Old Europe representing colonialism and nationalism needs to be faced and conquered if EU wants to be meaningful and useful as an avant-garde of geography and history in establishing a new home: A Cosmopolitan Europe.

Chapter 3: Imagining the Balkans



Figure 7: Map of the Western Balkans (Exploring What Europe Can Do For Western Balkans 2017).

In this part of the research I will scrutinize the precarious relationship of Europe with the unconscious Europe (the Balkans), with a special focus in BiH. I will analyze the conceptual terms and debates on Balkanism, ethnic war and liberal peacebuilding in BiH using a critical geopolitics approach. This section illustrates how the EU perceives the Western Balkans (BiH), while in the end, brief empirical findings from the field are presented to show how my interlocutors perceive the EU.

Balkanism

“Instability, lawlessness, fragmentation, inferior, backward, irrational, barbarian, anti-civilizational hinterland, exotic, primitive, socialist, rural, uncivilized” are just some of the few derogatory connotations given to the Balkans from the progressive, rational, civilized Western Europe. It takes just a glimpse at these derogatory Balkanizations to understand the architecture of enmity constructed from the West towards the East. The geopolitical dissemination of sane and insane people and nations is part of the grand colonial scheme promulgated throughout a persistence of an imperial geopolitical discourse (Todorova 1994). Todorova in her ingenious book ‘Imagining the Balkans’ takes on the challenging task to ask the question of how can one explain the continuity of such a frozen pejorative image of the Balkans? Using Said’s groundbreaking interpretation of Orientalism and the relation of power and knowledge, she attributes some of the doing to the construction of the literary work of Western scholars and travelers, who form the dominant rhetoric of uncivilized violent Balkan people. The stigmatization of the Balkans as the other, the construction of a pejorative connotative narrative has been the locus of several examination of scholarly work. Almost all publications have followed their line of analysis based on Edward Said’s Orientalism. Undeniably, it is venerated as the “Holy Grail” of postcolonial literature, where Said has brilliantly managed to deconstruct the relation between power and knowledge of the “Occident vs the Orient”, or the “West vs the Rest”. Pioneering such work on the issue of the Balkans, Todorova (2009) has put forward a thorough deconstruction of such Western narrative on the Balkans. Orientalism and Balkanism may look identically in their idiosyncrasies and philosophy, as they are part of a dichotomy between the rational and enlightened West and irrational, feminine Orient (Belloni 2009, p.34). However, unlike Orientalism, this discourse is specifically oriented towards differences within one type and even though the Balkans were never explicitly colonized, the psychic of colonialism has been utterly operating in the region. The Balkans have been Europe’s playground of manifesting its ontological insecurities, a type of a social experiment of “Homo Humanus” vs. “Homo Barbarus”. Europe has undertaken the quest of being on a mission “civilisatrice” into exporting and enforcing its principles and values in the underdeveloped Balkans. In trying to construct a European identity, the territorial proximity attained cultural reclusive tones between the two, creating a Balkan discourse geography, named “Balkanism” (Bjelic 2013).

Typical to the homogenization strategy of the nation-state crafting, the Balkan's history and ethnic heterogeneity, shared multicultural coexistence for centuries was seen as a danger to Europe's frigid identity. Thus what better way to eliminate such threat than to transform and integrate its societies into a strictly European normative one. In the process, countries like Bulgaria, Croatia, Slovenia have already become part of the family, thus when I refer to Balkans I take into consideration Western Balkans, which are yet ought to be candidates. (Macedonia, Albania, Montenegro, Kosovo and Serbia, specifically BiH in this research). After the fall of communism in these countries, there was a democratic propulsive trend, which gave a big impetus to institutionalization and democratic principles of political pluralism, representation, human rights and right to property, freedom of speech, etc. However, the appropriation of the political situation by ethnopoliticians in ex-Yugoslavia did not have the desired results. Ethnic violence was to endure the region for a decade in one of the most vicious bloodbaths since WWII. It was Europe's turn to intervene; however, they stood and did almost nothing (Bakic-Hayeden 1995). Rather the ethnic violence in the Balkans kind of reassured Europeans of the constructed imaginaries they had of those people (there are two pictures at the end of this part, which best capture the UNinvolvement in peace and the prejudices).Therefore, after the end of the war, Europe with its claim of knowledge and civilizational superiority embarked on its democratization mission. Although it cannot be argued that it was imperative for these countries to have democracy for peace to endure, and some of the accomplishments of liberal peacebuilding, somewhere along the way democratization acquired another tone: that of Europeanization, which as aforementioned imposes a European identity, assimilating the traditions and cultural traits of these local people. Balkanism was promoted even further and the Balkans fell into the "spontaneous submission" of Europe's mighty hegemony. Balkan people, afraid of returning back to the old trap of ethnic violence, are massively supporting and cheering for integration in the EU. For them, EU is the savior of a deeply divided society with serious economic problems and theatrical institutions and politicians. For the people, there is no choice when it comes to the destructive past of nationalism and the bright future of the European Union. As Chandler writes: "The sleeping beauty of ethnicity can, alas, often be awakened with the gentlest and most tender of kisses. She now sleeps ever so lightly" (Chandler 2000,p.126-7). With the latest developments, the trance seems to have been troubled back to reality into a monster and another war on the underbelly of Europe might be on its way.

Todorova concludes her book with a bold recommendation for further challenges when she says that the Balkans are “geographically inextricable from Europe, yet culturally constructed as the ‘other’ within.” (Todorova 2009, p.188). Thus, Balkan people are different, indeed, but not necessarily less European than Europeans, rather they have been part of unfortunate events schematized by the greed for power by ethnopoliticians and occult selective imperialist narratives. In this perspective, European identity or Europeanization is not about becoming, but being and feeling, in which I will return on more details on the empirical part. Hence, Todorova inspires future research to reflect not on the need to Europeanize the Balkans, but to debunk the mythical stereotypical images constructed alongside Balkanist ideology. I argue that for the simplistic reason of enduring peace and stability, the forbearing mission of the European family after WWII, the WB needs to be welcomed into the new home of Europe, not through imposed Europeanization using carrot stick strategies, but through understanding and acceptance. A home that is not a fixed notion and adopts the geography of exclusion but that the geography of the heart, a shared experience of people and cultures, that is free from the shackles of imperial geopolitical continuity, nationalistic traps, insecurities and ambiguities; a truly cosmopolitan democratic polity and society. BiH is the best starting place as it represents not only a miniature Europe but also because of its fragility when it comes to ethnic divisions. The place of the Balkans in a changing Europe in a globalized world ought to be asserted in terms of communication between equal partners and giving voice to the people. Only in this way can Europe become meaningful and useful in avoiding its colonial past and nationalistic quagmire. Revisiting Europe’s past thus was a necessary prelude to understand why it addresses Balkans in this way and to discover the importance of a new European home with the Balkans inside. Furthermore, I will also have to undertake a historical journey of the Bosnian conflict and putting theory in perspective to get a glimpse of how the complexity of the European vortex works.

Critical Geopolitics in BiH

Narrating the regime of terror through othering, ordering, bordering during the war.

The process of rising nationalism and subjugation of ethnic coexistence began in the early 1990s with the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the transformative politics of nationalist leaders, who through the usage of manipulative methods of transmitting selective information to the public from

ancient history and primordial theories, sought to enable the collective power of memory. It is a methodical approach of dislocating culture using selected narratives of collected memory with the purpose of ethnic homogenization so that ethnopoliticians can hold a grip to power. David Apter calls it “the disjunctive moment of history when relations of power are transformed through reformulations of ideology that combine theory and myth” (in Denich 1994, p.382). What came in handy in promulgating such narratives that the elite used to grab power were also preposterous academic theories such as primordialism. Primordialism theory on ethnic conflict bases its argument on the ostensibly ancient ethnic hatred, which has been latent for centuries and with the necessary spark, rises again (Kaplan 1993). In this context, political leaders such as Milosevic and Karadzic used the theory of primordial unity of Serbian language and culture in conjunction with symbolic myths from the past to follow the territorial claims of Serbia in BiH or Kosovo. Croat leader Tudjman resorted to the same techniques in remembering the glorious past of Croatia. The story has it that then President Clinton impressed by Kaplan's theories in his book ‘Balkan Ghosts’ decided to intervene in Kosovo. What a theatrical play of power and political interest, where academic thought does nothing but to behold a position of a mere companion rather than deconstruct the realities of the ethnic conflict throughout a holistic approach. Kaplan does the contrary by choosing to propound once again the locus of Orientalist ideology and geographies of exclusion, enmities of arrested populations in the Balkans, a pathological geography of the East, which in the knowledge of the civilized West remains barbaric. Primordialism theory on ethnic violence is an archetype of imperialistic behavior, an assertion of total knowledge of the West.

On the other hand an interesting analysis is that of Oberschall (2000, p.983), who tries to explain ethnic conflict in a more contextual framework of “normal vs. crisis times”, referring to ethnicity as being manipulated. Bluntly put his argument is that less likely driven by ancient hatred, different identity groups in normal times are tempted to have good relations, whereas in troubled times, the factor of fear and discourses propagated by politics and media drives them towards violent behavior. In order to understand the complexity of the conflict in BiH, one must attempt to deconstruct the socially constructed predominant narratives, which guide our beliefs and behavior. The prime discourse that prevailed in the conflict was undoubtedly the nationalist territorial claims made on the basis of belonging. These discourses were fueled by the process of othering, bordering and ordering. Such aims were inducted through territorial claims and appropriation by the Bosnian Serbs, producing difference and exclusivity through remembering the four-century Ottoman

invasion of Serbia, therefore excluding the Bosnian Muslims and differentiating on the basis of religion and culture. The regime of terror of the Bosnian-Serbs, backed by the Serbs, aimed at identifying and eliminating Muslim populations and towns using all necessary means. The process of othering here embraces deep antagonist feelings and perpetuates its hatred through terror against the defenseless. In towns like as Foca, Karadza or Srebrenica a “space of exception” in Agamben terms gave rise to concentration camps and mass killings for the nation’s sake. Milosevic’s speeches produced selective remembering of ancient history, propagating the nationalist sentiment, and narrating a narcissistic identity. The use of symbols such as flags, monuments and heroization through banal nationalism also fueled the feeling of collective belonging of the people (van Houtum and van Naerssen 2002).

Undeniably, one of the most effective factors was also the imposition of fear through the usage of the massive military Yugoslav power to cleanse villages and replace hundred thousands of people. So, war in Bosnia is not a simple derivation of Kaplan’s theory of ancient hatred as it is nonsensical as an argument, but the instigation of those theories by the local political elite and propagation of such narratives, which resulted in a very constrained choice for the people of the three ethnicities, Bosnian Muslims, Croats and Serbs: You either fight to live and protect your family and home, or refuse, and wait for your neighbor to come and take your life. As Chatwin ingeniously described in a proverb: “I against my brother, I and my brother against our cousin; I, my brother and our cousin against the neighbors, all of us against the foreigner” (Chatwin 1998, p.201). It seems more realistic to argue that it was because of the crisis and the ongoing political instability over territorial dispute, which brought forward ethnic cleansing, mass killings and displacement, letting hatred and antagonism take over in a once harmonious multi-cultural ethnic society. In these instances, disturbing remembrances of the past become instruments in the struggle for power of politicians and nations. Fearon and Laitin’s constructivist approach relates ethnic violence as a direct result of elite’s efforts to grab power. (Fearon and Laitin 2000, p.850) Robert Hayden writes, “extreme nationalism in the former Yugoslavia had not been only a matter of imagining allegedly ‘primordial’ communities, but rather of making existing heterogeneous ones unimaginable” (in Campbell 1999, p.401) By antagonizing and constructing the other, one ethnic group seeks to purify itself and inexorably excluding the other through socio-cultural, economic and religious differences. Through the usage of biopolitics and geopolitics, extreme nationalism purifies the “we” and demonizes “them”, making ethnic heterogeneity unthinkable in the pervasive

sentiment of fear (van Houtum and van Naerssen 2002). Ethnic cleansing thus bolsters by the philosophy of the security dilemma. In order to reach true security, BiH needed to be divided in ethno-nationalist entities and ethnic cleansing came because of a necessary mean in achieving that “true security”. Through such means, ethnopolitics policies sought to reorder and reborder BiH into demographically homogenous geographical ethnic territories through separation, to provide the ultimate goal of security (Dalhman and Tuathail 2005, p.580).

