

Governing Heritage Dissonance

Promises and Realities of
Selected Cultural Policies



Višnja Kisić

European Cultural Foundation

CULTURAL POLICY RESEARCH AWARD 2013

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Riksbankens
Jubileumsfond

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Endorsements

“In times when conflicts are becoming increasingly culturalized and fuelled by identity politics, this pioneering study is timely in connecting heritage studies and cultural policies with issues of difference, conflicts and reconciliation. Using the case of South East Europe as exploration ground for wider philosophical and practical questions related to heritage, it calls on us to rethink how we approach the past and deal with diversities – among cultures, nations, communities, classes, gender, and generations. Finally, Kisić offers invaluable insights in the benefits and flaws of international development aid and transitional justice actions in post-conflict areas, making a strong case for the crucial role of culture and heritage in overcoming symbolic violence and creating understanding of ‘the other’.”

Sneška Quaedvlieg-Mihajlović

Secretary General, Europa Nostra

“*Governing Heritage Dissonance* is a valuable contribution to the continued development of ‘New Heritage’ thinking. Written, refreshingly, from a South East European perspective it gives a cogent rebuttal to the notion that heritage is cosy or comfortable, and instead deals with dissonance and plurality as aspects of all heritage, as intrinsic as they are unavoidable. Through her analysis of four examples of attempts in South East Europe to use heritage to re-forge consensus and unity, Kisić in effect asks why heritage dissonance is feared – must we always try to smooth it away, can its tensions be used constructively?”

Graham Fairclough

McCord Centre for Landscape, Newcastle University, UK

“Višnja Kisić’s first book is challenging the borders between heritage studies, cultural policies and practices of mediation and intercultural dialogue. Is the dialogue possible around understanding of the common past, still ‘preserved’ in a form of a cultural monument, unwanted by some, or re-appropriated by others? How can culture of memory be developed around heritage that divides? What are the specificities of heritage institutions, international actors, professionals and NGOs in dealing with the past? This brilliant book offers a fresh perspective on possible policy tools, both through success and failure stories.”

Milena Dragičević Šešić

Professor of Cultural Policy and Cultural Management, University of Arts, Belgrade, Serbia

“This important study exposes the problems of trying to neutralize conflicted heritage, arguing instead that it is the quality of inclusive dialogue around such resources that matters. Kisić makes a compelling case for the creative management of interpretative dissonances in heritage that deserves the attention not just of professionals but anyone engaged with culture and Europe today.”

François Matarasso

Honorary Professor, Robert Gordon University, UK

“South East Europe is well suited to discuss under what conditions heritage arouse aggression and how heritagization can be turned effective in overcoming conflict and making for trust and inclusion. Višnja Kisić’s book provides a much needed ensemble of hopeful empirical evidence to rethink the possibilities and urgency for an inclusive heritage discourse.”

Peter Aronsson

Professor of History, Linnaeus University, Sweden

“The book you have in your hands is the most serious attempt to explain the nature of heritage that I have read in years. Way beyond usual discourse and reach! Studying this subject in specific, conflicting and delicate historic circumstances and in a situation which suggests nothing of the ease of disinterested intellectual speculation – has born an impressive account. This book will easily stay on the shelf of heritage professionals working in any public memory institution or anybody taking cultural politics or cultural diplomacy seriously.”

Tomislav Šola

Professor of Museology, University of Zagreb, Croatia

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Foreword

In 2004, the European Cultural Foundation (ECF) initiated the Cultural Policy Research Award (CPRA) with the aim of supporting a young generation of researchers in their career development, strengthening the discipline within the academic world, and growing a network of engaged cultural policy researchers. The CPRA had been a small but timely incentive for ambitious and talented cultural policy researchers to set the tone for a decade ahead. Between 2004 and 2013 ten researchers from six European countries received the award of 10,000 Euros to accomplish and publish their findings and results in a book. The CPRA laureates continued their careers in renowned academic institutions in Europe, Asia and Australia, some engaged in cultural policy-making, others joined global cultural movements.

