

WHEN THE TROUBLED PAST GOVERNS THE (EUROPEAN) FUTURE: HISTORY, NARRATIVES AND REGIMES OF MEMORY IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Faris Kočan, Iris Ivaniš and Rok Zupančič

1 INTRODUCTION

The history of the Balkan Peninsula is a history of violence and different claims over its territories (Allcock 2000; Bose 2002). Such trajectories were underpinned by the expansion of different religions in these territories (e.g. spread of Islam with the Ottoman Empire) and the intra-religious schisms (e.g. the 11th century schism between the Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches). The 20th century brought profound political changes to the Balkans that echo to date: the demise of the Ottoman Empire in the early 20th century, followed by the Balkan Wars (1912-13), the two World Wars and the Yugoslav era (1945-1992), the latter ending in wars as well (Bougarel 1996; Calic 1995). Inability to resolve many ‘ethnic questions’ until nowadays put an immense strain on the people living in this area – including the present Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH).

The country's most recent armed conflict, the Bosnian war 1992-1995, only deepened ethnic, religious and national divisions in BiH, which are still present nowadays. This is not surprising, as the Dayton Peace Agreement from 1995 (DPA), which effectively ended armed violence (but brought no reconciliation), carved the ethnic divisions of the country in stone and legalized them; namely, the Bosniaks and Bosnian Croats “got” the Federation of BiH (FBiH) (51% of territory), whereas the Bosnian Serbs got Republika Srpska (RS), spanning over 49% of territory (Carmichael 2002; Bieber 2010). By maintaining at least three different streams of exclusive ethno-nationalistic narratives, postulated in portraying ‘the Other’ as an existential threat also within the process of memorialization, the political elites of each ethnic group (nation) have been firmly holding the power in both entities since the end of the war. With the dissatisfaction over politicians growing among people, the lack of socio-economic development and the overall lack of progress, it does not come as a surprise that inter-ethnic tensions have not eased. While the separate narratives had been the point of disagreements for centuries, the politicized state of the country seems to protrude into every aspect of everyday life (Bojičić-Dželilović 2015; Bieber 2010; Zupančič, Kočan and Vuga, 2020).

Similar could be argued also when reflecting on the public opinion on the European integration of BiH, as in 2019 only 58,9% support for the integration in the EU is noted in RS, while in

FBiH 86,5% of people supports such endeavours (European Integration Directorate, 2019). One of the (potential) reasons for such discrepancy between the two BiH's political entities lies in the EU's efforts to reform BiH's constitution after 2005 with an aim to promote a 'more functional state'. The latter inevitably implied to the transferal of (political) competences from two subnational political entities to the state level. By advocating for police reform (Juncos, 2013; 2017) and openly promoting a debate aimed at the eventual changing of the current Constitution of BiH (Muehlman, 2008; Biermann, 2014) during the process leading to the signature of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA), the EU opened a "Pandora's box of a power-sharing system that no one was fully satisfied with but prudent politicians had refrained from contesting" (Biermann, 2014, p. 500).

The main purpose of this chapter is, primarily, to provide detailed historical overview of BiH's critical junctures (historical events) that led to eventual establishment of the three ethnic groups (nations) in BiH, as well as the role of conflicts in shaping the country's identity today. Here, we will discuss the historical evolution of the existing identities in BiH with an emphasis of identity-building efforts until the end of the Second World War (WWII). The latter is especially important for understanding the idea of three separate ethnic identities and their imagining in a way that clash between them is 'inevitable' (e.g. Velikonja, 2003). These processes have thus been monumental during the disintegration of Yugoslavia, as imagining mutually exclusive ethnic identities was one of the overarching conditions that enabled the Bosnian War (1992–1995) in the first place. In the second part of the chapter, we will examine the EU's approach to BiH's troubled past with the goal of discussing the role of the European integration as a mechanism for conflict transformation. Here, we will also briefly reflect on the perception of BiH's citizens towards the EU, drawing from the public opinion polling conducted within the Horizon 2020 project entitled "Strengthening European integration through the analysis of conflict discourses: Revisiting the past, Anticipating the Future".

2 HISTORIC ROOTS OF ETHNIC IDENTITIES IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA UNTIL THE INTERWAR PERIOD

The first traces of history of Bosnia and Herzegovina and its peoples date to the 6th century arrival of South Slavs to the territory. For over eight centuries, religious and ethnic identities were slowly shaping and developing, mixing Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, paganism and other religious denominations. When the Ottoman empire occupied Bosnia in 1463, and

Herzegovina¹ in 1483, the ethnic and religious conundrum of the people living in the Balkans became even more complicated; the start of Islamization was a decisive moment for the people living in what is today considered Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Up until the Ottoman invasion into the Balkans and its overtake of Bosnia in 1463, Bosnia's religious identity "remains too ill-defined to bolster the claim that most of the population was consciously either Croat or Serb" (Lampe, 2000, p. 18). The Ottoman rule in BiH brought positive changes mainly for the Muslim population, as well as some advantages to Catholics. For Catholics, the Ottoman rule allowed Franciscans, a Catholic order, to practise Catholicism, which was crucial for the survival of the Catholic belief. With the expansion of Catholicism through Franciscans' work in BiH, the Franciscans later founded Herzegovina, a Franciscan province in Bosnia, which still exists today.

The Ottoman Empire offered numerous advantages to those who would convert to Islam. These advantages of religious conversion in Bosnia attracted a large portion of Orthodox upland village population and Vlachs² (Lampe, 2000, p. 23), causing the number of people with Muslim faith in Bosnia to grow throughout the 17th century (*ibid.*). On the other hand, the non-converts in Bosnia had been in a much less-desirable position compared to the Islamized population, which only contributed to the appearance of inter-faith (Catholic, Orthodox and Muslim) tensions in BiH.

Most importantly, the Ottomans were crucial for the shaping of new Muslim identity among Bogomils³ (Sancaktar, 2012, p. 2). By necessity, Islamization of Bogomils brought changes to their identity as well, not only in regard to religion. Under the Ottoman rule, the Muslim population of Bosnia received greater privileges than other groups (tax exemptions etc.). With changes in governance structure within the Ottoman empire, many Muslim landowners appointed by the empire used the opportunity to turn lands into their private estates, which

¹ Before becoming Bosnia and Herzegovina, the country's name was solely Bosnia, while Herzegovina was established as an Ottoman *sanjak*. Subsequently, Bosnia's territory extended from the Adriatic coast to the west, to Trebinje to the south, Bijeljina and Srebrenica to the east and Dobor DOBOJ??? on the north. Herzegovina territory consisted of Gornje Podrinje and Hum, which is in the southwestern part of Bosnia and Herzegovina today (Imamović, 2006).

² In this context, Vlachs were small village populations whose lifestyle mainly consisted of "livestock pasturing and seasonal soldiering" (Lampe, 2000, p. 23). For such populations, tax privileges and legal rights that the Muslim converts enjoyed were extremely appealing, which made conversion processes easier.

³ Followers of Bogomilism, a heretic sect of Christianity, which dominated Bulgarian territories in 11th century, and BiH in 12th century (Lampe, 2000).

ultimately damaged the empire, while promoting their private economic, social and even political statuses (Sancaktar, 2012, pp. 2–3).

To prevent this from happening any further, the empire established a centralized government, which took away the power and privileges from landowners and other similar positions in BiH. As a result, in 1831, dissatisfied Muslims gathered in Travnik, as to collectively negotiate with the Ottomans to change the order of the governance (Sancaktar, 2012, p. 3). Upon rejection, Muslims rebelled, led by Kapetan Hüseyin (Husein Gradašćević). The riot grew rapidly, as poor Muslims, Orthodox and Catholics joined in, forming an army named “Zmaj od Bosne (Bosnian Dragon)” (*ibid.*). Ultimately, after multiple attempts to riot against the Ottoman empire, the once mutually beneficial relationship between Muslims and Ottomans was irreversibly broken down in 1832. However, the riots against the Ottomans were not in the 19th century, which brought the so called ‘national awakenings’, isolated to Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁴ With the gradual weakening of the Ottoman empire, Austria-Hungary occupied several Ottoman-held territories, including BiH. The Habsburgs gained control of BiH in 1878 after the Berlin Congress, and officially annexed it from the Ottomans in 1908 (Sancaktar, 2012, p. 3).

The Habsburg rule brought about numerous novelties to Bosnia-Herzegovinian society – agricultural, educational and economic prosperities became a priority under the Habsburg-appointed Joint Minister of Finance in BiH Benjamin Kallay. Even so, his most significant contribution to restructuration of BiH was the notion of a united, Bosnian identity, and elimination of existing Bosniak, Bosnian Serb and Bosnian Croat identities in the country. The rationale behind this idea was that, as elaborated by Sancaktar (2012), “if Bosnian identity and nation is created and Bosnia and Herzegovina is industrialized and modernized, the Habsburg rule can become more strong and influential in Bosnia and Herzegovina” (p. 5). Kallay’s view on the equalization of religion and ethnicity was that it was “oriental backwardness” (Lampe, 2000, p. 67), and his policies on preventing that were primarily focused on the Serbian population (*ibid.*).