Liberal peacebuilding in BiH

Inevitably the viciousness of the conflict, which was mostly propagated by ethnopolitical aspirations through means of ethnic cleansing, needed to be addressed by the international community. The European Community, who sought it as an opportunity to enter the global political arena as an influential actor, assembled many meetings and conferences in trying to deal with the conflict in BiH. However, the Bosnian conflict was regarded as a humanitarian problem and treated as such, in a neutral way. Debated from minimalist and maximalist proponents of humanitarian interventions and the lack of political will, ultimately resulted in a neutral position from the international community. “Neutrality is a form of moral bankruptcy” argues Weiss (1999, p.17) and is not a right provision to deal with such wars. Many humanitarian aid missions were attacked and used by the Bosnian Serb or Muslim militia to perpetuate ethnic cleansing (Dalhman and Tuathail 2005, p.577-8) Moreover, studies have suggested not just the inefficacy of classical humanitarian intervention, but also the moral hazard problem it created in Bosnia (Kuperman 2008). By assuming that the international community will intervene in favor of the victimized, the Bosnian Muslims were incentivized to strike back to the Bosnian Serbs and therefore the conflict escalated at higher proportions. The long-awaited feeling of the Bosnian people that help will come actually backfired and contributed to even more casualties and terror. The UN peacekeeping mission was a catastrophic failure in Bosnia, as the Srebrenica safe haven case exemplifies the audacity of the Bosnian-Serbs in the face of the world and the total ineffectiveness bureaucratic system of the UN, which stood by and did nothing while men were mass murdered (Vulliamy 2015).



Figure 8: Poster in the streets of Sarajevo next to a jazz club depicting the un-involvement of UN, (G. Jaupi, April 2017).

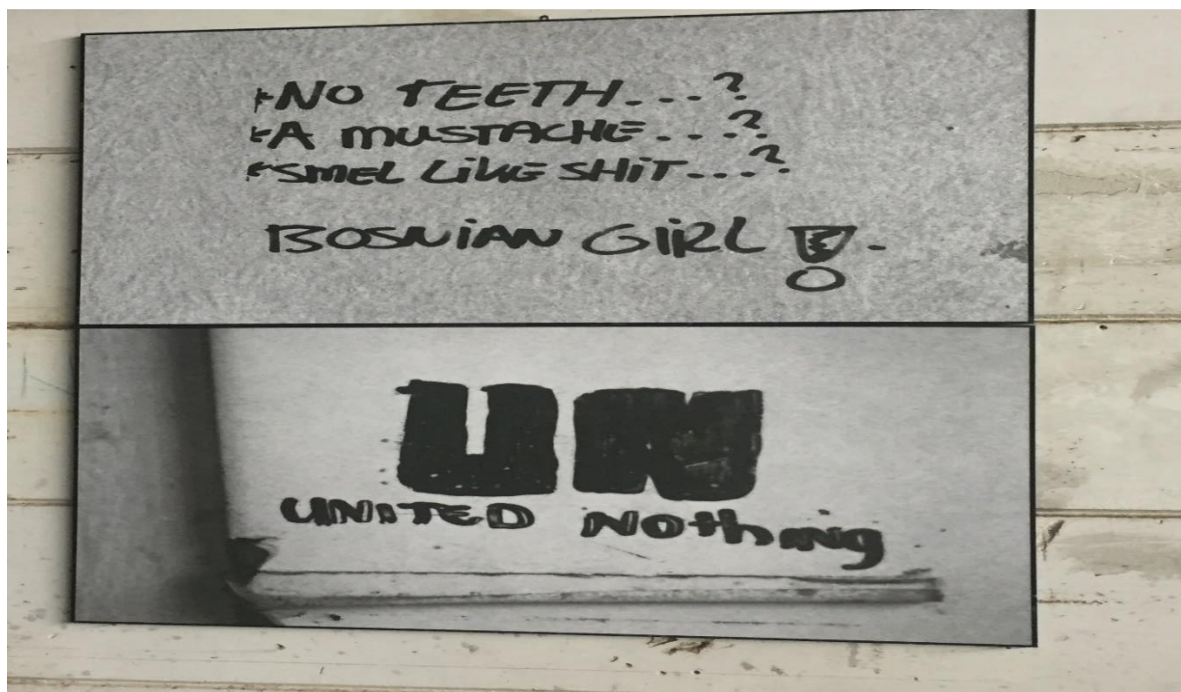


Figure 9: Taken from the UN base during the Bosnian war in Srebrenica. It clearly shows the stereotypical prejudices of the Westerners towards the Bosnians. Srebrenica Museum, (G. Jaupi, January 2017).

From 1992 to 1995, several plans were introduced from Cutiliero to Vance and Owen, ICFY, UTR, EUAP (Campbell 1999, p.417). The Vance-Owen plan was very close to secure peace until two maps shown by general Mladic at the Bosnian Serb assembly flipped the decision (YouTube). By showing how much territory the Bosnian-Serbs have acquired and how much they had to give away under the plan, Mladic, using the powerful representation of the maps, managed to change the politicians' minds. It is important to notice however, that except from the London plan all the others were based on the same principle of ethnic division. Several maps were drawn based on the demographic census of 1991 to provide a subtle separation along ethnic lines. However, through such cartographic representation of an ethnically divided country the plans helped coproduce the same nationalist imaginary narrative that constituted the core of the conflict. It was in Dayton, Ohio in 1995 that the three parties finally agreed to the DPA plan which partitioned the country in 2 entities, the Bosnian-Croat one with 51% of the territory and the Bosnian-Serb with 49%. An inter-entity boundary was drawn based on the war frontline and all three parties agreed the proportional calculus (DPA 1995). (see the map below)

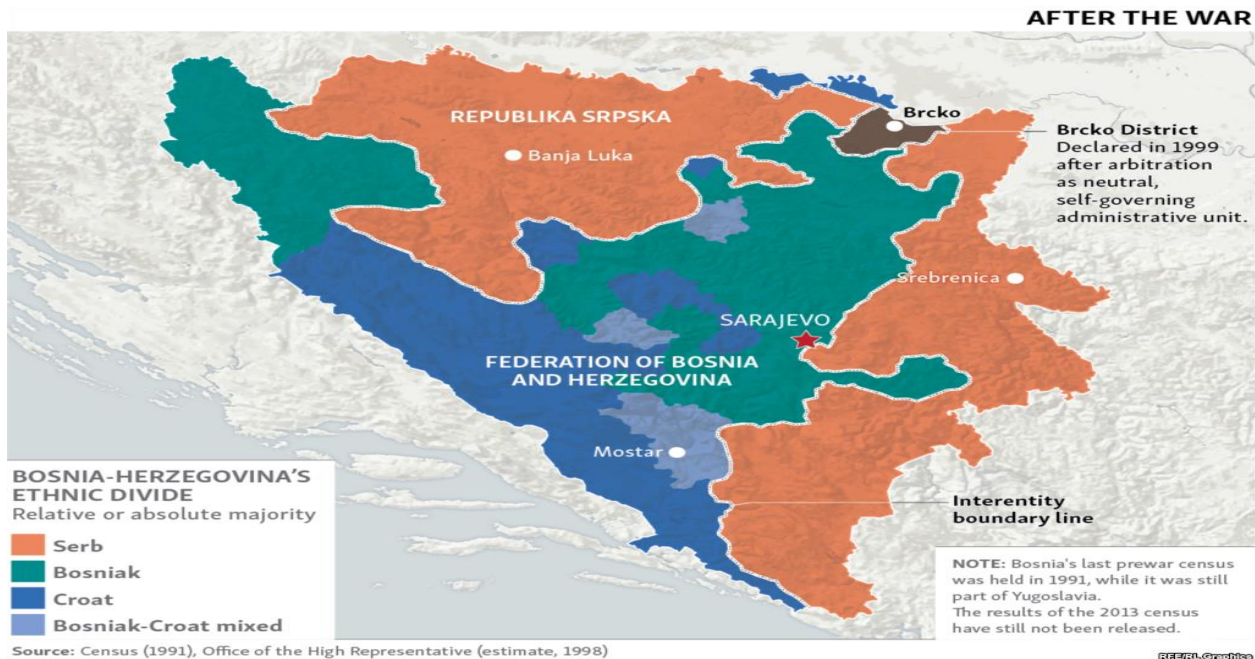


Figure 10: BiH map after Dayton Peace Agreement (Bosnia's Ethnic Divisions, Before And After Dayton).

The DPA brought an end to the conflict, but simultaneously through the practices of partition it has implicitly reinforced the ethnic divisions in BiH. The establishment of a feeble decentralized state and quasi, almost non-existent state institutions has bequeathed BiH in a perpetual state of dismay, distrust, corruption and instability. The liberal peacebuilding process has faced some several harsh critiques on the academic sphere as it is ostensibly after the interest of the international powers rather than local development. In BiH, it has inevitably however helped keep the peace intact and contribute to a more stabilized country. But to what extent have the EU and its programs done that? More than 22 years after the DPA, BiH is in a severe economic crisis, flourishing corruption, poverty and no clear cohesion in the legitimacy of the federal state. BiH today is as divided as it was during the war. State institutions rely heavily on kleptocracy, patronage, corruption, whereas politicians with nationalist agendas still win the elections. Power sharing in partitioned Bosnia is in-between the ethnopolitics that initiated and sponsored the war. The political parties moved to a transposition from the war economy to post-war profits, where they govern territory and enrich themselves in the back of the Bosnian people. While for the local elite the system works perfectly in their favor, the EU prefers it instead of political instability and turmoil, thus leaving the citizens with a quagmire for their future (Perry 2015, p.497).

Chandler in a thorough analysis of Bosnia and Herzegovina's situation deducts that the country represents the EU's ambitions towards peacebuilding as an experimental laboratory (Chandler 2000, p.74). It is more of an interplay between international actors and local political elite with the submission of people's voices. Liberal peacebuilding policies, which bases its principles in democracy and free-market, is too simplistic to work effectively in post-conflict BiH. The EU has disabled local actors through the DPA and has failed to incorporate an all-inclusive polity in BiH. Inexorably, a more bottom-up approach is needed to balance the power relations and give voice to smaller groups of people, who have been secluded by the DPA (van Leeuwen et al 2012). By trying to implement a top-up peacebuilding process, which relies heavily on exclusion of local involvement the EU has deprived the Bosnian people of the freedom they fought for in the war and of their own state-building participation. While most of the Bosnian people would like to be a part of the EU, they are also starting to antagonize the neo-imperial role of the EU in BiH. The EU is being associated with its own agenda in the region and self-interest rather than that of the Bosnian people. In the absence of the various forms of agency, Bosnia is more in a stalemate rather than integrating towards the EU, as the use of customary hybrid institutions is substituting

the ineffective role of the post Dayton state. EU liberal peacebuilding is suffocating the space of local peacebuilding and creating resistance, which ultimately backfires its goals (Kappler and Richmond 2011, p.271-3). In a similar context, transitional justice is being heavily imposed without in-depth research which can show the contextuality of the people regarding justice. When the EU representatives sit in their offices and make up the policies for BiH they do not ask themselves the most fundamental question they need to: What do peace and justice mean to the people of BiH? The contested past still haunts people down tremendously in every city and town. The Foca case study exemplifies how little has the ICTY done to establish justice through individual accountability (Selimovic 2015). Millar (2011) raises important issues regarding the projected accomplishments of justice processes by the international transitional justice advocates and the perceptions of the locals towards it. With his case study, he illustrates how truth telling in post-war settings varies in importance throughout different places and context.