Višnja Kisić (Serbia) is the 10th CPRA winner (2013) and her research *Governing Heritage Dissonance: Promises and Realities of Selected Cultural Policies* proves to be not only extremely relevant but also highly timely in today's European context. Her research focuses on the discourses, policies and practices (four case studies) of cultural heritage in the Western Balkans in the Post-Yugoslav period. Cultural heritage in this region has been for centuries a subject of divergent policies and politics, historic and ideological interpretations, serving purposes from peace and unification, to conflicts and disintegration. In pursuing her ambition to tackle this 'uncomfortable' area of research, Kisić skilfully navigates through critical theory, international heritage concepts and analysis of cultural heritage policies and practices across South East Europe, shedding light on the beauty and the challenge of heritage pluralism. Her findings show the general inability of heritage policy tools to tackle the heritage dissonance for purposes of reconciliation and dialogue, as opposed to the inherent power of heritage for shaping identities and group memories. By revealing the vast complexity of the matter and its role for conflict prevention, she points to the ways and methods of approaching our common heritage by dialogic, collaborative, innovative tools

that would enable pluralist and inclusive heritage discourses and policies. We hope this research will open up avenues to better design our common future in and of Europe.

We would like to sincerely thank Kisić for her inspiring, insightful and daring research journey in the Balkans – which is much needed in these critical times in Europe. As she rightly points out “The question of how we govern heritage dissonance is inseparable from the question of how we prevent, mediate and resolve conflicts.” This research could not have been more timely considering the current phenomena of fragmentation within our societies.

With this book ECF concludes its 10-year engagement in the CPRA programme involving an award, an annual Young Researchers Forum, a Researchers Lab and a publication. We are grateful to ENCATC, the European Network for Cultural Management and Policy, that has partnered in the initiative since 2008, helping to pursue the vision of an interconnected global network of cultural policy researchers and giving the award a new impetus by establishing the annual ENCATC Research Award on Cultural Policy and Cultural Management, matched with a Forum of young researchers from across the globe.

Isabelle Schwarz

*Head of Advocacy, Research and Development and Knowledge Management
European Cultural Foundation, 2016*

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Several times in the last three years this research seemed impossible, therefore I owe a deep gratitude to all those who supported me in making it happen – those who shared information, experiences and thoughts with me, those having time for exploratory conversations and valuable suggestions.

Having in mind all the ups and even more downs and silences in getting a hold on this research, if I would not have received a ‘credit-like’ award, I would simply have given up. Therefore, my foremost gratitude goes to the European Cultural Foundation, the Riksbankens Jubileumsfond and ENCATC for creating a dream opportunity through the Cultural Policy Research Award. It was an invaluable incentive for this research. I was also lucky that there were great individuals behind the Award itself. Special thanks go to Tsveta Andreeva and Isabelle Schwarz, for being there, being flexible and being focused on what is best for the research. I wish to thank all the CPRA jury members, Lluís Bonet, Eleonora Belfiore, Jacques Bonniel, Timo Cantell, Sanjin Dragojević, Mikhail Gnedovsky and Therese Kaufmann, for recognizing the relevance of this research, for individual talks I had with most of them at different stages of this research, and for giving valuable comments and suggestions at its final stage. And, a big thanks to ENCATC’s team, Giannalia Cogliandro, Elisabeth Darley and Constanza Caffo for creating opportunities to present and discuss this research within ENCATC Annual Conferences and Young Cultural Policy Researchers Forum both in 2014 and 2015.

The most special gratitude goes to colleagues from the Museum of Yugoslav History, Cultural Heritage without Borders, UNESCO, Documenta – Center for Dealing with the Past and individuals and institutions participating in the *Imagining the Balkans* exhibition project as well as the transitional serial nomination of Stećak tombstones. These people all generously shared their time, experiences, insights and documentation

with me. Since their sharing made this research possible, I hope that the research will inspire them to be even more courageous in pushing the boundaries of their disciplines, practices and organizations.