For Muslims, Kallay’s leadership brought decline and loss of privileges enjoyed under the Ottoman rule. Subsequently, they migrated to Ottoman-held territories in waves –

⁴ Here, we are talking about two Serbian uprisings, namely: i) First Serbian Uprising (1803–1813); ii) Second Serbian Uprising. Particularly the Second Uprising became a centre of resistance to Ottomans, actively or secretly supporting liberation movements in neighbouring lands, especially in Bosnia and Macedonia. The Serbian-Ottoman conflict culminated in the First Balkan War of 1912.

approximately 300,000 Bosniaks left BiH between 1878 and 1910 (Sancaktar, 2012, p. 4). In addition, strides made in intellectual fields by the Austria-Hungary had little impact on the Muslim population. Even though Muslims were unhappy with their position under the Habsburg rule, they had no “intellectual bourgeoisie” that would take charge of a Muslim national movement against the rule (*ibid.*); “/c/onsequently, the Muslim national movement was led by Muslim *ulema* (clerics) and *begs* (landowners)” (Sancaktar, 2012, p. 5). As a result, these two groups founded the Muslim National Organization (MNO – later Yugoslav Muslim Organization, YMO), which served to be one of the strongest contributions to the establishment of Bosniak identity (*ibid.*).

Under the Austro-Hungarian rule, there have been some attempts to introduce dominant Croatian national attitudes to BiH by Croatian Landesschefs⁵, but ended in failure. With the appointment of Dr. Josip Štadler “as the first Archbishop of Sarajevo” (Imamović, 2006, p. 217), the attempts to ‘Croatianize’ the population of BiH had re-emerged, setting strong foundations for the evolution of Croatian nationalism in BiH (*ibid.*). In contrast, the Habsburg empire’s push for the establishment of Catholic order largely disadvantaged the Orthodox Serbs. Under Benjamin Kallay’s successor, Istvan Burian, the Bosnian Serbs merged their three factions into a Serbian National Organization (SNO) in 1907, which primarily fought for education autonomy in Bosnia, of which Bosnian Serbs were stripped while Kallay was in power (Lampe, 2000, p. 82). Nevertheless, Serbian opposition to Austria-Hungary constantly grew, as did Serbian nationalism that quickly spread among Serbs within and outside Serbia (*ibid.*).

Already in the early 1900s, the “anti-Vienna ideas” and the unification of the South Slav countries into one entity strengthened, “based largely on the idea of Serbo-Croatian national unitarianism” (Imamović, 2006, p. 258). However, in a post-Balkan wars environment, the ambitions for a unified state were different for each group. The “anti-Vienna mentality” among Serbs culminated in 1914, when Gavrilo Princip⁶ assassinated the Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand during his visit to Sarajevo. This series of events, and the World War 1 that followed,

⁵ Known as *valija* during the Ottoman rule, Landesschef was a governor of a province in Bosnia under the Austro-Hungarian rule.

⁶ Princip was a member of a nationalist Serb youth organization Mlada Bosna (Young Bosnia). Princip’s act is, among most Serbs, still considered one of the greatest events in history of the Serbian nation, as it is perceived as a liberating act from the oppressing Habsburg regime.

put on hold the attempts to resolve “the Yugoslav question”, which had become a source of strong disagreements among Croats, Serbs, and Slovenes (*ibid.*).

By the end of the WWI, the breakup of Austria-Hungary became inevitable, where the Balkan states wanted either independence or broader autonomy⁷ within Austria-Hungary. Subsequently, in October 1918, the National Council of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs (SHS National Council) had been established as a representative body of the Yugoslav peoples (Imamović, 2006, p. 267). The same month, independent State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs was founded. However, during the negotiations on further unification, Serbian leadership managed to impose hegemony in the newly established state, which then became the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (*ibid.*). Certainly, such organization worked to advantage of all Serbs, including those in BiH. Moreover, with King Aleksandar Karađorđević’s establishment of the so called “January 6 dictatorship” in 1929,⁸ BiH was divided into four banates (autonomous provinces), each of which matched with the ethnic majorities living there (*ibid.*). The alleged motive of the king for such a radical move was his belief that the new measures are necessary to avoid the civil war in the country. However, his motives were founded on real possibilities that the war might happen; the animosities between Croats and Serbs have been growing since the inception of the new state in 1918, culminating in 1928 with the assassination of the Croatian People's Peasant Party’s leader Stjepan Radić, who was shot in the parliament by Puniša Račić, a member of People's Radical Party from Montenegro. These antagonisms led Aleksandar I. believing that abolishing the party-political system will increase the identification of people as Yugoslavs rather than as Serbs, Croats, Slovenes etc.

With an increasing number of Muslims seeking protection and safe haven from the oppressing policies in the Kingdom, the aforementioned Yugoslav Muslim Organisation (YNO) grew into “a Muslim mass party containing peasants, craftsmen, traders, clerics and intellectuals in the 1920s. This party played very vital role in protection and development of Muslim national identity until 1941 when it was banned by the Independent State of Croatia” (Sancaktar, 2012,

⁷ Here, we should mention Majniška Declaration (*Majniška deklaracija*), with which the leader of the Yugoslav club Anton Korošec aimed at unification of South Slavs into an autonomous unit within the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Here, we should also mention that certain parts where South Slavs lived have never been a part of the Austria-Hungary, such as contemporary North Macedonia, contemporary Montenegro from Boka Kotorska inwards and the majority part of Serbia with the exception of Vojvodina.

⁸ On January 6, 1929, King Aleksandar Karađorđević abolished the Constitution of the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, hence abolishing the parliament, and renaming the state to Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Coincidentally, he put a Law on Royal Rule and the Supreme Administration of State in power. This law made the Kingdom a hereditary monarchy, with, as argued by Imamović (2006, p. 302, the goal to keep it under Serbian control for as long as possible.

p. 7). Immense dissatisfaction within the Kingdom was not only present among the Muslims, but among other peoples of SHS. The two most crucial movements for the destiny of King Aleksandar's rule were the Ustasha movement in Croatia, and the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (VMRO) (Imamović, 2006, p. 321). These two organizations perceived the King, and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia as a whole, the greatest threat to the Croatian and Macedonian nation, respectively. Thus, Dr. Ante Pavelić, the founder of the Ustasha movement, and Vanče Mihajlov, leader of the VMRO, worked very closely on ending King Aleksandar's totalitarian regime and they gained plenty of support in fascist Italy and Hungary for the plans against King Aleksandar (Terzić, 1982, p. 170). Finally, in October 1934, the member of VMRO Vlado Chernozemski, in a close cooperation with the Ustasha movement, assassinated the King in Marseille. Unsurprisingly, the VMRO and the Ustasha leadership were provided with safe haven in the fascist Italy (Terzić, 1982, p. 171; Imamović, 2006, p. 321).

In the aftermath of King Aleksandar's assassination, ethnic and political conflicts in BiH did not cease. While Serbian ambitions for Serbian dominance in the Balkans were growing, Croatian pursuit to resolve 'the Croatian question' (Imamović, 2006, p. 330) emerged as an unavoidable political attempt in BiH. When Croatians Dr. Vlatko Maček and Prime Minister Dragiša Cvetković signed an agreement to establish a Croatian Banate in BiH (*ibid.*), the Serbs immediately followed suit by establishing a Serb Banate under the name of "Srpska zemlja" (*eng.* Serb land)" (Imamović, 2012, p. 331). Such political disorder and clash of interests prolonged the problems within the Yugoslav state; however, this had been interrupted by the beginning of WWII. At that time, with the establishment of the puppet fascist Independent State of Croatia (*Nezavisna država Hrvatska*, NDH), the hopes of the Ustasha leadership, supported by Hitler and Mussolini, that Croatians will finally start living in their own country rose.