The challenges of coexistence in post-war Bosnia remain ubiquitous with deep embedded socio-political-economic uncertainties and the peacebuilding process has done nothing but to reinforce the dividing remembrances of the past. A lot of harsh critique has built up regarding the fallacy of liberal peacebuilding and in BiH, the case seems to follow the same path (Chandler 2006). In saving liberal peacebuilding Paris (2010), one of its advocates argues that these hyper-critical writings base their arguments on doubtful reasoning and that liberal peacebuilding has overcome its moral costs through its benefits to the society. While I have to agree on the benefits of the liberal peacebuilding, its shortcomings are becoming more than pervasive. The BiH case has shown us the incapacity of the EU to transpose its Western style polity and institutions, leaving no space for local agency and the fluidity of the transitional justice process is neglected. For as long as there is no interaction in-between the international actors, local elite and local citizens the challenges of BiH will not go anywhere. Moreover, in order for the imposition of true justice the fluidity of justice ought to be conceptualized better in the policies of the EU and more local context needs to be added to it. It is essential for liberal peacebuilding to reform in order to achieve more viable goals and for that to happen, EU needs to re-envision itself as argued before. EU needs to regain its legitimacy and effectiveness as the urgency for its democratic principles and buoyant future are needed now more than ever. In corollary postimperial nostalgia has become guised as liberal peacebuilding and integration strategies. In an article from the Guardian in 2007, John Gray wittingly writes that: “What the world needs from western governments isn’t another nonsensical

crusade, but a dose of realism and little humility.” (Gray 2007). Only through a realistic and humble re-envision of Europe and its policies based on egalitarian democratic principles and values, can subsequently the EU find a home in the Western Balkans and elsewhere, by establishing a new home for itself, rather than just building useless blocks of a decaying house. The next section takes us to the realities of the challenges of post-conflict coexistence in Bosnia and into the understanding of how can the EU be at home there. It gives voice to the subaltern.

Chapter 4: Empirical findings and results: BiH

My data collection is a result of my two visits in BiH, where I had several formal and informal interviews with representatives from local/ EU cultural and peacebuilding institutions and NGO-s; albeit my priority has been giving voice to the locals throughout semi-structured interviews and informal coffee talks. These local views simply speak for themselves and do not represent the entirety of the locals' perspective, but I believe in the importance of empowerment of the enfeebled and the insinuations of their claims. Additionally I make use of controversial musical group lyrics, members of whom I had the pleasure to meet in BiH, as well as in the Netherlands, and with whom I had the opportunity to discuss thoroughly on the axis of this research.

Democracy cannot be imposed, it cannot grow out of fertile soils, it cannot be instrumentalized, and it can only be experienced through its shared values and principles. The EU has inexorably committed time, effort, and financial resources in promoting such democratic polity in BiH, so it seems far too arrogant and cheeky not to assert the benefits of the fruits it has planted since 1995. Thomas Paine brilliantly put it in a quote saying: "Those who expect to reap the blessings of freedom must undergo the fatigue of supporting it." On the contrary, the Bosnian people seem to be fed up with politics, democracy, the EU and all the methods utilized so far, their patience seems to have been exasperated. What are some of the reasons behind the distrust is a question this part will seek to answer throughout conducting semi-structured interviews while in BiH, to give voice to the simple people, "romanticizing the local" (Van Leeuwen et al 2012, p.302). The first section offers an oversight of the current situation in BiH, which comes as a result of a report I compiled along with members of the internship organization (BIRN) in August 2017, examining Bosnia's progress with regards to corruption, organized crime and terrorism as part of the EU enlargement policy. The second section focuses mainly on analyzing lyrics of a controversial group and some insights from local NGO-s, as part of giving voice to the locals.

Moving on a centripetal empirical debate of this research, I try to briefly unravel the EU-WB border in practice. If you were to cross the BiH-Croatian border, you would need to go through border control, which consist of security measures. These include biometric passport, passport control, interrogation etc. Your identity is scrutinized by the police, which decides upon your

border permeability, you become a subject in a space of exception as Agamben described it. This is ordering of time-space, marking “us” and “them”, member and non-members. The irony of it is that intrinsically Croatians and Bosnians have cohabitated for hundreds of years, in fact, they still do in a deeply ethnical divided postwar Bosnia, but Croatians are considered Europeans, whereas Bosnians are considered as the other, and are so far from holding the same status. Now this is the production of antagonistic psyche in a genesis on a subconscious level. On my second night in Sarajevo, I met with a Bosnian Serb in a bar, who made me understand how powerful this border regime is and how imaginary construction influences people profoundly. Later that week I met a Bosnian Croat during my visit in Mostar, specifically at the local NGO, Abrasevic Cultural Center. I was impressed by their answers and even shocked, to an extent. (I might have had to filter for explicit language, but I think that the whole point relies there) A Bosnian Serb I met in a bar told me on Croatians:

They think they are Europeans, they think they belong with Germany and Austria. (laughter) They are scums, they are just being used by the big powers and they think they are better than us just because they lick their ass, I don't care about the EU, I hope we never get in, they are liars.

And a Croat whom I met in Mostar told me:

Europe was a dream for many of us, we believed in it for a better future, better economy, more rights, but what we got is jack shit, higher prices, German banks, German supermarkets, more corrupt politicians who suck it on Brussels, it is no better than the war, just now we are fighting for survival in another way.

The former conversation showed me the impact of the border construction in producing a very antagonistic other, a form of compelling idea that beyond that boundary there lies an enemy and also how this binary narrative of ‘us vs them’ is coproduced in everyday life by the EU similarly to nations throughout even the simplest things we do not even notice, which we shall get to later on. The latter one however transmitted me a much deeper message and emotion, one that would take me on a long journey on the streets of the beautiful cities of Sarajevo, Belgrade, Tirana and Skopje, to try to understand how alive is the European dream and can it become a reality. What is Europe and what does it want to be? How about the Balkans, is it just a ‘cesspool’ in the words of Dusan Bjelic (2006) or the last remaining stronghold of the true European values?

Current situation

Nowadays apart from the well-known ethnic divisions and a chaotic political structure, BiH is facing an even more consuming problem, that of official corruption which is directly influencing the quality of life and future prospect of its citizens. Corruption, organized crime and terrorism are stagnating the societal integration to the European family and every day Bosnian people leave their country in which they no more believe in. During the first 10 months of 2016, 3,335 people gave up Bosnian citizenship, mostly young people (Ljudi odlaze iz naše zemlje). Each year, more than a thousand doctors, nurses, and other health workers leave BiH for Germany. Corruption is prevalent in BiH and affects every aspect of citizens' daily lives, including education, health care, employment and the courts. Thus, it becomes a vital necessity to help tackle such issues and there has been an ongoing collaboration with EU representatives to try and do so. When I asked Bosnians why they think they should leave their country, almost all of their answers regard their political and judicial system as highly corrupt and in bed with organized crime. Democracy is a utopic vision of the EU, which in turn has done little to mitigate conditions for Bosnia.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is undergoing fundamental structural reforms in its path towards the integration process in the European Union. Some of the most important reform initiatives are with regards to the central role of preventing and fighting corruption, organized crime and terrorism. Due to the essentiality of an urgency to address these issues accordingly, it is necessary for BiH not only to adopt specific reform strategies and plans, but to work feverously in implementing the strategic plans by enforcing the rule of law. The country lacks implementation of the reforms in structural levels, political will and popular trust. Clinical cynicism has turned into depressive pessimism in the country where trust in the political class has faded away and corruption seems to have touched every institution and individual at all levels. The reforms serve not only as a backbone to pave the way for the integration of BiH in the EU, but also to improve the quality of life in BiH. It is a commonsense truism that the accession to EU is a strategic priority and in order to achieve it BiH need to take concrete, comprehensive, all-inclusive measures in attaining its goals. Nevertheless such poignant measures, political and social transformation, BiH cannot do by itself. It is widely acknowledged that the EU needs to serve as an enforcing lever to adequate reforms, although without abusing its power. In BiH people perceive the EU as in

colliding interest with ethno-politicians, who have been stealing the public's money and future. Their quest is also for more Europe and less EU with more democracy which provides transparency, justice, fight against corruption and crime, equality before the law, human rights, ethnic tolerance and economic stability. For example Mirna Buljugic, director of the Balkan Research Network in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BIRN BiH), spoke about problems in the cooperation of journalists and representatives of judicial institutions saying in front of a panel:

The public wants and needs to know what is happening in the judiciary and I do not think it is transparent enough. In BIRN BiH, we sent 1,019 inquiries last year, and we received only 79 complete answers and 880 incomplete ones, which often pose a problem in the work of journalists (Buljugic, Balkan Insight BiH).

It is necessary to establish a more regular practice of holding joint meetings of the media and judicial institutions, in order to increase public confidence in the judiciary in BiH, Buljugić believes. This needs to become a pillar of promoting democratic values and halting the spread of corruption and crime in the country through transparency of information and professional integrity. With regards to terrorism, recent terrorist activities have increased the level of security into high alert in BiH and the U.S. Department of State has assessed Sarajevo as being a high-threat location for terrorist activity in the latest crime and safety report of 2017. It is believed that it was during the war that a considerable number of Islamic fighters came to BiH and remained there to promulgate fundamentalist ideology and organizations into influencing certain sections of the Bosnian Muslim community. In November 2015, a gunman walked into a small betting parlor on the outskirts of Sarajevo and opened fire, killing two Bosnian soldiers in uniform. The individual stepped back into the street and opened fire on another soldier sitting in a city bus. The gunman detonated a hand grenade, killing himself. Following a police investigation, it was believed that the attacker had become radicalized and specifically targeted members of the BiH armed forces ('Islamist' gunman kills two 2015). Moreover, in April 2015, a man walked into a police station in Zvornik, Republica Srpska and opened fire with an automatic rifle, killing one police officer and injuring two others before being killed by police forces. Upon opening fire, the attacker yelled Allahu Akbar ("God is Great") (Bosnia Police Station Attack 2015). Several other incidents predating the aforementioned ones have occurred and radicalization seems to have flourished in BiH. Many citizens traveled to Syria and Iraq, making BiH one of the main source-countries per

capita of foreign fighters in that war. Throughout 2016, the State Investigation and Protection Agency (SIPA) for BiH conducted several raids, arresting persons suspected of joining or supporting foreign fighters.

BiH has been affected by the inflow of foreign terrorist fighters as well as radicalization of its population. Statistical data have shown that as much as 181 men, 61 women and 81 children from BiH have travelled to Iraq and Syria during the period 2012-2015 (Sito-Susic 2015). Radicalization cells have been discovered across the country, particularly in the Wahhabi community. Even though there are a lot of convicted radicalized Bosnian fighters, there still is no presence of a deradicalization program. It becomes an omnipresent danger thus for the convicts that when they come out of prison they become even more radicalized than before. Such issue requires immediate attention if radicalization needs to be properly addressed and halted. Also, it contributes to develop the xenophobic fears of EU populist narratives that the majority of migrants from the East are barbarians and terrorists. It is true that Bosnia suffers from radical Islam cells, because it is a safe haven for these people to construct their network and spread their pseudo Islamic ideologies. However, they flourish in Bosnia because of the inefficacy of the state and European institutions to paralyze them in their embryonic stage. What also co-contributes to their bigotry is the EU's inability to understand what goes on beyond its borders and address these issues properly. At the mosque, I was careful to inquire about radical Islam with an imam who offered some profound insights and was more than opened to talk about it. I asked him why does he think radicalization and terrorist acts happen in BiH. This was his honest response:

My friend, crime soars when the stomach is hungry, especially when the stomach of your children. Hungry people are dangerous and easily manipulated. There are several radical Islamic cells here in Bosnia that appropriate such situation and propagate hatred and animosity towards what they believe is the cause of such poverty and discrimination: Western Europe. You can't imagine how easy it is to manipulate a troubled soul with a hungry belly (Hasan 2017).