This research has benefited from numerous people, interactions and conversations created during the last three years and I am grateful to all of them. However, there are those few special people who were important at different stages in this project. Special thanks go to Milena Dragičević Šešić for one more developmental mentoring. I also want to thank my 'heritage mentors' – Irina Subotić, Dragan Bulatović and Tomislav Šola – in their encouragement, critical conversations and mentoring while exploring the heritage field throughout my MA and PhD studies. My deepest thanks for this project go to my friends and colleagues – Katarina Živanović, Marija Đorđević, Goran Tomka and Jonathan Eaton – who were a sounding board for my ideas and reflections from the very inception of this project and who were reading through the different versions of the text and giving precious feedback. This final text also benefited from dedicated reading, comments and suggestions by Prof. Irina Subotić, Tatjana Cvetičanin and Karen Knight.

Thanks also to colleagues Tamara van Kessel, Peter Aronsson, Predrag Cvetičanin, Nikola Krstović, Milan Popadić and Aleksandar Brkić for sharp comments on the research proposal and their faith in this project before being awarded. To Olga Svoboda, Andreja Nježić and Relja Dereta for working with me on the quality of the CPRA project presentation. As well as to previous CPRA winners, Sofia Labadi and Christiaan De Beukelaer, on their comments and suggestions for the CPRA finale and for showing that CPRA has grown into a valuable community. To my colleague Mirjana Jemović who helped me with transcribing some of the materials and interviews. Conversations and comments from colleagues Vjeran Pavlaković, Vladimir Petrović and Maša Avramović, involved in cultural studies, history and pedagogy respectively, provided valuable new angles on the topic.

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Preface

I have read your research proposal and highly appreciate your desire to combine critical thinking with social engagement. It is not easy to do research in a field that lies so close at heart. In addition, you are trying to connect developments in academic theory to shifts in cultural policy, something which is not so easy to actually do. Now that I am teaching heritage studies for a while, I notice how easily 'theory and practice' can drift apart.

(Tamara van Kessel, University of Amsterdam)¹

The message I received from a colleague when I was applying for the Cultural Policy Research Award in Spring 2013 sums up both my intention when designing the research and challenges in implementing it. Growing up in Serbia during the last two and a half decades, my whole generation and I were first-hand witnesses to heritage being extensively used and produced to strengthen narratives of hatred among people across South East Europe (SEE). Instead of being a reservoir for bridging, relating, dialoguing and understanding, heritage has been a reservoir from which politicians, professionals and laics have been crafting mutually exclusive identities and drawing borders in the minds of neighbouring communities.

As a consequence my development was shaped by questioning how my passion for arts and heritage as ways of meaning-making can help influence the less dogmatic uses of heritage – the one that fosters critical thinking,

¹ Email correspondence, 23 July 2013.

acknowledges pluralism in worldviews and the right of each person to understand, create, relate and dialogue around the past. This need led me to cultural policy, museology, memory studies and heritage studies, mainly from a critical, interpretative and constructionist perspective. It also drove my motivation in connecting research and practice, since I believe that the mutual informing of the two opens up possibilities for rethinking, innovation and social change. The need for social engagement, critical thinking and personal motivations came together in this research, inspired by a mosaic of phenomena which I could observe in the last five years.

One part of this mosaic was a growing literature within critical museology and heritage studies which increasingly criticized how heritage has been traditionally governed. It shed a new light on heritage, identities and human rights, on heritage and conflicts, on politics of exclusion, but at some point became criticism for the sake of criticism without intention or power to inform practice. The discrepancy between uncritical ‘best practice’ approaches and ‘nothing is good enough’ approaches has left little space to constructively explore and understand what is in between and how it can be improved.

The other part of the mosaic was my relationship with heritage practice and practitioners, most of whom did not have access or interest to embark on deeper post-modernist, constructivist and critical approaches within their field. They continued practising their vocation perpetuating traditional processes of heritage selection, preservation and communication, without much reflection on their political and ideological position, societal ethics and engagement in issues of social justice, inclusion and pluralism. Those who do try to engage with critical theoretical, political and social issues within heritage practice face numerous walls – walls built by those who protect the heritage profession as traditionally practised; walls built by mismatching the expectations of citizens who are used to boosting their identities and self-image by visiting memory institutions; walls built because of real or imagined risk of reactions by politicians and funders; and walls built by the academic community in a position of arbitrating the quality of professional conduct – all of which make space for change quite limited.