3 INTER-ETHNIC AND IDENTITY-RELATED STRUGGLES IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA DURING AND AFTER THE WWII

Fighting within the territory of BiH during the WWII – from the Nazi occupation of Yugoslavia in 1941 to their defeat in 1945 – was extremely multifaceted, with many forces and the oscillation of unfaithful alliances (Palmberger, 2016, p. 53). The three key actors – Chetniks (*četnici*), Ustashe (*ustaše*) and the Partisans (*partizani*) – cannot be clearly distinguished along the national lines, even though there exists a common perception of understanding that Serbs

belonged to the Chetniks and Croats to the Ustasha movement (Lampe, 1996, p. 13), which is factually wrong; the *intra*-ethnic cleavages were sometimes even harsher than the animosity vis-à-vis the foreign occupiers.⁹

Even though the centre of the NDH, led by Pavelić, was in Zagreb, the NDH incorporated the whole of BiH (Hoare, 2019).¹⁰ The latter was also subjected to the aggressive activities against Serbs rather than the Muslim population, which was then by the Ustasha portrayed as quasi-Croat, or Islamized Croats (Palmberger, 2016).¹¹ The above-mentioned activities began in June 1941 in Mostar, when hundreds of Serbs were shot and their bodies thrown into the Neretva River. Afterwards, the inter-communal violence followed in many regions of BiH with the ethnically-mixed population (Bergholz, 2016), which led Serbs to join either the Chetnik movement led by Draža Mihajlović or the Partisan movement led by Josip Broz Tito to fight the Ustasha movement. The Chetnik response, as noted by Palmberger (2016, p. 56), was especially ruthless in Herzegovina, where they killed Croat and Muslim residents whose assent in the NDH rule they considered as collaboration. And *vice versa*: in many cases, where the opportunity arose, many Muslims and Croats living in BiH eagerly became the followers of the Ustasha ideology – often for very banal reasons, such as for ‘resolving’ disputes with neighbours – and were, in the name of NDH, killing Serbs unscrupulously (Bergholz, 2016).

Even though the majority of literature supports the thesis that Muslims in general were not prone towards the NDH regime, there are some authors like Tomasevich (2001, p. 491) who argue that there were some pro-Croat sentiments present in the Muslim population, and that sizable number of them joined the Ustasha movement.¹² However, as Wilson (1979) and

⁹ This was also confirmed by Malcolm (2002, p. 174), who argued that 'the history of the Second World War in Yugoslavia is the story of many wars piled one on top of another, where there was the initial war conducted by Germany and Italy, accompanied by the war of the Axis occupiers against Yugoslav resistance and at least two civil wars (Ustasha against the Serb population of Croatia and Bosnia, and Četniks against the Communist Partisans).

¹⁰ The Ustasha movement, which was relatively unknown to the population before the war, received strong support from the local Catholic Church (Perica, 2002). Palmberger (2016, p. 53) argued that when the NDH merged into BiH, it attempted to "from its territory the communists, Serbs who refused to convert into Orthodox Croats, the Jews, and Roma people". Bosnian Muslims were then called 'Muslim Croats' (Perica, 2002, p. 22).

¹¹ Here, we should also mention that the Croat claim that the Muslims were of Croat and Catholic or Bogomil origin was countered by Serb, arguing that the Muslim population was in fact Serb. This dynamic is crucial, as this was an active narrative of both ethnic groups since the mid-19th century in order to claim the territory of BiH (Cohen and Riesman, 1996; Malcolm, 2002; Palmberger, 2016).

¹² Here we can also mention that in April 1943, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem Husseini, a collaborator with Hitler for the sake of exterminating Jews, came to Sarajevo, where he spoke with Bosnian Muslims leaders Uzeiraga Hadžihasanović and hadži-Mujaga Merhemić, in order to form two Nazi SS Divisions (Munoz, 1991). The Handžar division was created on Februar 1943 and was the third largest SS division during the war (Schechtman, 1965, p. 704; Bougarel, 1996).

Schmider (2002) argue, more and more Muslims eventually resisted the NDH regime and joined the Partisans, who were fighting for a socialist Yugoslavia (Schöpflin, 1993). Furthermore, they projected a new Yugoslav federation of six republics and two provinces, where BiH was defined as one of the six republics of the three equal nations: Muslims, Croats and Serbs (Bougarel, 1996, p. 92).¹³ This vision was accomplished in 1945, when the Nazi-fascist occupiers had been defeated, and the second Yugoslavia under Tito was established, but with a difficult legacy. Allcock (2000, p. 270) and Bose (2002) showed that losses, which were experienced on all sides, were particularly high among Muslims (75.000 or 8.1% of total population – highest loss suffered by any people in Yugoslavia except Jews), and more Yugoslavs were killed by other Yugoslavs than by the occupying forces. This forced Josip Broz Tito, who became the central figure of the second Yugoslavia, to construct a myth around the Yugoslavian people as brave socialist Partisan fighters who defeated evil fascists (Jäger, 2001).

This image of the heroic Yugoslavs, which was later incorporated into schoolbooks, music, and movies¹⁴, should be understood as an act of memory politics that attempted to stop any further antagonisms between the national groups with an ultimate goal of creating a single identity in a unified state through a solitary and undisputed memory (Crampton, 1997; Djokić, 2003). An ideology, known as ‘Brotherhood and unity’, was thus installed in order to encourage people to live peacefully together after the brutalities of WWII, even though there were atrocities committed during Tito’s period of rule that were subjected to public discussion after his death (Allcock, 2000; Bet-El, 2002). The discussions regarding detention camps like Goli Otok¹⁵ or massacres during the WWII were primarily discussed from a nationalist stance with an aim of supporting the claim for the victimisation of one’s group – Serb, Croat or Muslim – rather than criticising socialism under Tito (Hayden, 1994; Price, 2002; Gilbert, 2006; Karge, 2009). It should also be noted that the ideology of brotherhood and unity became an ever-important concept also in historical remembrance when trying to create a remembrance on federal (Yugoslav) level. However, as Sahović and Zulumović (2015, p. 214) highlight, the memorial spaces such as the Kozara memorial complex and Kozara monument were never understood as a part of Yugoslav remembrance, but as local (Bosnian and Herzegovinian) one.

¹³ This was envisaged at the first session of the National Antifascist Council of National Liberation of Bosnia and Herzegovina on 25 November 1943 in Jajce.

¹⁴ Here, we can expose Raid on Drvar (Desant na Drvar), The Battle of Neretva (Bitka na Neretvi), Written Off (Otpisani), and Post-funeral reception (Sedmina).

¹⁵ As showed by REEEC (2017), by 1980 (when Josip Broz Tito died), there ”were dozens” of novels that have described Goli otok figuratively, signaling the crumbling of Tito's persona and system. However, more open discussions about Goli otok occurred after the death of Tito.

Furthermore, as Raif Dizdrapević, former Bosnian Communist Party leader, argued, framing the Kozara battle within federal remembrance paradigm would be "counter-productive" as a "large number of major WWII events happened in the territory of BiH" (*ibid.*). Another important indicator for perceiving Kozara as a place of Bosnian rather than federal historical importance is the remembrance of the victims, as they were not referred to simply as Bosnian (as they would be on the federal level), but within ethnic categories (i.e., Muslim, Serb and Croat) in official commemorating ceremonies (*ibid.*).

Tito's period of rule, which is in general divided into two parts (repressive and relatively liberal), coincided with a time of economic modernization and reforms (1965), was crucial for BiH, as this change went hand in hand with the allocation of leading positions from the old Serb elite to the young generation involving also of Muslims and Croats (Lovrenović, 1999, p. 170). The idea of self-management or power transfer, which was conceptualized as 'pluralist socialism', was also a period when Tito realized that he could no longer treat intergroup conflicts as taboo, as argued by Cohen (1995, p. 29). In 1974, when Tito awarded the constituent Republics more autonomy and power, he indirectly rejected the concept of Yugoslav nationality as the people were given more freedom to identify themselves with a particular nation (Denich, 1993). This was for example seen in official purposes such as census, where people had to choose one of the proposed national categories, and the new way of promoting the national identity was to promote the identity of smaller groups, including Muslims (*ibid.*).¹⁶ Finally, Allock (2000, p. 277) argued that initial prospects for a Yugoslav identity did not materialise in BiH due to the commitment and embeddedness of all institutions below the state to national affiliation. Here, we should also mention that not only did the Yugoslav identity "fail" to materialise in BiH, but also the idea of ethnic intermarriage that would derive from such identity-building efforts. Smits (2014, n.p.) showed that more than 90% of all three ethnic groups (Muslims, Croats and Serbs) have been married within their own group.