Another anti-democratic tenant systematic corruption, a widespread major challenge in BiH as an immediate threat to the core values of democracy, human rights, rule of law by undermining justice, good governance and economic development. Thus, it is one of the key requirements of the EU accession policies to halt corruption. The carrot-stick policy of the EU integration process

has proved to certain extent as a strong incentive to fight corruption. The several policies and strategies undertaken with the full financial support of the EU have not however managed to eradicate the widespread phenomena. Results of such plans are unsatisfactory and political status quo and will to improve them is insufficient. In order to properly address corruption, a holistic interactive and inter-operational approach needs to be adopted and implemented. An all-inclusive long-term work which includes multiple stakeholders at regional, local, national and international level is needed to fight corruption in the country.

A recent report of Transparency International (TI) in 2016 highlighted the fact that the fight against corruption in the Western Balkans is failing, regardless of the fourth-generation anti-corruption strategies. TI highlights the “phenomenon of state capture ... coupled with a lack of cooperation and coordination among state actors”. The report suggests that as a result of a feeble justice system and rule of law and a threatened media and civil society, the anti-corruption policies are not enforced resulting in “corruption in public office going largely unsanctioned” (Fighting corruption is failing in EU 2016). “We have free health care- an interviewer told me. However if I need the doctor’s attention I need to put money in his pockets, otherwise he won’t even bother looking at me” (Aleksa 2017). In a country where even doctors get involved in passive corruption, it is a common fact that almost every other level of institutions wants a piece of the cake. The EU accession requirements label corruption as one of the main elements undermining core democratic values and the stability of institutions and economic growth. To achieve accession, it becomes necessary for candidate countries to improve the political and socio-economic standards that corruption so drastically damages. BiH is undergoing a transitional period of implementing key anti-corruption measures under the guidance of UN, Council of Europe, OSCE, and OECD (Presentation and discussion at OSCE offices in Sarajevo, January 2017). However, no concrete results have been registered to show an actual improvement in the fight against corruption. A briefing of the European Parliament in April 2017, asserted that the Western Balkan’s major difficulty lies in the 'systemic nature' and 'institutionalization' of corruption (Lilyanova 2017). Once again the EU sets determinants and aims, withholding the regulator role in la carte, but doing little effort to challenge the status-quo. At cases it even contributes to deepen the power grip of the political elite in BiH, who have captured the country’s present and incarcerated its future. If there was one thing that really stuck out to me in Bosnia is that the people have deep resent for their politicians, but yet hold no agency in their belief to challenge them. A student who preferred to

remain anonymous during one of my meetings with them at the University of Sarajevo coffee place, told me this about her parents working in the state administration:

They detest politicians and their politics, but if they say just one word they will be fired. Most of the people here are employed by the state, thus it is illogical for them to go against it even though they want to because it's their only source of income.

Locals understand how peace and justice varies. In BiH people want acceptance of the war crimes. Some might need more restorative justice like truth commissions while others regard retributive justice as strictly necessary. They need recognition of the past before reconciliation, to forgive the perpetrators, their neighbors, and a process which has not been going on in Bosnia. Local voices go unheard because of the several tensions that transitional justice represents in itself from the meaning of justice to retribution or restorative and because of the EU's policies of shrinking space for local involvement (Panel discussion with a Bosnian Serb politician in East Sarajevo, Miroslav Lučić: President City Assembly, Administration East Sarajevo January 2017).

In corollary Bosnia and Herzegovina has had some level of development which however is infinitesimal in comparison to what it ought to be. Politically influenced judiciary and infringement of justice by criminal activities remain present. Judicial independence is yet far from being achieved. Plans were adopted regarding corruption but the yielded results also show no concrete change in the status quo. Corruption remains pervasive. As for the fight against organized crime there was some level of preparation. Some results were achieved as an outcome of inter-agencies cooperation and facilitation of the flow of information. However, these remain small steps into countering a widely spread phenomena which will require more legal procedures and strong institutions. BiH need also to counter the finance of terrorism and properly address the problem of radicalization. No concrete measures have yet been taken to ensure the swift deradicalization process of fighters who return from Syria and Iraq, which becomes a major problem for the society. Liberal peacebuilding has inherently failed in BiH in creating a sustainable economic environment, a multi-ethnic society capable of self-determination and democratic accountability. High levels of corruption in the justice system, political arena, and ties with organized crime, terrorism, soaring unemployment and immigration are indicators of a failing project. The democratization process from above which in time has turned to Europeanization has poured resources in a bottomless black hole (Chandler 2000, p.173). In BiH whilst talking to EU

representatives, NGO-s, and unofficial talks it is safe to say that paternalism and corruption, exploitation of the country and people supersedes tolerance and pluralism, legitimacy and responsibility. A member of the OHR stated during a panel discussion that it is the political ruling of three ethnic parties that has persevered ethnic divisions and hindered the development of democracy. His feelings about the future of BiH were strongly pessimistic (Panel discussion with OHR representative in Sarajevo, January 2017). While on the other side of the coin, local politicians blame foreigners. In a discussion with a municipality representative of East Sarajevo, he attributed the democratic deficit to the EU hegemony:

They come here and they want to enlighten our people. It is true that in their eyes we seems as savages because of the war but did they forget the atrocities of their last war? People are afraid to change to status-quo because they believe we might fight again and nobody wants war all over again. We do not just need strong institutions, we need strong economy. I believe a better economy can contribute to a better Bosnia and Herzegovina, to all of its people (Lulic 2017).

It does not come as a revelation however that people in the Western Balkans, blame Western Europe, and especially in Bosnia, where the wounds of the ethnic war are still fresh. “Europe stood by while we slaughtered one-another. They did not care about us then, they do not now” (Milan 2017). This is kind of a dictum in most of the suburbs of Belgrade where I spent a couple of days and had a chance to have some brief conversations with people. However, what is impressive is that there is still a great deal of people who still believe in the Union, more than ever, firmly and adamantly. More than half of my interviewers hinted that the EU can be the only rescuer and protector of peace and democracy in the WB. It was in Sarajevo that I encountered some of the most inspiring people. Adnan, a Bosnian Muslim and Sara, his Bosnian Serb companion, whose relationship flourished in a paradox, actively involved in local NGOs in peacebuilding, democracy, justice, told me:

During the war it would be impossible to be together. Most likely our families would end up killing each-other. Today our love is possible, but still a taboo, but we don't care not only because we love each other but also because we want to send a message of reminiscence of our collective past. There was a time we Serbs, Bosnians, Croats used to live together in peace. Now these memories are forgotten, banned, vanished. Children are

educated in segregated schools. They are taught that we are different. They are imbued with hate. Only the EU can alter the situation here by showing us a better path (Adnan 2017).

On the other hand Sara told me continuing on Adnan's logic:

Even though the EU is in deep crisis itself it needs to reassure its people that it can function and come up with a new vision which included Bosnia and all of the Balkans in its family. We need to accept our past and make peace with it and Europe needs to do the same. Our futures should be together (Sara 2017).

So many others suggested that Bosnia's future can only be that of the European direction, but a new shared direction with no leader. Einstein said that true democracy has no leaders, but servants to the people. Freedom and equality of all for all. EU needs to serve its people, not lead them, needs to be a model power not a superpower as aforementioned. "Let every man be respected as an individual and no man idolized"- said Einstein. In the next section, I present some more findings as a result of my encounter with a very exciting work from a musical group and two cultural NGOs in Sarajevo and Mostar.

Alternative spaces: Bosnia's subalterns

"One good thing about music, when it hits you, you feel no pain" – *Bob Marley*

Last year marked an important event on the world stage, when Bob Dylan won a noble prize in literature for his lifetime commitment to bring change throughout music. Protests songs against social injustices and inequalities were the backbone of civil rights movements. That is why some of the greatest artists of all times like Dylan, Baez, Hendrix, Marley, Rage against the Machine, put their dedicated work of art to the contribution of social change. Nowadays music's influential wield has diminished throughout the world. What we hear is the commercial nonsense of poor musical composition. Nonetheless, social injustices and inequalities only seem to be more persistent. In everyday life, people of different nations seem to be driven by the mundane routines and discourses where nationalism is reproduced rather than the collectivity of affective

nationalism. Banal and “hot nationalism” influence the feeling of communal belonging in the socio-spatial territories where we live (Paasi 2016).

In BiH, a metamorphic society with “hot nationalism”, where ethnic division is omnipresent and the main narrative in conjunction with the everyday banalities of symbols of separation in-between ethnic groups has managed to subdue the empathic concern of people who speak the same language. The main rhetoric used by the ethnopoliticians and instrumentalized through the usage of mass media has fueled even more deep feeling of resentment and detachment amongst the people of BiH. People of BiH are either socially manipulated or refuse to challenge the status-quo because of their economic dependence on it, feelings of fear and discrimination (panel discussion, Nansen Dialogue Center 2017). In an absence of civil society movement only a few groups of cultural organizations find courage to address the main issues of the Bosnian society. The Abrasevic Cultural Center in Mostar is one of the few. Strictly relying on self-autarky, they help to bring people together through their socio-spatial areas they have created such as bars, parties, concert halls etc. The manager asserted that people in BiH are very pessimistic and passive about their rights and duties. Such legacy is a courtesy of Tito’s (Yugoslavian) times when the state provided the basic needs for almost everyone. Civil movements and apolitical protests are almost absent in BiH, despite the wide dissatisfactions (Abrasevic Cultural Center 2017). Even Ceca, a famous folk singer, ex-wife of war criminal Arkan, gathers more people in her concerts than civil righteous protests denouncing corruption and poverty- said the manager in an ironical laughter (Ibid).

Similarly, to flags, national currency, topography, anthem, music can also be used by certain groups to identify themselves with, as well as reflect their values, traditions and ideology. Music is an identity marker. Music can be Janus-faceted too (van Houtum 2011). It can be used to promote national identity creating ethnic markers of belonging, thus including and excluding people. At the same time, it can be a strong reliant instrument used to promulgate elements of unity, peace, harmony. A musical group that uses music as a tool for change widely recognized not only in BiH, but worldwide, is Dubioza Kolektiv. Their music is a symbol of the cosmopolitan, borderless world as it is in itself a mish-mash of different musical genres from rock, metal, reggae and traditional Balkan folk. Their music has no genre borders, which is an illustrative example of how a multi/cultural/ethnic society like BiH should look like. Banal nationalism advertises

champions and heroes to nationalize national success, constructs places to remind the people of the imagined collective community such as memorials, monuments, museums (Billig 1995). It does nothing more but help coproducing the same ethnic divisions that initiated the war in BiH in the first place. There is no socio-spatial territory that beholds political agency or individual or groups that addresses the real issues of the today's Bosnian society expect for places like Abrasevic and groups like Dubioza. The ethnopolitics of BiH has managed to crush every attempt to criticize them and hold them responsible (graffiti "Delete the elite" as shown below demonstrates resent towards politicians). In addition to that the EU's commitment is only with the political elite which represents mutual interests and objectives, so not allowing for a more holistic contextualization of peace, democracy, Europeanization in its social and cultural space (Kappler and Richmond 2011).

The EU has showed phony ideals when it comes to NGO funding in BiH. Its assumptions are based on the indication that Bosnia will Europeanize following European standards. So the local voices and the social concerns of the people are marginalized and projects are instrumentalized, because of careful funding of selective strategical policies. In Chandler's words BiH is an 'inverted state', 'representing external agendas, while disparaging local interests' (Chandler 2000, p.74). Local NGO-s like Abrasevic or Nansen Dialogue center whose projects or methods endanger the EU's prominence with regards to its liberal peacebuilding and enlargements ambitions are cut off funding (Kappler and Richmond 2011, p.273). It is for these reasons that these two organizations have decided to be alternative spaces of peacebuilding and societal glue in BiH and fund their own modest projects. The hope for these local organizations lies in the cultural exchanges in schools, hospitals, television, and everyday life routine and it has become their quest to assist peace and reconciliation in BiH, regardless of political agendas. The representative of the NDC, however were very gloomy because of the lack of funding and a possible closing of the center. "Peace needs maintenance; it is not sustainable in itself. The sooner we acknowledge this the better for our country and people." (Brkic, NDC 2017).