The third part of the mosaic, the policy frameworks related to heritage

governance that, despite grand promises, lag behind critical heritage studies and constructivist approaches to heritage, perpetuating a status quo and traditional power positions within the heritage field. Recent academic theories do not fit so easily with existing heritage policy frameworks, even with those which nominally promise to bring a more pluralist, critical and participative stand.

The last part of the mosaic was put together by the extensive repetition of extensive repetition of the words 'reconciliation' and 'peace-building' in relation to heritage governance in documents, press releases and speeches of professionals, foreign experts and politicians, in a manner that became empty and not thought through. Reconciliation became a desirable mantra even among actors engaged in creating mutually exclusive versions of history through heritage. Furthermore, the need to deal with the recent past in former Yugoslav republics ignited practices of memorializing, collecting and archiving heritage related to wars and victims by human rights and peace organizations. This significant contribution has been going on without a sound theoretical base related to heritage, which impeded the possibility of going beyond the recent violent past and questioning *sedimented* identity building practices in public memory institutions. All these together influenced the desire to dig deeper into these buzz words and their relationship with heritage dissonance. In doing so, I aimed to delve deeper into the relationship between critical heritage studies, field practice and policy frameworks which inform the ways in which heritage plays a role in SEE societies.

Finally, conducting research on an issue which lies close to my heart was both a main driver and challenge. Digging deeper into the uncomfortable topic within my social context and shedding light on the discomfiting situation within existing practices in the field brought sad situations during interviews and while reading some materials. It took me on a journey from identity claims based on heritage from the Middle Ages, through the formation of nation-states and construction of national *imaginaria* in the 19th century, to the multilayered heritage of Yugoslavia and, finally, to the heritage and memories of recent wars.

The whole process forced me to constantly rethink my responsibility

towards this research in relation to the organizations which I studied and the colleagues who shared their insights with me. It also confirmed that there is a great need, not only for bridging policy, practice and research, but also for bridging different actors and different administrative fields in heritage management. Museums, institutes for the protection of built cultural monuments, NGOs active in heritage and human rights organizations dealing with culture of memory all participate in shaping our present by selecting, interpreting, protecting and communicating the past, but due to disciplinary and administrative regulations, they have limited space for encounters and intersections.

This research is an attempt to give a theoretical view of the shared challenges when working with heritage dissonance, while at the same time zooming in on the diversity of approaches and intersections within the heritage field. I hope that critical reflections and contextualization of selected practices will not only add to theoretical discussions, but serve as a reference point for embracing pluralism of heritage more openly and for self-reflections and improvement of existing heritage practices.

Executive Summary

The research that follows explores cultural policies and specific policy tools aimed at working with heritage dissonance and heritage related conflicts created for and implemented within the region of South East Europe (SEE) with the aim of contributing to reconciliation, mutual understanding and peace-building. The concept of heritage dissonance has been implicitly present through recent policy texts (CoE 2003; CoE 2005), which articulated the assumption that conflicts between nations, regions and communities embedded in contested interpretations of the past, can be overcome by the 'proper' governance of the very same heritage, which in the long-term has potential to create a situation of peace and stability based on shared heritage, narratives and value systems.

The following research questions this assumption by exploring whether, how and to what extent distinctive policy tools aimed at governing dissonant heritage have been able to justify their promises of contributing to reconciliation. In doing so, it explores questions such as: If heritage can be a powerful tool for reproduction of injustice, conflict and accumulation of power, how can it become a medium that contributes to peace and understanding beyond mere political rhetoric? What are the discursive and conceptual shifts in understanding heritage that would lower the clashes between cultures and enable constructive dialogues? What are the roles of supranational actors, public memory institutions, civil society organizations and heritage professionals in influencing and facilitating the processes of mediating heritage dissonance? What are the mechanisms and conditions which enable such processes to take place and what are the advantages and limits of specific methods and policy tools?