3.1. HOW THE INSTRUMENTALISATION OF THE PAST LED TO THE BOSNIAN WAR (1992 – 1995)

In the academic literature, there is a widely shared view that the break-up of Yugoslavia was caused 'from above' by nationalistic forces led by political elites rather than as an

¹⁶ For a good overview regarding the question of identification and supra-nationality, see Donia and Fine (1994), Botev and Wagner (1993), Eriksen (1998), Lovrenović (1999) and Žepić (2006).

extemporaneous process emerging ‘from below’ (Pantic, 2002; Gingrich, 2002; Gagnon, 2004).¹⁷ In order to understand the nationalism ‘from above’, we should move back to the period between 1967 and 1972, when the so-called ‘Croatian Spring’ happened. The idea behind the movement was that Croatia would reach Western Europe’s level of progress and prosperity only without the rest of Yugoslavia (Sells, 1996). The failure of the movement, however, led to the seizure of the ‘national Croat agenda’ by the Roman Catholic Church (Perica, 2002). The latter started it by reintroducing the cult of the Virgin Mary as the major national and religious symbol of the Catholic Croatia, and was even referred as the “Queen of the Croats (Perica, 2002, p. 109). This ethnic mobilization and religious awakening was further utilized in 1981, when six children from Western Herzegovina stated that the Virgin Mary appeared.¹⁸ The cult of the Virgin Mary and the mass excursions to Medjugorje worsened the already bad relationship between the Catholic priesthood and the Orthodox as well as Muslim representatives in BiH, as the Medjugorje movement was perceived as a fall-back into Ustashism (Medjugorje was the headquarters of the Ustasha during WWII) (Palmberger, 2016, p. 67). Unlike their Christian colleagues (Bosnian Serbs and Croats), the Muslim priests did not position themselves as the protectors of the identity to the same extent and did not systematically worship medieval native rulers, saints, territory and (ethnic) myths (Perica, 2002, p. 74; Palmberger, 2016, p. 68).

In the 1980s, however, this has changed, as nationalists found support among some anti-communist Muslim clerics who sympathised with Alija Izetbegović’s religious nationalism (Hoppe, 1998; Velikonja, 2003).¹⁹ This was also the time of the ‘great discussions’ regarding the identities in BiH when the theory of common descent and a consistent Bosniak history was promoted. Bringa (1995) argued that Bosnian intellectuals revived the historical category Bosniak (Bošnjak) to include all three categories, but they failed as Serb and Croat national identifications in BiH have become omnipotent (p. 35). This term then became a synonym for Bosnian Muslim, which insinuates the attempt by Bosnian Muslims to determine a more evident historical link to both the state and the territory of BiH (*ibid.*). The national discourses,

¹⁷ This can be further argued by the fact that around 10.000 citizens participated in a peace march in Mostar on 6 March 1992 (Calic, 1995; Meier and Ramet, 1999).

¹⁸ The apparitions of the Virgin Mary, as argued by Perica (2002, p. 110), “should be understood in the context of the struggle of the Catholic Church with communism, the anti-communist backlash after Tito’s death, and the deep economic crisis accompanied with the growing ethno-political tensions”.

¹⁹ Alija Izetbegović was well-known figure on the political landscape already in the 1970s when he wrote the Islamic Declaration: A Program for the Islamization of Muslims and Muslim Peoples!. In 1983, Izetbegović was arrested and sentenced to 14 years in prison (of which he served 5 years) because of his declaration (Meier and Ramet, 1999).

which became increasingly antagonistic, led to the proclamation by Bosnian Serbs and Croats that the Muslim population actually belongs to them, but they converted to Islam, arguing that the Bosniak identity is invented (Ivanov, 1996). Despite the official recognition of the Muslim population as the third nation in BiH during the Second Yugoslavia, Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats had continuously rejected the idea of the third nation, which would threaten their ethnic dominance and control in BiH (Sancaktar, 2012, p. 9). Thus, the Bosniak name and identity has not gained any acceptance until the dissolution of the socialist regime – up until then, the Muslim population was considered as “Islamized Serbs” by the Serbian population of BiH, or “Islamized Croats” by the Bosnian Croats (*ibid*). Only because of the socialist regime, the Muslim nation had a certain level of protection against the other two ethnicities in BiH, which assisted them in strengthening their identity and presence as the third nation (*ibid.*). But, only in 1994, with the Constitution of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH), the name *Bosniak* was introduced as one of the constituent peoples in BiH (Kalčić, 2005). Nevertheless, when the frictions intensified in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the Bosniaks were in a unique position, which led Calic (1995) to emphasize that Bosniaks did not have an alternative ‘mother country’ like (Bosnian) Serbs and (Bosnian) Croats, establishing the notion that Bosniak collective identity postulated on a shared environment, cultural practices and common experiences (p. 158). This was not the case of the collective identities of (Bosnian) Croats and Serbs, who focused on shared blood and a myth of common origins (Bringa, 1995, p. 30; Calic, 1995, p. 159; Palmberger, 2016; p. 69).

3.2.REWRITING HISTORY AND POSTWAR MEMORIALIZATION PROCESS

As the regime in BiH changed after the dissolution of Yugoslavia and Bosnian war, there were a number of nationalist responses and strategies to make a profoundly changes in the field of memory politics in at least three ways (Dragičević Šešić, 2011, p. 31–46). First, BiH’s social landscape was subject to the destruction of the common socialist past and pre-war collective memory by appropriating the antifascist struggle to be more in line with the prevailing ethno-national ideologies of three constituent nations (Sokol, 2014, p. 106). Second, BiH was subject to the demolition of all the traces of non-Bosniak, non-Serb or non-Croat elements on ethnically cleansed territories, which were before the war ethnically mixed (Riedlmayer, 2007, p. 107). Third, BiH was subject to the construction of a new memory, or rather three ‘constituent’ memories, based on mutually exclusive and nationalist Bosniak, (Bosnian) Serb and Croat narratives of the last war (Sokol, 2014, p. 107).

Within this nation-building project, the last war is perceived as a ‘foundational myth’, as argued by Sokol (2014), because it twisted and reinterpreted old myths and “usable pasts” (p. 108). The above-mentioned foundational myth draws from the stories of distant historical past, injustices from the WWII and the experience of the Bosnian war, which was crucial for the consolidation of post-war identities and stabilization of new regimes (Dragičević Šešić, 2011, p. 33).²⁰ The reason behind the foundation of three new post-war narratives lies in the fact that the war ended without winning and losing sides. Furthermore, there was no winning side to impose an official narrative or memory, as there was in Croatia. Kostić (2012, p. 655) emphasized that the lack of clear winners and losers is the core reason why Bosniaks, Bosnian Serbs and Croats employ the argument of “our people were fighting a defensive war”, which led to an uncoordinated approach to memorialization where the majority group in one local community has the freedom to commemorate only their victims (Irwin and Šarić, 2010, n.p.).

The culture of neglecting the memories of the ‘Others’, who are often labelled as the minority group in respective local communities, is deeply embedded in the culture of victimhood in BiH, whereby ‘everybody wants to be a victim’ (Tepić, 2012, p. 22).²¹ Such victimhood, at the level of ethnic group, denotes denial of the Other, as all three constituent ethno-national narratives²² are based on the removal of any (collective) guilt by evading being marked as an aggressor, thus posing themselves as the ones who were on the ‘right’ side (*ibid.*).²³ This is further institutionalized and reproduced through the school curriculum on the subnational level (RS

²⁰ The consolidation of post-war memories and stabilization of new regimes was done *via* changes in urban spaces, e.g. by giving streets and squares new, more ‘ethnically important’ names, by erecting new mosques, churches, monuments and memorial plaques) (Dragičević Šešić, 2011; Sokol, 2014).

²¹ One well-known case of neglecting the memory is the Omarska mine near Prijedor, where the surviving inmates of the Omarska concentration camp are still waiting for the construction of a memorial centre and the exhumation of missing persons (Sokol, 2014, p. 109). We should mention that the memorial plaque was first placed in August 2019 by Serbs from Prijedor who live in Belgrade (Dedić, 2019). It says "Never again, Omarska 1992. Neighbours" (*ibid.*). Memorial plaques are set up to assure the remembrance of between five and six thousand detainees that had passed through the Omarska concentration camp between 25 May and 21 August 1992, of which 700 Omarska detainees ended up being murdered. The plaque is waiting to be legalized as it was erected without the approval of local authorities and Mittal, the company that operates on this land and declared itself incompetent to issue the permit.

²² These three ethno-national narratives can be defined as the Bosniak-Bosnian identity dilemma, the Serb Liberation War and the Croat Homeland War (Sokol, 2014, p. 111–117).

²³ The removal of any (collective) guilt can also be traced on the level of the adopted state (BiH) laws that address issue of memorialization. There are only two, namely: a) Law on Missing Persons (*Zakon o nestalim osobama*) and Law on Criteria for School Names and Symbols (*Kriteriji za školske nazive i simbole*) (Sokol, 2014, p. 109). While Law on Missing Persons gives the families of missing persons or their associations the right to request that locations of burial and exhumations, individual or joint, to be marked, the Law on Criteria for School Names and Symbols prescribes that eligible school symbols are war memorial plaques with the names of those who were killed, the year of birth and the year of suffering and do not contain interpretation of the war (alongside with offensive and unacceptable messages) (Sokol, 2014, p. 109). The analysis from 2008 has showed that this was not respected by about 27% of the total schools (556), which had disputed symbols that were mostly related to the memorials to fallen soldiers from the last Bosnian war (*ibid.*).

and FBiH) as the war of the 1990s is thought in a way that it downplays or even ignores victims from other ethnic groups. Obrenović (2020) showed – by analysing history textbooks used for 14-15 year-olds in BiH's two entities – that textbooks reflect on the major events and personalities of the Bosnian war (e.g. siege of Sarajevo, ethnic cleansing, the Srebrenica genocide and the roles of Bosnian Serb political and military leaders) in a diametrically opposite way. To give an example, in RS, the genocide of Srebrenica is not mentioned under this name in textbook, and the first president of Republika Srpska Radovan Karadžić, who was jailed for life by the ICTY for genocide and other wartime crimes, is described as "psychiatrist, poet and politician" (*ibid.*).