Figure 11: Graffiti at the Abrasevic Center (“Future fast will be past”; “Ne treba nam sve, jer imamo ništa”- “We don’t need everything because we have nothing”), Mostar. (G.Jaupi, January 2017).



Figure 12: Graffiti ‘Delete the Elite’, ‘I love BiH’ top left; OKC Abrasevic non-conformist center right in Mostar, down , Dubioza Kolektiv during a concert in Nijmegen, Netherlands. (G.Jaupi, January 2017).

Alternative spaces: Soundscapes of Dubioza Kolektiv

The work done by DK can be seen as radical, inflammatory, revolutionary in the Bosnian society as it explicitly goes against the corruption and nepotism of the political elite, denounces extreme nationalism and addresses not just civil and political rights of the people but also socio-economic ones. They have created soundscapes with an affective atmosphere of nationalism/ethnic identities coming together to joy to the powerful messages of their music. Some of their most influential songs include themes of political and social injustice such as in *Justice* they sing:

Justice is far from this land

Justice is far

Justice is far

Man you can't get nothing but war

Why? Why? Why? Why? Why?

Why just can't get nothing but the war?

Why you're wasting' you precious time?

Why you're losing all, where ang porqua?

Why you're losing mind in the games of war?

In the games of war..."

The pessimism encountered throughout BiH is expressed throughout their lyrics, which demonstrate the inability of the state, people, and internationals to achieve justice in BiH as the wounds off the war are still the dominant narrative. In *Democracy* they sing against the system which only beholds the name of democracy but is in fact a hypocritical system, created for the post-war economy to enrich the same politicians who initiated the war:

recognize, realize, be wise

The clock is ticking away
time is slipping away
blood is spilt today
i'll be critical, mystical, lyrical
in the white hall
blood on the people wall
who stole the soul of the people
i heard somewhere we're all equal
guess they don't want us to be free
from here to the deserts
from past to the present
democracy with the fake smile
forced upon whole world to apply
while we're living in hypocrisy
fuck this democracy.”

In *Bosnafaria* the responsibility that the people have in saying enough and collectively rise is being emphasized along with the recognition of a Bosnian multicultural society with no borders and differences. The political agency that the people behold is being promulgated as the only hope to change something in the Bosnian society:

No more pressing our wishes
No more control our feelings
No more following what they say
Our rights are only thing to respect and obey

No more silence of witness
No more ruing our spirits
No more ignoring dirty business
No more waiting tomorrow
Must fight today
No more borders differences
No more hidden evidence
No more play blind while they play
C'mon people rise and stop their game
No more losing while they get
No more killing without regret
No more following what they say
Our rights are only thing to respect and obey.

Walter also instigates the same message of anger with the socio-political narratives and realities and the urge of the people that they belong together and not separately:

This country will never be split into three!
Your nationalism is not my patriotism! ...
I cannot stand you anymore,
get out of these chairs,
I will not give you my vote! "...
A new time, new people –
just the new occupier,
their motives are the same,

call them by their real names!

Go out on the street, fight for your rights!

The ethnopolitical leaders continue to target ethnic groups to remain in power while the economic situation in Bosnia is in staggering conditions; they use their power for their own beneficial purposes on the back of the simple people. This is also shown in the song *Blam, Blam/ Shame, shame*, which illustrates how the rich get richer while the poor, poorer :

If I were good,

if I were nice,

If I were a daddy's boy

If I had money and a fast car

I wouldn't need a job,

I wouldn't need a goal fingers in my ears,

I wouldn't need anything at all.

Shame, shame

Every day I dream of a highway

Shame, shame

I only see dirt roads around me

Shame, shame

Man, I am so furious

Shame, shame

There's a crane hanging above our heads.

Along other geopolitical lines, they do not only target local politics and policies but also the failure of the EU and international community to stabilize and democratize BiH. They also try to challenge the belief that life in the Balkans is uncivilized and barbaric. By doing so they involve

into contesting the binary framework of ‘us vs them’ and the narratives of imaginary geographies that are transpired when we talk about the Balkans. In *Eurosong* they sing:

Auf wiedersehen miss Merkel,

you are not my friend.

When I tell you merhaba,

you don’t understand.

Cantare Berlusconi, prostitution story,

His libido running country,

taking all the glory.

If you wanna meet me mister Sarkozy,

you will have to learn my language,

parle-vouz gipsy.

Don’t want to be annoying,

please don’t get me wrong.

I’m sick of being European just on Eurosong.”

Bosnia’s society is ostensibly tired of the ambivalent politics of the EU which seems not to understand the local culture, traditions of a country who is just at its backdoor. However, they are also aware of the fact that EC cannot change Bosnia’s deep rooted problems. Only the people of Bosnia can, but to do so, they need to regain their political agency and start thinking beyond the binaries of “us vs. them”, stop being influenced by the mundane discourses of ethnopoliticians and banal nationalism and challenge the status-quo irrespective of the consequences. Their songs with essential messages are numerous and cannot all be mentioned here. However, the fundamental goal of their socially engaged music is to bring change. Civil society in BiH needs to be more proactive and robust. People need to develop more human empathy and move beyond the wounds of the war for a more prosperous and harmonious Bosnia. Alternative socio-spatial places like the Abrasevic cultural center and soundscapes with powerful emotional practices and anti-political

messages like Dubioza Kolektiv are the backbone of what we might call the unofficial legitimate voices of Bosnia. These voices alter the dominant division rhetoric of everyday banal and hot nationalism towards a multi-cultural collective society with a more affective form of “embodied nationalism”, something that EU demos is missing in its comfort zone (Stephens 2016).

Waiting for Godot: Can the Balkans find a home in EU?

Although, most of the Bosnian people agree that integration in the Union is vital, I discerned that for them the methods used by the Union are faulty and inquisitive. They used words such as “control, rule, dominate, regulate”, or even more aggressive expressions such as “they do not really care’ and “they are selfish and hypocrites”. The crisis of legitimacy of the EU, thus encapsulates even its esoteric inward frontier. As we have seen, the EU has been projecting its colonial project to the candidate countries throughout a sophistry of methodological and epistemological stances. Thus, I offered a revisit of Europe’s past to understand the way it addresses the Balkans today. My claim that EU has failed in accepting its past and proposing other headings to a more democratic cosmopolitan Europe and less EU is also backed up by the voices of the simple people that I had the opportunity and pleasure to talk to. For them the only choice of freeing themselves from the shackles of the past and disparaging nationalism is the European route. Nevertheless, they are also aware that the European way has diverged from its principles and values and they hope for its restoration. Bosnia needs more cooperation and understanding. For them it is not about becoming European that matters foremost, but feeling free and safe in the realms of being a Bosnian in the European family. As my dear friend, Katarina put it: “Isn’t it about feeling and being European, not about becoming one?” (Katarina 2017). She encapsulated in her rhetoric the intrinsic moments of what being European really means. It is not about becoming as Europeanization suggests, it is about being, hence the quest as Todorova suggest is to deconstruct stereotypical representations of the Balkans, and refute the neocolonial project of Europeanization on the basis of superiority. There is no such thing as a gradient of Europeanism, one being less and the other more European because European identity is liquid and hybrid, it is a place of communication, a discursive encounter of diverse cultures based on communication and understanding rather than norms and specific sets of values. EU needs to create common EU-

spaces and write and teach about other Euro-geographies and histories moving beyond the neoliberal socio-economic policies upon which the EU has pledged to develop a “transnational ideal of social justice, belonging and cultural tolerance” (Amin 2002, p.14). In the end, WB can be a part of the newly established home of the EU, on a respectable level of equal terms, but as suggested, only throughout an unfathomable deconstruction of Balkanism and re-envisioned European Union, whose adage should be that “to be European is to recognize that one lives in a world that does not belong to specific people” (Rumford and Delanty 2005). It is about being and not becoming. Only this way can Europe find a home in the Western Balkans and mutatis mutandis, WB can feel at home in the European Union establishment.



Figure 13: A drinks menu from a bar called the Goldfish in Sarajevo; The owner believes that only Sarajevans can save Sarajevo. “We are the Godots we have been waiting for”- she said to me. (G. Jaupi, April 2017).

Conclusion: ‘L’ avenir’; why do we need EUtopia now more than ever?

I began this research paper with ambitious expectations and audacious tasks to prove that Europe can be indeed made meaningful and useful if it accepts its past and incorporates in its new home on equal terms the Western Balkans. In the end of this journey, I want to go back on the beginning: the quote from Jacques Derrida, which encapsulates my quest into portraying this reflection of a new cosmopolitan democratic Europe. Derrida makes use of two very similar terms in superficialities but with deep instilled differences in his philosophical understanding. For him ‘la future’ is the predictable Europe, which I implicitly describe in the research, a banal Europeanism, Europeanization in and out, or the more stringent need for populism and nationalism; the existential desire to belong somewhere and force others to be like you. On the other hand, ‘l’avenir’ is more about the “unpredictable rescued from the future, liberated from imperialism and nationalism” Europe. I focused my whole reflection and analysis on the latter, trying to transmit an idea of a more utopic Europe: a ‘EUtopia’, which might be preposterous but much needed and desired. A EUtopia is a land of heterotopia, not one single defined space or territory but an amalgamation of spaces with no distinctive lines and borders, a socio-cultural coexistence, where communication, understanding and learning; democracy of the people in a collective egalitarian power, are the core premises of the new European home, dismantled from the shackles of the colonialist ideologies. It is not an imaginary land of excessive idealisms and unlikely pragmatisms but rather an achievable process, which involves not only political will and effort but also an active participatory democracy, an appeal to our humanity and to what defines us as human beings living on this planet. It is what my interlocutors wish for and strive for the future of their children, a mediated EU with the WB in it on more shared cosmopolitical democracy.

I cannot not mention a striking passage here from astronomer Carl Sagan, in which he describes the Earth from a picture taken by Voyager 1 before leaving our solar system for interstellar space. You would be asking yourself right now what is the validity and connection of astronomy with this research paper but it will speak for itself as it beholds a powerful resonating message:

Look again at that dot. That's here. That's home. That's us. On it everyone you love, everyone you know, everyone you ever heard of, every human being who ever was, lived out their lives. The aggregate of our joy and suffering, thousands of confident religions, ideologies, and economic doctrines, every hunter and forager, every hero and coward, every creator and destroyer of civilization, every king and peasant, every young couple in love, every mother and father, hopeful child, inventor and explorer, every teacher of morals, every corrupt politician, every "superstar," every "supreme leader," every saint and sinner in the history of our species lived there--on a mote of dust suspended in a sunbeam. The Earth is a very small stage in a vast cosmic arena. Think of the rivers of blood spilled by all those generals and emperors so that, in glory and triumph, they could become the momentary masters of a fraction of a dot. Think of the endless cruelties visited by the inhabitants of one corner of this pixel on the scarcely distinguishable inhabitants of some other corner, how frequent their misunderstandings, how eager they are to kill one another, how fervent their hatreds. Our posturing's, our imagined self-importance, the delusion that we have some privileged position in the Universe, are challenged by this point of pale light. Our planet is a lonely speck in the great enveloping cosmic dark. In our obscurity, in all this vastness, there is no hint that help will come from elsewhere to save us from ourselves. The Earth is the only world known so far to harbor life. There is nowhere else, at least in the near future, to which our species could migrate. Visit, yes. Settle, not yet. Like it or not, for the moment the Earth is where we make our stand. It has been said that astronomy is a humbling and character-building experience. There is perhaps no better demonstration of the folly of human conceits than this distant image of our tiny world. To me, it underscores our responsibility to deal more kindly with one another, and to preserve and cherish the pale blue dot, the only home we've ever known (Sagan 1994).