In analysing conceptual shifts in understanding heritage dissonance within heritage and cultural memory studies and ways in which they are reflected in international policy documents, the research introduces the concept of 'inclusive heritage discourse' (IHD) that provides an alternative to

the dominant way of understanding and governing heritage – ‘authorized heritage discourse’ (Smith 2006). It argues that understanding heritage within the inclusive heritage discourse brings a different view on the concept of heritage dissonance and the aims, actors and approaches in cultural policies related to heritage. Instead of understanding heritage meaning and value as the embedded truth waiting to be recognized and deciphered, inclusive heritage discourse articulates heritage as contingent, culturally and politically conditioned interpretative process. Therefore, within the inclusive heritage discourse, dissonance is understood as a quality which unlocks and challenges the sedimentation of a single discourse and opens the space for a negotiation of meaning via diverse actions and agencies – providing a framework for analysing current and creating future heritage policies, interpretative and management practices.

In discussing the continuous memory wars in the SEE region, and responses of diverse policy actors in addressing heritage related conflicts, the research shows that even though numerous heritage related practices and actors in South East Europe have been appropriating the phrase ‘reconciliation and peace-building’ hardly any of these articulated the meaning, philosophy and policies behind the phrase in relation to heritage. In the absence of transparent, explicit and elaborated policies of reconciliation in the heritage domain, this research concentrated on some of the tools created and used by different actors in the name of reconciliation, illuminating discursive and ideological assumptions behind them. Most of these policy tools focused on post-war heritage reconstruction; networking among professionals; transitional professionalization and capacity building; or cooperation based on consensual heritage topics; while only rare ones worked explicitly or implicitly with active heritage dissonance.

Therefore the research analyses four distinctive cases which worked with heritage dissonance developed within and for the SEE region – the transnational nomination for UNESCO World Heritage List of Stećaks, medieval tombstones by the Ministries of Culture of Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina; the regional exhibition *Imagining the Balkans: Identities and Memory in the Long 19th Century* involving museums from 12 SEE countries under the facilitation of the UNESCO Office

in Venice; the exhibition *Yugoslavia: From the Beginning to the End*, an attempt to musealize Yugoslavia through the creation of a permanent display for the Museum of Yugoslav History in Belgrade; and the oral histories archive Croatian Memories (CroMe) implemented by Croatian NGO Documenta – Center for Dealing with the Past. Each of these cases illuminates some of the advantages, limitations and tensions characteristic for the particular discursive frameworks, actors involved and methods used in them.

All the studied cases highlight the argument that all heritage has dissonance as its quality, and that the connection between heritage dissonance, reconciliation and cultural policy tools cannot be solely connected to the heritage of wars and violence, but must include much wider social and cultural patterns of understanding and using heritage. In particular, they should address exclusions, divisions and symbolic conflicts related to the interpretation and uses of ‘normalized’ aspects of heritage, particularly those related to national, ethnic, gender or class identities, part of which took place within some of the studied cases. These cases temporarily created new spaces to make dissonance visible, new ways of interacting among different actors and possibilities to create new meanings around heritage, but did not change the dominant understandings and practices exercised by actors involved. These temporary efforts show that continuous international, intersectoral and intercommunity cooperation in interpreting and managing heritage is one of the ways to go out of singular ‘truths’, increase understanding of different perspectives, encourage dialogue around them and come up with a more pluralist approach to heritage. Exactly because they are project based, internal reflection within organizations, planned and transparent evaluation and learning from research could make these short-term projects become integrated within longer-term organizational value perspectives, policies, strategies and programmes.