Even though that most of the cantons of the FBiH follow a recommendation adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe to exclude the war of 1992–1995 from the schools' curriculums, this does not mean that textbooks do not deal with the recent war at all. They do in different ways, as argued by Palmberger (2016, p. 100). It is up to teachers, who find a great range of possibilities in what and what not to teach their pupils (OSCE, 2007). As Borneman stated (1992, p. 42), historians are granted exceptional authority in speaking of the past, and in BiH, historians are the spokespeople of their respective nations. They are central actors in providing verification of the nation's legitimate existence, which led Sekulić (1999, p. 283) to label them as 'ethno intellectuals', or Donia (2000, p. 358) calling them 'national historians'. This was further established in a work of Palmberger (2016) who even attended lectures at two universities in Mostar (Croat-dominated *Sveučilište u Mostaru* and Bosniak-dominated *Univerzitet 'Džemal Bijedić' u Mostaru*). She has demonstrated that little attention was paid to the atrocities committed by one's own national group or to the atrocities experienced by others, while the victimization of one's own group took centre place (Palmberger, 2016, p. 114). While Bosniaks located their victimhood first and foremost in the latest Bosnian war and in the WWII period, the Croats located the victimhood first and foremost in the time of Tito's Yugoslavia, the 1992–1995 and the post-war period (*ibid.*). Bosnian Serbs were presented as the initiators of the Bosnian war both by Bosniaks and Bosnian Croats (*ibid.*). In the Bosnian narrative (Alićehajić, 2004), Bosnian Croats and Serbs are perceived as quislings who have no respect for the multi-ethnic nature of BiH. As a state, in which Bosniaks as a majority would enjoy a privileged status, BiH is thus strongly opposed by many representatives Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats, who perceive a multinational and centralised state with the capital in Sarajevo as a threat to their existence and rights (Torsti, 2003). Contrary to the Bosniak and Bosnian Croat narrative, the Bosnian Serb historical

imaginary and discourse around the Bosnian war, labelled as the Defence-Patriotic War (*Odbrambeno-otadžbinski rat*), are portrayed as a war for the survival of the Serb nation in BiH (Ljubojević et al 2012, p. 74; Kolstø and Jelovica, 2014, p. 242).

Among historians, a central discursive approach was the linking of the recent with the more distant past, even if the distant past was not officially the object of study (Dimou, 2007, p. 131). Even though the historiographies of Bosniak, Bosnian Serb and Croat historians can hardly be more opposing, their strategies are similar in many ways. They are all linking different historical periods in order to achieve a coherent national narrative that serves present political purposes while the Bosnian war in 1992–1995 into the meta-narrative, even if it is not an explicit subject of discussion (not included everywhere in curricula) for the nation's respective future (French, 2012, p. 346). Here, we should also mention an observation by Palmberger (2016, p. 121), who noted that Bosniak- and the Croat-dominated universities claim authority and objectivity over history in a way that the historians were giving direct instructions to the students on how both local and national history should be understood. This is possible since history textbooks in BiH are often written in an encyclopaedic style (listing historical 'facts') that discourage the students to critically reflect the content of the textbooks (Stradling, 2001; 2005; Palmberger, 2016).

4 FROM PROGRESS TO STAGNATION: THE PROSPECT OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION FOR CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

4.1. FIRST PHASE: THE WAR IN BIH (1992-1995)

The first identified phase (1992–1995) was marked with both the declaration of BiH's independence from Yugoslavia in 1992, followed by the war, which ended in late 1995. Various endogenous and exogenous actors were expecting that the EU would (re)act in the war, but its efforts to create a common policy towards the war-torn BiH was hampered by "the intergovernmental nature" of the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), which in practice meant the lack of any substantial common policy towards BiH (Dover, 2005). The limited role of the EU during the Bosnian war could also be observed when the Dayton Peace Agreement (DPA) was signed in 1995, as the EU's representative was 'just' a co-chairman along with the First Deputy Foreign Minister of Russian Federation. This left many, including

the interviewees in our project, with the perception of the US as the main actor, who “brought” peace to BiH, and with the EU as an actor, who only observed the war as a by-stander. However, the DPA, signed in the US in 1995, laid down conditions for international involvement in BiH, including the platform for the EU’s post-war efforts in years to come.

4.2. SECOND PHASE: THE INCREASED ROLE OF THE EU IN BIH IN THE POST-WAR PERIOD (1995-2008)

The second identified phase (1995–2008) brought significant changes for the role of the EU in BiH and could be regarded as perhaps the most active period for the EU. The EU became, alongside with the Office of the High Representative (OHR),²⁴ the main external actor in BiH and replaced the US in that regard. Furthermore, this is the period when BiH started negotiating for the signing the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) after the Thessaloniki Declaration in 2003, when BiH received unequivocally affirmation of its EU future. The EU’s post-conflict efforts, which should be understood through the initiatives striving for the successful implementation of the Dayton Agreement while at the same time pursuing “the Euro-Atlantic integration” of BiH, can in general be divided into three broader set of activities : 1) constitutional reforms; 2) police reform; 3) bringing war-crime indictees to the courts (Arvanitopoulos and Tzifakis, 2008; Rangelov and Theros, 2009; Perry, 2015; Juncos, 2017; Zdeb, 2017). When talking about the constitutional reforms, the role of the EU was at least two-fold. Firstly, by advocating for the reforms in order to strengthen the central government, the EU pursued the *institutional and administrative dimension* in order to reduce the visibility of the division into political entities along ethnic lines. Secondly, by advocating for the military and intelligence reforms, the EU pursued the *security dimension* in order to achieve sustainable peace (Padurariu, 2014; Kudlenko, 2017; Juncos, 2017).

One can argue that the police reform was the main priority of the EU, as the European Commission considered the reform as one of the last remaining obstacles for launching the negotiations over SAA (European Parliament, 2005). The limited outcome of the reform could be ascribed to the unpreparedness of the Republika Srpska (RS) – one of the two entities in

²⁴ The Dayton Agreement established the OHR to oversee its implementation. Furthermore, the OHR received wide-ranging powers to impose decisions («Bonn powers») in cases where the authorities are unable to agree, or where political and economic interests are considered to be at stake. It is important to mention that OHR had dismissed a total of 119 officials, issued 757 decisions and imposed 286 law until 2005 (Majstorović and Vučković, 2016).

BiH – to integrate its police structures with those of the Federation of BiH and District Brčko into one centralised police force. It is also important to note that at that time, all the EU’s ‘second pillar’ instruments of both CFSP and European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), were employed in BiH, namely: EU Special Representative, EU Monitoring Mission, EU Police Mission and the EU peacekeeping force EUFOR (Kronenberger and Wouters, 2004; Dover, 2005; Juncos, 2013).

Finally, the most important EU efforts in addressing the troubled past of BiH postulate in its efforts to bring those accused of war crimes to justice after 1995. It took nine years (until 2005) for RS to start handing over war-crime indictees to the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). However, the most wanted indictees, Radovan Karadžić and Ratko Mladić, remained at large for a long period of heavy international presence in BiH (2008 and 2011, respectively). The most positive development in the field of war crimes was perhaps the restructuring of judicial system of BiH, when the War Crimes Chamber of the State Court and the Special Department for War Crimes in the Bosnian Prosecutor’s Office were opened (Meernik and Barron 2018). In the same year, the European Parliament also adopted its first Declaration on Srebrenica, which were meant to serve as a pillar of reconciliation, but rather further entrenched the positions of ethno-political parties (Milošević and Touquet 2018).²⁵

4.3. THIRD PHASE: FROM THE SIGNATURE OF THE STABILIZATION AND ASSOCIATION AGREEMENT WITH THE EU UNTIL TODAY (2008-)

The third period, identified for the purpose of disentangling the EU’s approach to the troubled past of BiH, begins in 2008 with signature of the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) between the EU and BiH, which can be regarded as one of the most important steps in the process of BiH’s challenging integration into the EU. However, regardless of this success for BiH, the period between 2008 and 2016, when BiH finally filed its EU membership application, can be understood as ‘a period of regression’.

The EU’s efforts, which strived towards the reforms to create ‘a more functional state’, were met by resistance by the political authorities in Republika Srpska. The EU approach was risky as it created the narrative of ‘cutting back the Bosnian Serbs and Croats while empowering

²⁵ The European Parliament adopted three different declarations on Srebrenica from 2015 until 2015 (Milošević and Touquet 2018).