It is a breathtaking speech, which I do not dare to analyze, rather only point out to one simple realization that there is no Godot coming for us in our planet, in EU or in the Balkans: We are the Godots we have been waiting for just like Sara, the coffee place owner of Goldfish, told me. Getting back to BiH, I find it exhilarating and beautiful when I read how during the Sarajevo siege from 1992-1995 there were almost two thousand theater performances with an overall attendance of approximately one million (Horvat 2004, p.189). Horvat tackles brilliantly the war period in Bosnia to explain that in order to survive the longest capital city siege in history, Sarajevians found refuge in the theater, in a state of unparalleled utopia. The noteworthy play of Beckett 'Waiting for Godot' set in scene from Susan Sontag, a well-known American artist made Sarajevo a truly cosmopolitan space (and not only, many other international plays were performed there during the war; in Horvat 2004, p.190). Therefore, theater in Sarajevo was a utopic space where there were no boundaries between actors and audience. Everybody felt threatened for their lives, everybody

shivered from cold and was hungry, exhausted physically and wounded spiritually. However, the plays kept everyone going in one of the darkest times in modern European history. It was utopia then and it should be EUtopia now. There is cynical pessimism in the streets of Sarajevo towards politics and democracy and not only there, in Serbia, Albania, Montenegro, Macedonia, Italy, Spain, Greece to go in the EU space too. Hence, the EU needs a pendulum swing to a more realist constructivist optimism for the future to support its projects and ideas.

In 2014, protests started off in Tuzla to spread all over BiH against corruption, crime and passivity of the political situation. It was a moment of great exuberance of an act of active participation of thousands of people inflicting their democratic rights. It was maybe one of the rare instances expect from the entertainment franchise of sport or music that the three ethnicities in BiH were one. I refer here once again to the radiant saying of one of the protesters:

I am a Catholic, I am a Jew, I am a Muslim, I am all citizens of this country” and another one replied “If I am a Muslim, and he is a Serb or a Croat, if we are hungry, aren’t we brothers? We are at least brothers in stomach. He continued by saying that: “I am not smart, but I just wanted to say this” and another person from the crowd replied: “If you are here, you are smart” (Horvat 2014, p.185).

This example again speaks for itself how Bosnians came together to the realization of the true intrinsic values of democratic citizenry and in the words of Horvat: “BiH had in seven days of the protests with the plenums come closer to the idea of Europe than in the last twenty years together” (Horvat 2014, p.188). We need more self-awareness and realization that we hold the agency and we are the ones who can inflict the change. A war tour guide while speaking to us about the war seemed very antagonistic towards the Bosnian Serbs. I believed he would have been a Bosnian Muslim or a Croat. When I approached him and cordially asked, he said he was a Bosnian Serb. He had fought in the war and had several injuries.

I fought because my father was in military- he said. My best friends were Muslims. We were forced to fight and for that, I will never forgive myself and the politics. They are the bad guys, they have always been. We need more protest, we need more people. We have to fight for our rights(Vuk 2017).

Surprisingly enough, however, I learned that it is misconceptions and our urge of categorizing and naming people that leads us to conflicts and misunderstandings. BiH is an archetype of cosmopolitanism, it has been even in its darkest times, trying to seek for normality in abnormal times, trying to share and promote peace and coexistence. However, in the eyes of Westerners they are the stereotypical representation of uncivilized barbarians (recall the picture No teeth, mustache, Bosnian woman).

Most of my respondents blame the politicians and the internationals for the war, but they also strive to move past it, reconcile with the past and look for a brighter future. “We have suffered too much”- said Vuk.- “It is time to move on” (Vuk 2017). The future they want however does not seem to be that of in a predictable predatory EU but an EU with another heading, just as the people transmitted during the war or the protests. During the war, they believed the Americans or Europeans were going to come and save them. Nevertheless, time has taught them that they are the Godots they have been waiting for and that the ability to make a difference, no matter how infinitesimal lies in each and every one of them. EU needs to take their pledge seriously and realize that BiH can be its savior. EU needs to free itself from its old decaying corpse of colonialism and hegemonic need, to re-substantiate its legitimacy and trust in the people who still believe in a truly European Europe with shared principles and values. I claimed that the right path for Europe to become possible again in its *avenir* is only throughout a revisiting of its past and realization that Balkanism is a stereotypical misconception of a European self-image of constructing an us vs. them. The WB needs to be the right path of l’avenir of Europe with the now forgotten enlargement process, but even then, the rules of the game need to be reconsidered in more egalitarian terms. As Balibar writes Europe without the Balkans in it is impossible:

The fate of European identity as a whole is being played out in Yugoslavia and more generally in the Balkans (even if this is not the only site of its trial). Either Europe will recognize in the Balkan situation not a monstrosity grafted to its breast, a pathological “aftereffect” of underdevelopment or of communism, but rather an image and effect of its own history and will undertake to confront it and resolve it and thus to put itself into question and transform itself. Only then will Europe probably begin to become possible again. Or else it will refuse to come to face to face with itself and will continue to treat the problem as an exterior obstacle to be overcome through exterior means, including

colonization. That is, it will impose in advance on its own citizenship an insurmountable border for its own populations, whom it will place indefinitely in the situation of metics, and it will reproduce its own impossibility.” (Balibar 2009, p.6).

Europe needs to tackle the problems of its past and the immediacy of its present debacles. It needs a realization that a democratic European Europe needs social movements like that in BiH in 2014 and social politics who supports them against the ferocity of the authoritarians in producing exclusionary geographies and constructs (Balibar 2009, p.9). Citizenship cannot be possible without community and the latter cannot be possible without shared feelings of understanding and communication on equal basis. Europe has to overcome its phantasmagoric past and confront the realities of its present if it wants to not just survive, but set in motion an unprecedented process of social egalitarianism and democracy in the global world.

Just like Bosnians realized, no one would come to save them, they have to save themselves, and to use Derrida’s saying that when we are stuck on other people’s dreams we are doomed, we need to be our own saviors, Godots, and stand up and fight for our righteous beliefs and ideals, even dreams. Statistically speaking, only a tenth of EU citizens regard the EU with prosperity and rule of law, while in the WB the same number is something between 30-60% (Krajina and Blanus 2016, p.12). Somewhere in the museum of abandoned ideals and innocence, there is still hope for a cosmopolitan democratic Europe; for humanity as Sagan describes it in the abovementioned passage, there is no need for imagined self-importance, schizoid and paranoid desires, recognition in status and wealth, power and domination, so that to delude ourselves that we somehow will be remembered and venerated in glory. It is useless when you take a second to glimpse at what our Earth represents in the great oceanic vastness of the cosmos. That is why this research was more of a cry for social change, a pathos appeal to conclude that we can all decide l’avenir of Europe with the Western Balkans in it, and then why not of our entire planet. Take a moment to look at the picture below and think, and then why not act.

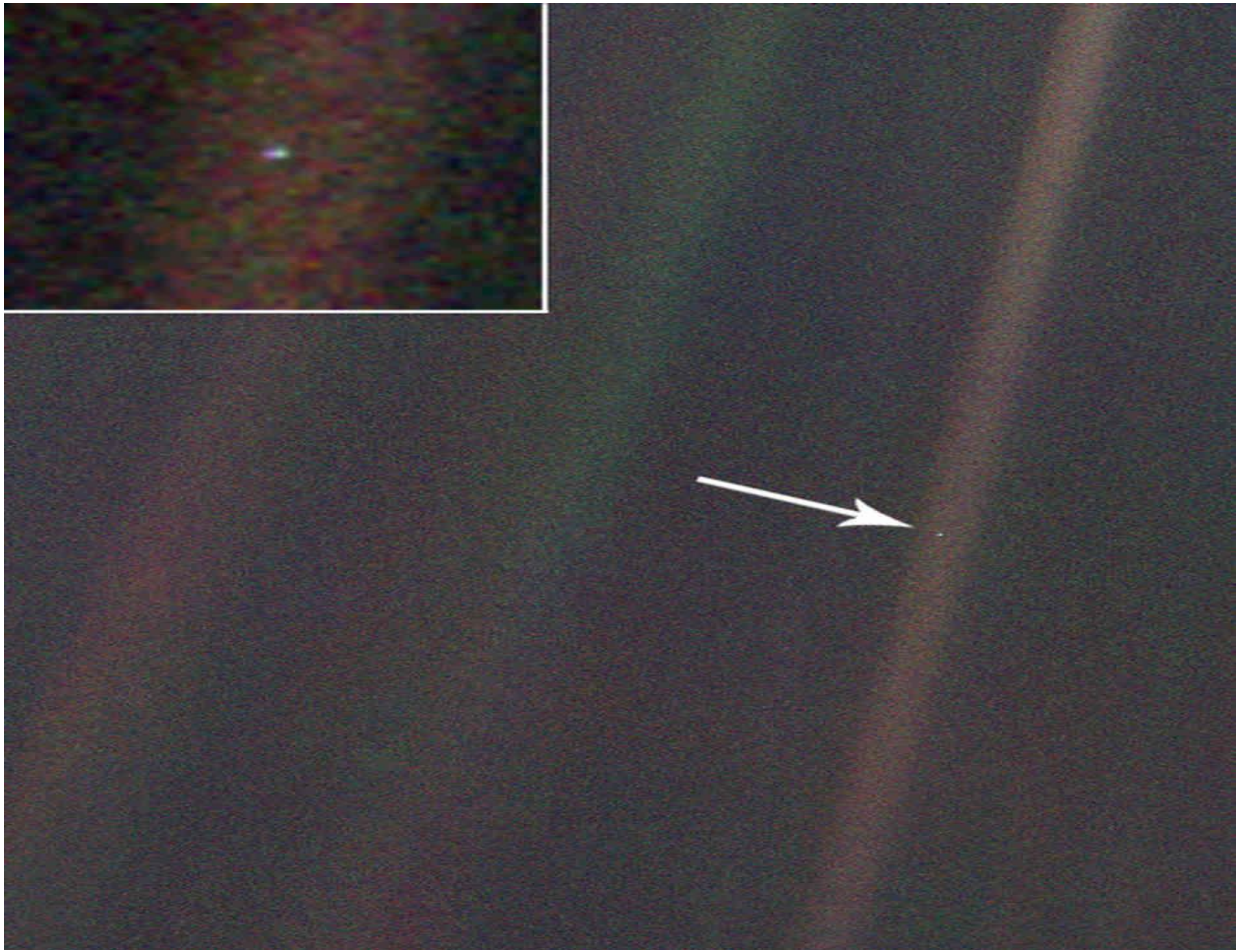


Figure 14: We are there. That small dot is planet Earth (Scharf 2013).

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Appendix

Interview Design

Main Topic: Can Bosnia feel at home in the EU? EU-WB relations

Related topics/ points of discussion:

- Borders
- Political situation in BiH
- Corruption and terrorism
- EU enlargement and policies
- EU prospects of the WB
- Identity
- Local peacebuilding
- Future headings of BiH and Europe
- Europeanization and its impacts
- Local NGO-s
- Alternative spaces for building peace
- Ethnic war

Background questions:

What is your name? How old are you?

What is your profession?

Do you like your country, city?

What would you change about it?

More topic related questions:

What do you think of Bosnian politics and politicians?

Why do most people leave Bosnia?

Do you consider yourself as part of the Balkan?

Do you think Europeans feel and act superior than Balkan people, Bosnians?

Is the EU-WB relationship one of inequality?

How important is your ethnic affiliation to you?

What do you think are some of the commonalities/differences between WB and WE?

What are the challenges Bosnia needs to overcome to enter the EU?

Do you feel a European Bosnia is a better Bosnia?

Do you feel European? Would you still feel Bosnian after entering EU? Is identity important?

Do you believe in the European dream?