On a broader policy and management level, the research proposes the importance of discourse analyses in reproaching heritage dissonance, both when it comes to understanding competing meanings connected to particular heritage and to understanding of the heritage discourse in which particular practices operate. Having that in mind, the research indicates why

authorized heritage discourse is inherently problematic in approaching heritage dissonance, conflicts and human rights, and argues that inclusive heritage discourse provides a suitable framework for dynamic pluralist understanding of the past and for reproaching conflicts. However, it makes clear that the appropriation of the inclusive heritage discourse as a conceptual framework requires the change of museological practices as well as the education of heritage practitioners. More cooperation and co-productions among the public institutions, artists and civil sector, as well as with academic community are much needed in order to increase the share of knowledge and information, to widen the space for articulation of diverse voices and to share the responsibility for the change of traditional heritage practices.

Finally, it concludes by connecting the issues of heritage dissonance, conflicts and human rights to the current European policies related to heritage and to transitional justice, signalling the challenges they pose to the ideas of pluralist, intercultural, peaceful and democratic societies. Apart from the call for the wider change of the dominant heritage discourse, the research proposes that particular examples of tackling actively dissonant heritage can be used as a testing zone for new, alternative methodologies and principles in heritage governance, interpretation and management which are in line with the inclusive heritage discourse. Some of these include diversifying interpretation strategies, implementing collaborative, cooperative and co-management approaches.

Furthermore, the use of participative methods of heritage making, management and interpretation such as discussions, evaluations, oral histories, personal collecting, crowd-collecting, crowd-curating and artistic interventions might be useful for starting a dialogue around the past, remembrance and identity politics, for encouraging multiperspectivity and critical approach to heritage. In the long run, the power of these examples could become the basis for understanding uses and abuses of heritage and for reconfiguring the system of heritage policy so that it is more inclusive, plural and participatory.

1. Setting the Stage

In what is in some respects an increasingly heterogeneous transnational world, senses of national belonging and other scales of rootedness grounded in heritage remain potent sources of pluralization, diversity and hybridity, but also of dissonance, conflict and overt violence.

(Graham/Ashworth 2000, 13)

We reject the idea of a clash of civilizations and firmly believe that, on the contrary, increased commitment to cultural cooperation and intercultural dialogue will benefit peace and international stability in the long term, including with respect to the threat of terrorism.

(Council of Europe, Board of Ministers, Faro, 2005a)

At a time when there has never been more recognition for the value of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue at international policy level (UNESCO *Convention on the Protection and Promotion of Diversity of Cultural Expressions* 2005a; CoE *White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue* 2008; Baku *Declaration for Promotion of Intercultural Dialogue* 2008; European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008), we are facing increasing *culturalization* of conflicts informed by the increased emphasis on ‘difference’ around the world. It is heritage that often plays a pivotal role as a reservoir for articulating identities and meanings used then as arguments to justify political interests igniting, explaining and perpetuating conflicts.

In this research, heritage is approached as a social construct, a selective

interpretation of the past and a form of collective memory (Halbwachs 1992), shaped by current political, economic and social concerns. As a process of meaning-making informed by the present (Smith 2006), heritage serves simultaneously as a cohesive and divisive factor, helping various powers 'stake claims': from drawing boundaries of identities, articulating the moral superiority of a certain image of the world, carving out territories, appropriating resources, to opposing and subverting the pertaining power positions. It is therefore both a source and a result of the conflicts (Graham/Howard 2008), and is increasingly seen both as a threat and as a cure in assisting intercultural dialogue and pluralistic democracy, as well as in peace and reconciliation efforts. In all these the concept of heritage dissonance, understood as the diversity of competing meanings attached to heritage (which normally cause disagreements on how the past is being interpreted and represented by different actors) plays a significant role.

This research is dedicated to the issues of heritage and conflicts as reflected through the relationship between cultural policies and the concept of heritage dissonance. Such research, which theoretically links cultural policy and heritage dissonance, is much needed at this point in time. The widened concept of heritage and discursive shift in understanding heritage both within academia and cultural policy frameworks creates conditions which make dissonance more acknowledged and visible. In the last ten years traditional 'authorized heritage discourse' (Smith 2006) seems to be challenged by newer international conventions and declarations: the UNESCO *Declaration on Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage*; the UNESCO *Declaration on Protection of Cultural Diversity*; and particularly the European Council's *Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society*. These policy texts have expanded the concept of heritage at a policy level and recognized intercultural dialogue, democratization, pluralization, diversity and participation of diverse actors in heritage management as a precondition for sustainable development of societies.