Bosniaks' (Noutcheva, 2012); however, it should be added that it is difficult to say how the EU could have approached this problem more efficiently. Opting for constitutional reforms – an example of this could be the Prud and Butmir Processes²⁶ (Zdeb, 2017) – opened the 'Pandora's box' of a power-sharing system that no one was fully satisfied with but political elites refrained from contesting it (Biermann, 2014). An important indicator of that was the secessionist rhetoric of Bosnian Serb Milorad Dodik, then the Prime Minister of the RS, who have started issuing statements that Republika Srpska would declare independence from BiH (Mušinić, 2015)²⁷.

The EU's endeavours did not end here as the EU has argued on many occasions that the SAA would not enter into force unless the Dayton constitution was revised according to a European Court of Human Rights Sejdić-Finci²⁸ ruling in 2009, which called for electoral reform of the tripartite Presidency of BiH and the House of Peoples as they were reserved only for ethnic Bosniaks, Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats (Biermann, 2014, p. 502). However, coercion by imposition by the EU was scaled down and the EU's footprint in BiH significantly decreased; for example, the size of EUFOR troops, was downsized from 7000 troops in 2004 to 2000 troops in 2010, followed by the termination of the EU Police Mission in BiH two years later (2012) (Palm, 2017). Here, it is also important to note the EU's shift from security and socio-political to economic initiatives, as the only visible EU efforts during this period were: a) visa liberalisation in 2008/2010²⁹; b) the introduction of EU's Economic Reform Programme and Competitiveness and Growth Programme 2014/2015.³⁰ Finally, this "period of regression", which was marked with Milorad Dodik's resistance towards the EU³¹, has reached its peak in

²⁶ Prud and Butmir Processes were two informal attempts to create an agreement on the institutional reforms in order to implement key changes and put an end to the dysfunctional power-sharing institutional arrangement that was installed by the DPA (Zdeb, 2017).

²⁷ Between 2009–2015, Milorad Dodik threatened with the eventual referendum on the independence of Republika Srpska more than 30 times (Mušinić, 2015).

²⁸ The plaintiffs in this law suit were two citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Dervo Sejdić and Jakob Finci, who are of Roma and Jewish ethnicity, and could not as such stand for the elections as candidates.

²⁹ In January 2008, the EU concluded visa facilitation agreements with all the Southeast European countries. However, in July 2009, the EU announced that the citizens of BiH would not enjoy a visa-free travel due to lack of reform progress (Biermann, 2014, p. 502). The EU conditions were met in October 2010 and BiH was granted visa liberalisation.

³⁰ It is important to mention that this initiatives were exercised in the midst of the protests in Tuzla, where the non-ethnic momentum occurred as the protesters demanded the "social justice" (Puljek-Shank and Fritsch, 2018).

³¹ Anti-EU feelings are not only present in RS via discursive acts by local political elite, but are also present within the mnemonical structures that are institutionalised through monuments. A good example of this is the ICAR Canned Beef Monument in Sarajevo with the following inscription on the plinth. "Monument to the International Community by the grateful citizens of Sarajevo". This monument is installed in order to "commemorate" the barely-edible canned food (some left over from the Vietnam War and over 20 years expired, some consisting of pork for half-Muslim country, and in popular legend refused by dogs and cats) (Charles, 2011).

2016, when Republika Srpska held unconstitutional referendum on the National Day of RS. This action violated the Dayton Agreement and caused strong reactions by the EU officials (Rettman, 2017); not surprisingly, given the fact that the calls for not deepening the ethnic strife were not heard by certain politicians.

Such trajectories are still vivid in BiH's socio-political landscape today, as reflected in the Working Paper prepared by Martin, Paradés and Dacosta (2020) within the Horizon 2020 project entitled "Strengthening European integration through the analysis of conflict discourses: Revisiting the past, Anticipating the Future". For example, the public opinion survey that was conducted in 2020 with 922 respondents from BiH showed that the EU's role in overcoming the conflicts of the past is perceived more or less negative (Martin, Paradés and Dacosta, 2020, p. 12). However, it should be noted that people in BiH support the idea that the EU should help the victims of the conflict (*ibid.*). Finally, it should be noted that those who sympathize with one of the sides of the conflict (e.g. Bosniaks, Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats) in general better evaluate (potential) EU membership and are more likely to identify the EU with the concept of 'peace' than those who sympathies with "all sides" (Martin, Paradés and Dacosta, 2020, p. 15–16).

5. CONCLUSION

The main rationale of the chapter was to provide an overview of BiH's historical trajectories that led to the process of 'imagining' the three ethnic groups (nations) in BiH, as well as the role of such process and its instrumentalization for ill purposes. The latter, which attempted to construct homogeneous and exclusive national and ethnic categories, inevitably led to the bloody and cruel conflicts and shaped the notion of at least three exclusivist ethnopolitical narratives that not just underpin contemporary BiH's identity but also govern the socio-political and socio-cultural reality of this post-conflict country. As demonstrated in the chapter, the history of BiH is a history of "maximum diversity on a minimum space" (Velikonja, 2003, p. 342) as people that lived in this territory have been – from 1463 on, when the Ottomans overtook Bosnia – subjected to different socio-cultural, religious and political settings that underpinned the process of 'imagining' contemporary Bosniak, Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb identity. While the Ottomans were crucial for shaping new Muslim identity among Bogomils and strengthened – through the Millet system - separate religious and ethnic identities (Muslims, Bosnian Serb and Bosnian Croat), the Habsburg rule from 1878 attempted to

introduce a united, Bosnian identity by attempting to eliminate the existing separate identities (Muslim, nowadays referred to as Bosniak, Serb and Croatian identities in BiH).

However, the Austro-Hungarian rule was – in ideational terms – more of a "short breath" as already in the early 1900s, the "anti-Vienna ideas" and the unification of the South Slav countries into one entity, "based largely on the idea of Serbo-Croatian national unitarism" grew and culminated in 1914, when Gavrilo Princip assassinated the Archduke Franz Ferdinand and triggered WWI. Soon after the WWI, Bosnia became a part of the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, but was – due to the Serbian ambition of dominance in this political entity – destined to become another unsuccessful political project. King Aleksandar's totalitarian regime, which aimed at suppressing ethnic nationalisms and making his subjects Yugoslavs rather than Croats, Serbs, Slovenians etc., provided with fertile ground for the establishment of two nationalistic movements, namely the Ustasha movement in Croatia and the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization in Macedonia, which gained plenty of support in fascist Italy and Hungary. Particularly the Ustasha movement was important for BiH, as one of the main purposes of this fascist movement was to address the 'Croatian question' that ultimately culminated in the Cvetković-Maček agreement to establish a Croatian Banate in BiH. The Serbs of BiH immediately followed suit by establishing a Serb Banate in BiH, propelling the political disorder and clash of "nation-building" projects that were interrupted by the beginning of WWII. The latter was particularly multifaceted and complex in BiH, as fighting within its territory was marked with many forces and the oscillation of unfaithful and changing alliances. The WWII in BiH, which ended in the defeat of Nazi-fascist occupiers, has marked a new era for BiH, an era of the second Yugoslavia that was built on the image of the "heroic Yugoslavs" and the metanarrative of "Brotherhood and unity" in order to govern a newly found political entity with a difficult legacy. The latter forced Josip Broz Tito, a central figure of the second Yugoslavia, to promote an ideology of Yugoslavism, an idea(1) of a unified state through a solitary and undisputed memory.

Tito's period of rule, which is in general divided into two parts, lucidly reflects on such mnemonical structures as from 1974 onwards, Tito acknowledged that it can no longer treat the intergroup conflicts as taboo, and ultimately gave the constituent Republics more autonomy and power, alongside with promoting the identity of ethnic groups. After Tito's death, the nationalist sentiments grew both in Croatia and Serbia that inevitably led to the radicalisation of the political landscape in BiH, which ultimately, within the process of Yugoslav disintegration, led to the destructive war in BiH.

The end of the Bosnian war, which was stopped by the US-facilitated Dayton Peace Agreement, laid down the foundations for post-conflict reconstruction of BiH but also facilitated the conditions in which the ethno-political responses and strategies could install certain practices that are in line with the prevailing logic of ‘imagining’ three exclusivist national identities. Not only that BiH’s social landscape was subjected to the destruction of the common socialist past and pre-war collective memory by appropriating the antifascist struggle, but there was also a process of the demolition of all the traces of non-Bosniak, non-Serb or non-Croat elements on ethnically cleansed territories. The final element of such process was the construction of a new memory, or rather three ‘constituent’ memories, based on mutually exclusive and nationalist Bosniak, (Bosnian) Serb and Croat narratives of the last war. Such narratives were – by establishing subnational political entities (RS and FBiH) – not just institutionalised but legitimised and upheld.