Can Europe feel at home in Bosnia? Can Bosnians feel at home in Europe?

Can we have a united Europe without a united Balkans?

What does it mean for BiH to belong in Europe and for Europe to find a home there?

What is Europe and EU to you?

Why can Bosnian accession to EU be helpful to restore European legitimacy and unity?

Has democratization turned into Eurocentric Europeanization which has undermined autonomy in the Western Balkans?

Do you believe that EU institutions and policies disregard the opinion of the simple people?

Do you think local NGO-s do a better job at building peace? Should they be supported more?

List of respondents:

Interviewee: Katarina Jankovic

Profession: Project Officer

Institution: BIRN BiH

Interviewee: Ljuljeta Brkic

Profession: Manager

Institution: Nansen Dialogue Center

Interviewee: Adnan Vukojevic

Profession: volunteer

Institution: BILD

Interviewee: Sara Vukojevic

Profession: volunteer

Institution: BILD

Interviewee: Milan Randelovic

Profession: student

Institution: University of Belgrade, Serbia

Interviewee: Aleksa

Profession: student

Institution: University of Sarajevo

Interviewee: Vuk Vaselic

Profession: tour guide

Institution: tour agency

Interviewee: Hasan

Profession: imam

Institution: Mosque of Ali Pasha

Interviewee: David

Profession: unemployed

Institution: member of Abrasevic

Interviewee: discussion

Institution: local NGO, ACC

Interviewee: panel discussion

Institution: OHR, Sarajevo

Interviewee: panel discussion

Institution: OSCE, Sarajevo

Interviewee: Miroslav Lucic, panel discussion

Profession: President City Assembly

Institution: City Municipality of East Sarajevo

Some of my interviewees are in rather informal settings such as coffee bars or streets; the transcripts represent just some parts of the conversations we had, mostly related to this research topic.

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

Interviewee: Katarina Jankovic

-Hello, first of all I would like to thank you for your help, readiness and contribution to my research. Could you please state your name and profession for the record.

-My name is Katarina Jankovic and I am a project officer at BIRN BiH. I mostly oversee projects that are funded by donors which seek to maintain peace, develop democracy and the rule of law and integrate Bosnia in the EC.

Q1: Okay so because you are very familiar with my research and the topic in hand, because you are also my supervisor at my internship at BIRN, I would like to delve straight into the topic with some questions. What are in your opinion some of the challenges Bosnia needs to overcome to enter the EU?

A1: Well I think because of our history of long standing conflict, Bosnia needs not only to face external problems and conditions set by the EU but foremost its internal existential issues. I emphasize here the urge to solve the ethnic disputes once and for all, in order for peace to endure. However the role of ethnopoliticians has been unfavorable as they use the ethnic card to win elections and people's sympathy. Corruption and the faulty system of democracy we have here in Bosnia are at unimaginable levels. The ethnic divide is visible everywhere from the minor things to the most important, from cabs to hospitals, from cable TV and cellular carrier to lines dividing the capital. Our wounds from the war not only they have not healed but they continue to grow.

Q2: And who do you think is most responsible for this situation? And is it possible for Bosnia's accession to EU to help solve problems and restore unity in Bosnia and maybe even in Europe?

A2: I myself was always a firm believer in the European dream. I grew up looking over at Europe as a place of inspiration, salvation. Bosnians always believed in their power to save us from our own destructive behavior. However now that I work on a daily basis in an investigative journal which unfolds the realities, I see the problems Europe is facing too. Therefore I believe it would be necessary that both Bosnia and Europe save themselves from the grip of authoritarianism and nationalism. We have all seen the consequences of that. As for who to blame, I do not like to point fingers to a specific entity but I believe we are all coparticipants in this demise, Bosnians, politics, Europeans, Americans. Like it or not greed and power are humanistic traits which have brought the worst in us.

Q3: As you mentioned you work closely to oversee the progress of Bosnia in complying with the EU acquis, a project I have also been a part of in the past month. Do you think the EU conditions are benefiting Bosnian development in overall or they are merely fixed policies set to Europeanize Bosnia as the WB as well? So has democratization turned into Eurocentric Europeanization, simply speaking?

A3: I am glad you brought this up. It is a very sensitive topic. Here in Bosnia and especially in Sarajevo discontent has risen considerably with regards to EU and their unconditional measures to 'subdue' Bosnia. Polls and interviews we conduct here at BIRN have shown that the general public mistrusts the internationals and their loyalties are once again shifting to ethnic politicians. This is indeed a very bad indicator of what the future might bring for Bosnia and the whole region. It is because the EU and OHR are here not to collaborate and hear everyone out but to order and assume a normative position in Bosnian politics and issues. While I agree that most of the conditions set by the EC are beneficiary and mandatory because they will help prosper the Bosnian society, I also believe that a standard used elsewhere to democratize or Europeanize other countries cannot work in Bosnia's deep divided society. I think bottom up approaches and giving voice to all the people should become the subject of EU's efforts here. Bosnian people need to be and feel involved and not alienated from the decisions that will shape their future.

Q4: So do you believe that EU institutions and policies disregard the opinion of simple people?

A4: Maybe not intentionally because of the complicated system it is close to impossible to hear everyone out, and sometimes it creates a bigger mess, but I do believe that EU officials fail to understand the Bosnian culture and mentality, or that of the Balkans in general. There might be this complex of superiority where they think of us as inferior people, because of the wars and our past, thus maybe because of this they think it is better they make the decisions. Maybe in their attempt to do good they are doing more bad, unwillingly.

Q5: Do you think it is important for Bosnian people to become part of the European family so that they set apart their conflict, and move forward into prospering the society? Can Bosnia feel at home in Europe and vice versa?

A5: Honestly I think EU has some very immediate problems it needs to deal with. Lately it is pretty unstable and is facing a crisis of legitimacy. So it is important for EU to decide what it wants and what it wants to be. Undoubtedly Bosnians in my opinion would feel safer and better off being part of the EU family but maybe not this one right now which is becoming more xenophobic and nationalistic. Bosnia, the WB and Europe can feel at home only if they have a common sense of understanding and sharing of their cultures, traditions and histories. In the end I read or maybe heard somewhere, I am not sure, that it is not about becoming European that matters, but feeling, and feeling European is about having a space where we all feel equal. So feeling at home is a big step and in order for that to happen big steps need to be taken from EU and Bosnia, too.

Q6: Do you like your country, city? What would you change about it?

A6: I love my country. It has so much potential and opportunities from natural beauties, amazing cultural traditions in history, cuisine. If there is the will from all parties Bosnia can prosper and develop. However there are so many things that need to change from the ruling political parties and the faulty system, a legacy of the Dayton Peace Agreement, the EU's attitude, the ethnical division. Corruption, terrorism, organized crime soar here and need to be stopped so that Bosnia comes back finally to its people, to whom it belongs and not to greedy politicians.

Interviewee: Ljiljeta Brkic (this was after the panel discussion we had)

-Good morning! Thank you for taking your time to answer a few of my questions. Can you please state your professional position, and briefly say something about the activities of NDC.

-Hello, I am the current manager of Nansen Dialogue Center in Sarajevo, a project which was founded in Lillehammer, Norway, in 1995. The reason was to bring to public attention that while the city was hosting the 1994 winter Olympics, there was a civil war going on in the former Winter Olympics city of Sarajevo. Our principal aim is to bring communication and dialogue to the table of ethnic groups, in order to restore understanding. My expertise in dialogue, peacebuilding and conflict resolution as well as the passion and love of my country has accompanied me in this journey of restoring and maintaining peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Q1: So you have been working for many years now as part of a NGO. How important do you think the work of NGO-s is in maintaining peace? Is your job more incremental than that of governmental agencies and European ones?

A1: I do not want to compare to others but sometimes it helps to see where you stand. NDC has been very helpful and has assisted thousands of people and projects over the years, with offices in Mostar, Sarajevo, Banja Luka, Podgorica, Skopje, Belgrade, etc. Unlike government and other agencies our mission is clear and focused in creating a peaceful and functional society with human rights and integration of all diverse parts. At NDC conflicts are transformed into opportunities throughout the power of dialogue. But politicians on the other hand and especially here in Bosnia use conflict to win elections and fuel more conflict. They hinder peace and that cannot be tolerated.

Q2: You mentioned earlier that your biggest challenge remains funding. You are facing a big threat now as your principal donor, the Norwegian Embassy, is thinking of cutting you down? Is there other potential donors that can assist your valuable work, maybe other European fundings?

A2: Yes, I am very sad because our long term funder and biggest contributor to the NDC in BiH is facing financial problems. We are in the middle of a crisis and so are our projects in schools, communities, hospitals, workplaces to bring people closer. You have seen the famous school in Mostar where under one roof two ethnicities study, one during day and the other at night. It is a plague of our society. We are divided in everything. NDC has done a lot of work in trying to overcome these divisions, especially with children. They are not to be blamed for their fathers' sins. They cannot be raised and educated with the hatred that this country lives on. That is why we have several important projects that bring children together and it is impressive to see the results. We are desperately however in need of money to oversee and implement these projects and no one has come to help us. Funding is very important. Especially, in our line of work, it is indispensable because peace needs maintenance; it is not sustainable in itself. The sooner we acknowledge this the better for our country and people. However we remain hopeful as always.

Q3: Do you think conflict resolution will work in Bosnia eventually and that the EU might play a big role in healing the Bosnian society?

A3: I do believe in the power of dialogue and conflict resolution. I say that because I have experienced it first hand in my line of work with people who swore to kill each other becoming best friends. Or take me for instance, I am Bosnian-Croat, my husband is Bosnian-Serb and our children live in Sarajevo and do not put a tag on their ethnicity. They are simply Bosnians. Why do they have to be educated of favoring or hating one or the other. It is a misfortune that has to be eliminated and the only way is through supporting local NGO-s which more than anyone get the job done. As for the EU so far they have helped local NGO-s, as long as they agree with their agendas. They have been participators in our war like it or not and they must be so in our healing, too.

Q4: What do you mean by as long as they agree with their agendas? Do you think local NGO-s should be supported more and be more independent?

A4: Well, I mean there are cases where EU does not agree with local NGO-s plans and work, because they interfere with their bigger plans. And that's when they cut off funding. I think that is wrong because the EU takes upon itself the role of God by thinking it knows everything, what is best or not for our country. On the contrary it is the local people and organizations who are more aware of the cultural traits, mentality and customs of Bosnian people, not some Brussels officials. Not only should locals voice be heard more but also supported and taken into consideration. Only that way can the people restore their trust in the European community and democracy. Otherwise nationalism will win again in Bosnian and the EU will be held accountable this time.

Q5: Do you like your county and what would you change about it? **A5:** I am pretty sure that not just me but majority of Bosnians love this place. It is full of natural beauties and good people. But all the goods and power is in the wrong hands. So what I would change, everything from top to bottom. Our people deserve much much more. We have suffered for too long and it is about time that we move on to bring our country forward.

Interviewee: Adnan Vukojevic

Interviewee: Sara Vukojevic

Both Adnan and Sara, recently married couple do voluntary work and are part of some important projects next to Bosnia Initiatives for Local Development (BILD, headquartered in Tuzla). I met both of them in Sarajevo on April.

Q1: Can you please talk about what is BILD about?

A1 (Sara): The initiatives for local development of Bosnia focuses on promoting and developing education, empowerment, prosperity in all three cultural, religious groups. We do this in a very structured organization who takes upon numerous projects with very passionate and admirable people. We consider ourselves as a very big family trying to bring people closer together.

A1 (Adnan): A little bit on how we do things. We have education projects, community service projects, local investments, sustainability, development. Mainly education focus on teaching and

assisting youngsters in their academic life so that they can succeed in the future and also contribute to Bosnian society. Other projects include developing leadership and community skills, strengthening ties, civil engagement. People who work at BILD are of great importance but also volunteers such as ourselves make a great contribution. We are united by our common goal in building stronger relationships between Bosnian people and maintain a lasting peace and prosper the society of Bosnia.