New principles of heritage value, use and safeguarding, as well as concepts such as 'heritage community', 'participatory governance', 'shared European heritage', advocated by these policy documents provide alternative understandings and approaches to heritage dissonance. The concept of

dissonance as genuinely interconnected with policy concepts of cultural diversity, participation and pluralism sets the ground for a diversity of interpretations of the past and challenges 'authorized' singular interpretations.

Despite significant literature from heritage, memory and tourism studies, and despite existing policy texts and numerous practices, there has been a hesitance to incorporate the idea of dissonance into definitions of heritage within cultural policy debates. Apart from a few specific case studies, the concept has not been given the required scrutinized overview and analysis within cultural policy as a scientific discipline and as a political and social practice. Indicative of this is the document that defines challenges and priorities for the EU cultural policy for the next 5 years. This document put forward by the European Union Directorate General for Culture and Education (DG EAC) in cooperation with the European Expert Network on Culture (EENC) in 2013 stated that dissonant, controversial or difficult heritage is a challenge and a particular, under-researched issue while one of the priorities is to find particular mechanisms so that dissonance could be mediated.

Relying strongly on the concept of 'dissonant heritage' as a discord or lack of agreement in the way the past is represented and interpreted by different actors (Tunbridge/Ashworth 1996, 21-27), I do not use the term dissonant heritage as such for two reasons. First, the term indicates that there is a certain type of heritage that has an unusual quality and requires different treatment than usual, 'normal' heritage (Smith 2006, 80-82). The recognition that heritage *is* dissonant would make the term dissonant heritage a pleonasm. Second, the term focuses on heritage as object and obscures agencies, actions and power related to heritage. I use the term 'heritage dissonance' instead, since it acknowledges that any heritage has dissonance as a quality, and its meanings are contingent. Dissonance exists as a latent quality of any heritage – it is present as a passive potential. This latent quality becomes active only when new voices are articulated (Laclau/Mouffe 1985; Laclau 1993; Couldry 2010) and unlock the already established discourse related to that particular heritage. Therefore, in certain moments and contexts dissonance has been worked out and is not an active issue, since the processes of heritage management resulted in *objectivity* or

sedimentation (Laclau 1994, 34)² of one discourse. At some other moments dissonance unlocks the dominant discourse and creates political struggles, burning tensions, confusions, disputes or conflicts which have to be addressed and renegotiated.

The road from active dissonance towards consonance is not an irreversible process and dissonance can be activated and recreated even if there has been a long-term agreement about what certain heritage is, means and represents. An earlier *sedimented* discourse can, at any time, enter the play of politics and be problematized in new articulations (Laclau/Mouffe 1985, 105; Jorgensen/Phillips 2002, 26-30).³ Also, active dissonance can give way to objectivity in which one perspective gets naturalized and the consensus prevails for some time. Therefore, the boundary between latent and active dissonance is fluid and historical. It reflects the line between objectivity and the political in the understanding of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, or between what seems natural and what is contested.

² In Laclau's discourse theory those discourses that are so firmly established that their contingency is forgotten are called objective or sedimented discourse (Laclau 1994, 34; Jorgensen/Phillips 2002). As Jorgensen and Phillips explain (2002, 36-38) objectivity is the historical outcome of political processes and struggles, and sediment discourse is a discourse that is accepted as the truth – that is normalized and seen as objective reality. The boundary between objectivity and contestation of what is objectified is both fluid and historically bounded. Therefore, specific sedimented discourses can enter the play of politics and be problematized through new articulations. When this happens we are talking about active dissonance.