In such highly ‘ethnicised’ context it does not come as a surprise that the EU’s approach to the troubled past was not always interpreted by the local political elite as a ”road to the overall progress and development”. Such logic was especially vivid in the period from 2005 onwards, when the EU’s constitutional efforts to make BiH a more functional (centralised) state were framed as an ”existential threat” by RS’s political elite. Furthermore, as the analysis showed, the narrative of transferring the political mechanisms, power and responsibilities from the subnational political entities in order to consolidate the national (BiH’s) level, has ultimately facilitated the necessary conditions for the RS to held an unconstitutional referendum on the Day of RS in 2016. Finally, a brief reflection on the 2020 public opinion survey with 922 respondents from BiH has showed that such trajectories also impacted the individuals, as the EU’s role in overcoming the conflicts of the past is perceived more or less negative. On a more positive note, the survey has showed that people in BiH in general support the idea that the EU should help the victims of the conflict, which implies that the transformative, normative and/or symbolic of the EU is still present and still – to a certain extent – reflects on the fact that the EU should, regardless of the contemporary stagnation of BiH’s European integration process, still invest in future endeavours in order to transform the antagonistic ethnic relations that still persist in BiH and contribute to high level of ethnic distance between the peoples and stereotyping ‘the Other’.

6. REFERENCES

- Alićehajić, K. (2004). *Horde zla u Mostaru*. Sarajevo: Biblioteka Logos.
- Allcock, J. B. (2000). *Explaining Yugoslavia*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Arvanitopoulos, C. and Tzifakis, N. (2008). Implementing Reforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina: The Challenge of the Constitutional Process. *European View*, 7(1), 15–22.
- Bergholz, M. (2016). *Violence as a generative force: identity, nationalism, and memory in a Balkan community*. Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press.
- Bet-El, I. R. (2002). Unimagined Communities: The Power of Memory and the Conflict in the Former Yugoslavia. In *Memory and Power in Post-War Europe: Studies in the Presence of the past* (ed. J. W. Müller), pp. 206–222. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bieber, F. (2010). *Constitutional reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina: preparing for EU accession* (Policy Brief, n. 1). Brussels: European Policy Centre.
- Biermann, R. (2014). Coercive Europeanization: the EU's struggle to contain secessionism in the Balkans. *European Security*, 23(4): 484–508.
- Borneman, J. (1992). *Belonging in the Two Berlins: Kin, State, Nation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bose, S. (2002). *Bosnia after Dayton: Nationalist Partition and International Intervention*. London: Hurst & Company.
- Botev, N. and Wagner, R. (1993). Seeing Past the Barricades: Ethnic Inter-marriage in Yugoslavia During the Last Three Decades. *Anthropology of East Europe Review*, 11(1–2), pp. 3–21.
- Bougarel, X. (1996). Bosnia and Herzegovina – State and Communitarianism. In *Yugoslavia and After: A Study in Fragmentation. Despair and Rebirth* (eds. D. A. Dyker and I. Vejvoda), pp. 87–112. London: Longman.
- Bringa, T. (1995). *Being Muslim the Bosnian Way: Identity and Community in a Central Bosnian Village*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Calic, M.–J. (1995). *The War in Bosnia-Herzegovina: Causes – Conflict Structures – International Solutions*. Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp.
- Carmichael, C. (2002). *Ethnic Cleansing in the Balkans: Nationalism and the Destruction of Tradition*. London: Routledge.
- Charles, D. (2011, 18 February). Sarajevo gives thanks to the UN. *David Charles*. Retrieved from <https://davidcharles.info/2011/02/sarajevo-gives-thanks-to-the-un/>.
- Cohen, L. (1995). *Broken Bonds: Yugoslavia's Disintegration and Balkan Politics in Transition*. Boulder: Westview Press.
- Cohen, P. J. and Riesman, D. (1996). *Serbia's Secret War: Propaganda and the Deceit of History*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press.
- Crampton, R. J. (1997). *Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century – And After*. London: Routledge.
- Dedić, M. (2019, 11 August). Spomen-ploča prijedorskih Beograđana u Omarskoj. *Al Jazeera Balkans*. Retrieved from <http://balkans.aljazeera.net/vijesti/spomen-ploca-prijedorskih-beogradana-u-omarskoj>
- Denich, B. (1993). Unmaking Multi-Ethnicity in Yugoslavia: Metamorphosis Observed. *Anthropology of East Europe Review*, 11(2), 14–29.

- Dimou, A. (2007). Present's Past: The National History of Socialism or the Socialist Period of the Nation? Representations of Communist Yugoslavia in the Textbooks of the Successor States. In *Zwischen Amnesie und Nostalgie: Die Erinnerung an den Kommunismus in Südosteuropa* (eds. U. Brunnbauer and S. Trobest), pp. 131–151. Cologne: Böhlau.
- Djokić, D. (2003). *Yugoslavism: Histories of a Failed Idea, 1918–1992*. London: Hurst & Company.
- Dodik nudi izlaz iz krize. (2007, 21 November), *Nezavisne novine*.
- Donadio, C. (2014). Gender Based Violence: Justice and Reparation in Bosnia And Herzegovina. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 5(16), 692–702. <https://doi.org/10.5901/mjss.2014.v5n16p692>
- Donia, R. J. (2000). Review Article the New Bosniak History. *Nationalities Papers*, 28(2), 351–358.
- Donia, R. J. and Fine, J. (1994). *Bosnia and Herzegovina: A Tradition Betrayed*. London: Hurst.
- Dover, R. (2005). The EU and the Bosnian Civil War 1992–95. The Capabilities – Expectations Gap at the Heart of EU Foreign Policy. *European Security*, 14(3), 297–318.
- Eriksen, T. H. (1998). *Common Denominators: Ethnicity, Nation-Building and Compromise in Mauritius*. Oxford: Berg.
- European Integration Directorate. (2019). Infographics. Retrieved from https://www.dei.gov.ba/uploads/documents/istrazivanje-javnog-mnijenja-2019-stavovi-gradana-o-clanstvu-u-eu-i-procesu-integracija-u-eu_1599037957.pdf
- European Parliament. (2005). Note on the main Elements of the Dayton Agreement for Bosnia and Herzegovina. Retrieved from https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2004_2009/documents/dv/afet_111005_0/afet_111005_004.pdf
- Formiranje vlasti, pa promjena Ustava. (2006, 23 October), *Glas Srpske*.
- Gagnon, V. P. (2004). *The Myth of Ethnic War: Serbia and Croatia in the 1990s*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Gilbert, A. (2006). The Past in Parenthesis: (Non) Post-Socialism in Post-War Bosnia-Herzegovina. *Anthropology Today*, 22(4), 14–18.
- Gingrich, A. (2002). When Ethnic Majorities Are 'Dethroned': Towards a Methodology of Self-Reflexive, Controlled Macrocomparison. In *Anthropology, by Comparison* (eds. A. Gingrich and R. G. Fox), pp. 225–248. New York: Routledge.
- Hayden, R. (1994). Recounting the Dead. The Rediscovery and Redefinition of Wartime Massacres in Late- and Post-Communist Yugoslavia. In *Memory, History, and Opposition under State Socialism* (ed. R. Watson), pp. 167–189. Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press.
- Hoare, M. A. (2019). Muslim Bosniak collaboration in World War II. Retrieved from http://www.yuhistorija.com/second_ww_txt01c.html
- Hoppe, H. J. (1998). *The Dayton Agreement and the New Leadership Elite in Bosnia-Herzegovina*. Cologne: Peter Lang.
- Imamović, M. (2006). *Bosnia and Herzegovina: Evolution of its political and legal institutions*. Sarajevo: Magistrat.
- Irwin, R. and Šarić, V. (2010). *Special Report, Calls for Memorials Divide Bosnia*. Sarajevo: Institute for War and Peace Reporting.