Q2: Now if you allow me some more detailed questions regarding my research. What is Europe and EU to you? What does it mean for BiH to belong in Europe and for Europe to find a home there?

A2 (Adnan): Let me tell you our story briefly. We met a bit before the war started and like a young couple we fell in love. However, during the war it would be impossible to be together. Most likely our families would end up killing each-other. Today our love is possible, but still a taboo, but we don't care not only because we love each other but also because we want to send a message of reminiscence of our collective past. There was a time we Serbs, Bosnians, Croats used to live together in peace. Now these memories are forgotten, banned, vanished. Children are educated in segregated schools. They are taught that we are different. They are imbued with hate. Only the EU can alter the situation here by showing us a better path. Europe for me is the only hope there is for this country to feel safe again, for love to flourish, for children to be educated, for economy to strengthen.

A2 (Sara): Even though the EU is in deep crisis itself it needs to reassure its people that it can function and come up with a new vision which included Bosnia and all of the Balkans in its family. We need to accept our past and make peace with it and Europe needs to do the same. Our futures should be together. Me and Adnan come from a very difficult past but we believe that only made us stronger and firm believers of love and of Bosnia. We love our country and we would never want for war to come back again. The EU can help us but it can also hurt us. It all depends on their will to do good and help the Bosnian people. We try here at BILD to help children understand that it doesn't matter which religion they are, they should never think of others as strange or enemy. They should learn at an early age that such thing is bad and that Bosnia needs to be rebuild on new terms of love. So for Bosnian people to be a part of the European family should mean being equal, being free, being democratic, being independent, being responsible civilian, being just, but on the other hand Europe needs to be all these things first if it wants other countries to follow its model.

A2(Adnan): I agree with Sara. EU wants to create a safe community but it has shifted to focus more on economy than civil problems such as refugees, democracy levels, corruption, justice. They want Bosnia to have less corruption, more justice, more democracy. I agree, we suffer here a lot from all of these things, we do need strong reforms but we can never make it in our own. We need Europe to guide and help us but not just tell us what to do. They also need to ask us what do we think we should do. It's our country after all.

Q3: Adnan, when you say that EU needs to ask you too because it is your country, do you think that they take a position of superiority by telling you what to do to follow their own interest? Do you believe that EU institutions and policies disregard the opinion of the simple people?

A3: Absolutely. Here in Bosnia we are used with internationals being around for a long time. They have failed us a couple of times, Srebrenica, being the most dramatic one. It's not that we don't trust them at all, but Bosnians are impatient people and hot-blooded too. If things don't change soon enough, nationalism might come back to hurt us all over again. It's already round the corner waiting for the right time. And the EU is doing nothing. It is just saying: Bosnia here you go a list of things you have to do if you want your candidacy to be considered. And it is gonna take you a couple of years, ten maybe more. What??? You really think we can hold this country together for that long. No way. We need fast reform, to combat the bad things that happen in politics, organized crime, societal problems. We don't just need a big piece of paper telling us what to do, we need help, we need people, ideas, practice, teaching, caring and understanding. Bosnia needs action. EU doesn't listen to Bosnian people. I doubt they listen to their own people. Decision making is onefold. They take whatever decision they think is best or is best for them. That's why people are pissed and loose trust, in democracy and in EU.

Q4: Sara, do you think change can occur if there was to be more cooperation and communication between EU agencies and Bosnian politics, NGOs and local people?

A4: I really think that can bring a real change. A space of communication between all actors. So far as Adnan said only the big players have a seat in the table, the simple people are just the suffers of the consequences of the decisions taken high up. People need to be more involved, more ideas can be born, and also it might help bridge the ethnic divide, if we all sit on the same table and look each other in the eyes. I think it is important to at least try and then see how influential it might be.

Q5: I know this question might be of no value knowing your history together but I have to ask: How important is your ethnic affiliation to you and how important do you think is in overall for the Bosnian people?

A5 (Sara): Well not at all. Honestly right now is the last thing we think about, if not at all. Yeah when we met each other, it was hard for a Bosnian Serb and Muslim to be together. We have heard all kind of stories, of couples being shot to death, just like the one from Sarajevo, named after Romeo and Juliet. We were scared but we defeated fear and we work everyday to do the same with people here in Bosnia. I think they don't care about ethnicity in the long run if their economy is good and the country development is stable. Why would they? But as long as economy and unemployment are stagnant, ethnicity is very important, especially in the Republika Srpska, which is mostly homogenized or among old people who have suffered the atrocities of the war.

A5 (Adnan): Politics man, it's all about the lies that they sell to people. Media is helping them in telling us that nationalism will save us and there is no other way. In our war for existence and survival it is only safe to be together , Muslims with Muslims, Serbs with Serbs. We cannot trust the other, they killed us once and they will do it again. Only together we can be stronger in

facing them in the future. This is the big lie. This is why people hold so strongly on their ethnicity as a condition for existence, not as a cultural trait. We can work together, live together, love together, have sex together, all sorts of imaginable things but we can never ever trust each other. This is insane but it is part of the Bosnian society, something that we have to work together, all of us to change. The ethnic card and all those who use it to turn us against each other are cruel and mean people. Bosnia deserves better.

Q6: Why do people leave Bosnia?

A6: Isn't it obvious. I mean you haven't been here long enough to see that coffee places are filled with young people. There is no perspective here, no future. We hate our politicians because they are greedy and corrupt and Bosnia can never have a future with them. Even professionals and middle aged people leave Bosnia because they can't make it here on a normal payday without engaging in a form of corruption. You have to hustle real hard to make a good living here and most of the people can't or won't go against some principal values so they decide to just leave for a better life. If Europe is not coming here then we are headed there.

Interviewee: Aleksa

Student at the University of Sarajevo. I met him randomly at a bar and once we started talking and he heard about my research, he told me a couple of interesting things I decided to include in the thesis.

“We have free health care. However if I need the doctor's attention I need to put money in his pockets, otherwise he won't even bother looking at me.”

“ In Bosnia corruption is everywhere from the simplest thing to the most necessary and unimaginable. What I have noticed is that if you have enough money to corrupt, it doesn't matter which ethnicity you are. Money gets the job done”

“ Man, you will see while you are here that Bosnia is a place of unbelievable things. Ethnicity means so much that we have divided capital city, divided hospital, divided cellphone companies, divided taxi service, divided institutions. Everything is a big big mess and no one cares. Not our politicians, not the Europeans, even the people don't care. It's chaos and stupid. EU has the power to help us, to awaken us, but all they do is tell us you have to do this and that. We know what we have to do but we are incapable of doing it alone. We need help man.”

Interviewee: Hasan

While I was visiting the mosque I ran into the kind imam who agreed to briefly talk to me about the relationship of Islam and terrorism in Bosnia. The two have been closely associated with one another. This is a brief account of what he told me.

“My friend, crime soars when the stomach is hungry, especially when the stomach of your children. Hungry people are dangerous and easily manipulated. There are several radical Islamic cells here in Bosnia that appropriate such situation and propagate hatred and animosity towards

what they believe is the cause of such perennial poverty and discrimination: Western Europe. You can't imagine how easy it is to manipulate a troubled soul with a hungry belly. But we should all inform ourselves and be careful to understand that Islam is not what they tell us in TV-s, or what these radicals say. Islam is a spiritual religion, a peaceful and humble religion. Jihad is not war with the other but war with yourself to combat all the evil like greed, hate etc. to achieve spiritual fulfillment. However it is hard for the true face of Islam to penetrate the poor slums of Bosnia who seek refuge in the radical propaganda. Terrorism will continue here unless all parties start working together, religious institutions and people, politicians, all of them need to work for the development of the society. Our religion is very important to us because of the past but no one wants the past to repeat itself. With the will of God and our determination to the truth and peace, Bosnia will be hopeful again.

Interviewee: Milan

I met Milan in a very informal setting, while traveling by bus from Sarajevo to Belgrade. He was very nice and chatty and we spend the trip talking about political situation in the Western Balkans. He is a student at the Faculty of Law at the University of Belgrade. Below are some of the things he said to me.

“Just think of this. We were in war for what, 10 years, and Europe, US, all of the international actors let the war start, evolve, and only after 10 years they intervened in Kosovo, and mostly because of American self-interest. Europe stood by while we slaughtered one-another. They did not care about us then, they do not now. Why should they. They always thought of us as barbarians, people with no intelligence, who only like to make war and kill one another. I go to European countries and at border control they give me a different look, like I am different and stranger. We will never be Europeans to them. This whole EU family is a big bullshit, if you ask me, just a way to get them more richer and us poorer and helpless. That's what it is.”

I remember asking him who does he blame for the war, even though he was pretty young back then. His reply was: Everyone- from our dirty politicians to the greed of the powerful people who lied to the people, people's naivety, and of course the international's inefficacy or better they not wanting to meddle in our business. They could have stopped all of the tragedies and dramas long before it was too late. They did not. Why? Ask them.

Interviewee: Vuk

Vuk was the war tour guide in Sarajevo. I managed to ask him some simple questions and most of the text is from what he said during the tour.

Q1: Why did you fight in the war? Did you have any other choice?

A1: “I fought because my father was in military” he said. “My best friends were Muslims. We were forced to fight and for that, I will never forgive myself and the politicians who made us fight. I still suffer from the trauma of the war. I have bullet wounds in my leg, but also head

trauma. Things will never be the same for our generation after the war. We are lost. We did not have a choice, it was kill or be killed, the law of the jungle.

Q2: Who do you blame for the war and for the situation now more than 20 years later?

A2: The politics then, the politics now. Bosnia was peaceful place in harmony, working together, living together. But then they decide we Serbs want more, we Muslims fight and like this war started. And our neighbors, Serbia help Serbs, Croatia help Croats, and Muslims are alone in the middle. And Europe pretends to help while does nothing. They are to blame too, they were spectators. They are the bad guys, they have always been. We need more protest, we need more people. We have to fight for our rights in Bosnia, together. No matter if Serb or Bosnian, we need unity but they will not let us have it because they loose power if we are strong.

Q3: Do you think there is hope for Bosnia in the future, maybe as part of the EU?

A3: I really hope so. We have suffered too much. It is time to move on. We have to move on from the past and work for our children's future.

Interviewee: David

David was a member of the Abrasevic Cultural center in Mostar, a local self-dependent NGO, trying to develop ethnic relationships throughout culture and entertainment. As an unemployed youngster, David talked to me with notes of pessimism about the future of Bosnian youth.

Q1: Why do most young people leave Bosnia? What do you think of the future?

A1: Most people are leaving Bosnia and not only young, all ages. There is no future, economy is collapsing, stability with it. My parents tell me before the war, everything was so different and peaceful. People were living happily together, while now they avoid each other at any cost. There is nothing left here, politicians have the money and power for themselves and they keep rotating in their seats, Serbs, Croats, Muslims. The people, we suffer, because there are no jobs, there are no opportunities.

Q2: What about becoming part of the European Union? Do you think that might help change things?

A2: Oh, a lot of people still believe in Europe here. They think that if we are part of it, all of our problems will be solved. That is just a big lie. We have so many problems that we need more than 100 years to fix and all the help we can get. Europe was a dream for many of us, we believed in it for a better future, better economy, more rights, but what we got is jack shit, higher prices, German banks, German supermarkets, more corrupt politicians who suck it on Brussels, it is no better than the war, just now we are fighting for survival in another way.

Q3: So you don't believe in the ideals of the EU? You don't think you can ever be called a European citizen?

A3:For me it doesn't matter what I am called. This is what brought us the war in the first place. The names we are given, Croat, Bosnian, European. This is how they teach us to hate and differentiate. Here in Mostar we have the two ethnicities under one roof school. Croats go in the morning and Bosnians in the afternoon. How crazy is that? We are basically teaching children that we are different, those are not to be trusted or talked to. If these are European ideals, then yes I don't believe in them.