- Ivanov, A. (1996). *The Balkans Divided: Nationalism, Minorities, and Security*. Frankfurt/Main: Peter Lang.
- Jäger, F. (2001). *Bosniaks, Croats, Serbs: A Guide into Their History*. Frankfurt/Main: Lang.
- Juncos, A. E. (2013). *EU foreign and security policy in Bosnia: The politics of coherence and effectiveness*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Juncos, A. E. (2017). EU security sector reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Reform or resist? *Contemporary Security Policy*, 39(1), 95–118.
- Kalčić, Š. (2005). Changing Contexts and Redefinitions of Identity among Bosniaks in Slovenia. *Balkanologie*, 9(1-2). URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/balkanologie/585>
- Karge, H. (2008). *20th Century History in the Textbooks of Bosnia and Herzegovina: An Analysis of Books Used for the Final Grades of Primary School*. Sarajevo: OSCE.
- Kolstø, P. and Jelovica, V. (2014). Conclusions: Success and Failure of Nation-building, Structural vs. Political Factors. In *Strategies of Symbolic Nation-building in South Eastern Europe* (eds. Kolstø, P.), pp. 227–242. Ashgate: Farnham.
- Kostić, R. (2012). Transitional Justice and Reconciliation in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Whose Memories, Whose Justice? *Sociologija*, 54(4), 655–657.
- Kronenberger, V. and Wouters, J. (2004). *The European Union and Conflict Prevention: Policy and Legal Aspects*. The Hague: Asser Press.
- Kudlenko, A. (2017). Security sector reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina. A case study of the Europeanization of the Western Balkans. *Südosteuropa*, 65(1), 56–76.
- Lampe, J. R. (1996). *Yugoslavia as History: Twice There Was a Country*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lampe, J. R., & Lampe, J. R. (2000). *Yugoslavia as History: Twice there was a Country*. Cambridge University Press.
- Ljubojević, A., Gavrilović, D. and V. Perica. (2011). Myths and Counter-myths and the Incorporation of the Myth. In *Political Myths in the Former Yugoslavia and the Successor States: A Shared Narrative* (eds. D. Gavrilović and V. Perica), pp. 67–76. Dordrecht: Publishing BV.
- Lovrenović, I. (1999). *Bosnia and Herzegovina: A Cultural History*. Vienna: Folio Verlag.
- Majstorović, Danijela and Vučković, Zoran (2016). Rethinking Bosnia and Herzegovina's post-coloniality: Challenges of European discourse. *Journal of Language and Politics* 15 (2): 147-172.
- Malcolm, N. (2002). *Bosnia: A Short History*. London: Pan.
- Martin, I., Paredés, M. and Dacosta, R. (2020). Working Paper "Comparative Attitudes about Past Conflicts and the EU". Final Draft.
- Meernik J. and Barron, J. (2018). Fairness in National Courts Prosecuting International Crimes: The Case of the War Crimes Chamber of Bosnia-Herzegovina. *International Criminal Law Review*, 18(4): 712–734.
- Meier, V. and Ramet, S. P. (1999). *Yugoslavia: A History of Its Demise*. London: Routledge.
- Milošević, A. and Touquet, H. (2018). Unintended consequences: the EU memory framework and the politics of memory in Serbia and Croatia. *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, 18(3): 381–399.
- Muehlmann, T. (2008). Police restructuring in Bosnia-Herzegovina: problems of internationally-led security sector reform. *Journal of intervention and Statebuilding*, 2(1): 1–22.

- Munoz, A. (1991). *Forgotten Legions: Obscure Combat Formations of the Waffen SS*. Boulder: Paladin Press.
- Mušinović, E. (2015, 26 April). Milorad Dodik više od 30 puta najavljiavao referendume. Klix. Retrieved from <https://www.klix.ba/vijesti/bih/milorad-dodik-vise-od-30-puta-najavljiavao-referendume/150426044>
- Nezavisne novine. (2007). Politicari iz Sarajeva najviše doprinose rasturanju BiH. Retrieved from <https://www.nezavisne.com/novosti/bih/Milorad-Dodik-Politicari-iz-Sarajeva-najvise-doprinose-rasturanju-BiH/12642>
- Noutcheva, G. (2012). *European foreign policy and the challenges of Balkan accession*. London: Routledge.
- Obrenović, M. (2020, 30 October). Bosnian, Serbian Schoolbooks Teach Rival Versions of History. *Balkan Insight*. Retrieved from <https://balkaninsight.com/2020/10/30/bosnian-serbian-schoolbooks-teach-rival-versions-of-history/>.
- OSCE. (2007). *Tailoring Catchment Areas. Schools Catchment Areas in Bosnia and Herzegovina*. Sarajevo: OSCE.
- Padurariu, A. (2014). The Implementation of Police Reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Analysing UN and EU efforts. *International Journal of Security and Development*, 3(1), 1–18.
- Palm, T. (2017). The changing character of EUFOR Althea: power politics or learning? *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 30(1), 67–86.
- Palmberger, M. (2016). *How Generations Remember: Conflicting Histories and Shared Memories in Post-War Bosnia and Herzegovina*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Pantic, D. (2002). Heterostereotypes of Serbs Towards Nations of the Former Yugoslavia and Other Nations. In *Den Anderen im Blick: Stereotype im ehormaligen Jugoslawien* (ed. A. Moritsch), pp. 67–88. Frankfurt: Lang.
- Perica, V. (2002). *Balkan Idols: Religion and Nationalism in Yugoslav States*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Perry, V. (2015). Constitutional Reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Does the Road to Confederation go through the EU? *International Peacebuilding*, 22(5): 490–510.
- Price, M. (2002). Memory, the Media and NATO: Information Intervention in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In *Memory and Power in Post-War Europe: Studies in the Presence of the Past* (ed. J. W. Müller), pp. 137–184. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Puljek-Shank, R. and Fritsch, F. (2018). Activism in Bosnia-Herzegovina: Struggles against Dual Hegemony and the Emergence of “Local First”. *East European Politics and Societies*, 33(1), 135–156.
- Rangelov, I. and Theros M. (2009). Transitional Justice in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Coherence and Complementarity of EU Institutions and Civil Society. In K. Amos, J. Large and M. Wierda (eds.), *Building a Future on Peace and Justice* (357–389). Berlin: Springer.
- Rettman, A. (2017). Republika Srpska defies EU and US. *EUobserver*. Retrieved from <https://euobserver.com/foreign/136490>
- Riedlmayer, A. (1995). Erasing the Past, The Destruction of Libraries and Archives in Bosnia and Herzegovina. *Middle East Studies Association Bulletin*, 29(1), pp. 7–11.
- Sahović, D. and Zulumović, D. (2015). Changing Meaning of Second World War Monuments in Post-Dayton Bosnia and Herzegovina: A case Study of the Kozara Monument and Memorial. In M. L. Stig Sørensen and D. Viejo-Rose (eds.), *War and Cultural Heritage: Biographies of Place* (208–224). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Sancaktar, C. (2012). Historical Construction and Development of Bosniak Nation. *Alternatives Turkish Journal of International Relations*, 11(1).
- Schechtman, J.B. (1965). *The Mufti and the Fuehrer: The Rise and Fall of Haj Amin el Husseini*. New York: Thomas Yoseloff.
- Schmider, K. (2002). *Partisan War in Yugoslavia 1941–1944*. Hamburg: Mittler.
- Sekulić, G. (1999). Five Paradoxes of Human Rights Issues from the Standpoint: Ethnical Reconstruction of the Humanities and Social Sciences in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Vienna: Böhlau.
- Sells, A. M. (1996). Religion, history, and genocide in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In D. G. Scott (ed.), *Religion and justice in the war over Bosnia* (23–43). New York: Routledge.
- Smits, J. (2014). Ethnic Inter-marriage and Social Cohesion in Yugoslavia. In *Encyclopedia of Quality of Life and Well-Being Research* (ed. A. C. Michalos), n.p. Dordrecht: Springer.
- Sokol, A. (2014). War Monuments: Instruments of Nation-building in Bosnia and Herzegovina. *Croatian Political Science Review*, 51(5), pp. 105–126.
- Stradling, R. (2001). *Handbook: Teaching 20th century European History*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.
- Tepić, J. (2012). *Perspective Series, Research Report: Do memory initiatives have a role in addressing cultures of silence that perpetuate impunity in Bosnia and Herzegovina*. Utrecht: Impunity Watch.
- Terzić, V. (1982). *Slom Kraljevine Jugoslavije 1941*. Belgrade, Serbia: Širo Srbija.
- Tomasevich, J. (2001). *War and Revolution in Yugoslavia, 1941–1945: Occupation and Collaboration*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Torsti, P. (2003). *Divergent Stories, Convertent Attitudes: Study on the Presence of History, History Textbooks, and the Thinking of Youth in Post-War Bosnia and Herzegovina* (MA Thesis). University of Helsinki, Faculty of Social Sciences, Helsinki.
- Velikonja, M. (2003). *Religious Separation and Political Intolerance in Bosnia-Herzegovina*. Texas: Texas A&M University Press.
- Wilson, D. (1979). *Tito's Yugoslavia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Zdeb, A. (2017). Prud and Butmir Processes in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Intra-ethnic Competition from the Perspective of Game Theory. *Ethnopolitics*, 16(4): 369–387.
- Zupančič, R., Kočan, F. and Vuga, J. (2020). Ethnic distancing through aesthetics in Bosnia-Herzegovina: appraising the limits of art as a peacebuilding tool with a socio-psychological experiment. *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*. DOI: 10.1080/14683857.2020.1867410
- Žepić, B. (2006). Hercegovina između negiranja i opstanka. *Status: Magazin za (političku) kulturu i društvena pitanja*, 8(2), 141–149.