³ In Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory, discourse is a more abstract fixation of meaning, and articulation is the specific action that draws on or transforms the discourse (Laclau/Mouffe 1985, 105; Jorgensen/Phillips 2002, 26-30). An articulation is every new combination of elements that gives elements a new identity, and creates new, even slightly different, meaning. Because of this, articulations can conceptualize change but can also conceptualize reproduction of the dominant meaning. Articulation is used as a discursive practice in a specific sense throughout this research, claiming that different policy texts, project proposals, or actions give new articulations of a certain phenomena and social orders related to heritage.

As opposed to the majority of discussions around heritage dissonance, I do not approach heritage dissonance as a problem in itself but as a tension and quality which testifies to the play among different discourses, and opens the space for a number of diverse actions. Some of these actions tend to lock the existing discourse or to negotiate a discourse in order to close its singular meaning and make it *sedimented*, while others keep the discourse unlocked. In the following chapters I aim to analyse how the understanding of heritage informed through ‘authorized heritage discourse’ (Smith 2006) normalizes the idea of a single meaning innate to heritage and tends to lock the discourse, ignoring the existence of alternative meanings. The locked discourse of one actor faced with the locked contradictory discourse of another can ultimately lead to conflicts resulting in violence and destruction.

Ignoring or reproaching through violence are just two of a range of possible actions related to heritage dissonance. Many other actions create the space to confront different perspectives, try to understand them, reconsider current positions and possibly construct something new out of them. In the discursive framework which I define as ‘inclusive heritage discourse’ dissonance is acknowledged, and the possibility for different voicing is recognized. This discourse allows that heritage can be talked about and worked with in ways that give space for articulating diverse meanings. As such, dissonance can empower de-naturalization of heritage, foster critical thinking and create opportunities for intense intercultural mediation. Therefore, the tension and energy that dissonance in heritage brings is not necessarily the energy of violence, but the energy of action and change, which could be used for the good.

In relation to cultural policy and heritage dissonance, one aspect is of particular interest for this research. At the international cultural policy level, there seems to be a renewed awareness of ‘cultural identity’ in conflicts, and cultural heritage is discussed as a resource through which to develop dialogue, democratic debate and openness between cultures. Since the wars in Yugoslavia in the 1990s, through policy texts such as the Council of Europe’s *Ministerial Declaration on Intercultural Dialogue and Conflict Prevention* (CoE 2003) and *Framework Convention on the Value of Heritage for the Society* (CoE 2005), one important assumption has been put forward:

conflicts between nations, regions and communities embedded in contested interpretations of the past, can be overcome by proper governance of the very same heritage, which, over the long-term, has the potential to create a situation of peace and stability based on common heritage and shared narratives. The research explores this assumption by analysing how it is reflected in practice, in distinctive initiatives and methods of working with heritage dissonance and peace-building in SEE as a region characterized by active heritage dissonance. This closer insight into practices set within specific contexts, aims to unpack the tensions, contradictions and challenges of working with dissonance in the broader debate on heritage and peace-building. It also aims to consider the strengths and weaknesses of models aimed at working with heritage dissonance.

1.1 Theoretical framework

This research has been carried out from an interdisciplinary interpretative constructionist approach and has been designed around two key methods. The first one involves the critical discourse analysis of existing literature and policy documents, aimed at positioning the concept of heritage dissonance by different disciplines and cultural policy texts, leading to a theoretical framework for the field research. The second one is the case study method focusing on selected cases from the SEE region, in which a mix of document analyses, in-depth interviews, focus groups, participant observation and action research have been used, complemented by discourse analyses.

From the analyses of existing literature, it became obvious that even though the concept of dissonant heritage has been a hot topic within heritage, memory and tourism studies, there has been a noticeable lack of discussion within the cultural policy field. For this reason, I have reviewed a significant body of literature and analysed and structured main insights related to the concept of dissonant heritage in order to articulate its implication and manifestations in the field of cultural policy research. From this analysis it was possible to signal the main conceptual and discursive shifts in understanding heritage and draw the main premises for talking about policies for governing heritage dissonance. Chapter 2 reflects on the

main premises of existing literature, in relation to the difference between the concept of 'dissonant heritage' and the concept of 'heritage dissonance' and argues for treating dissonance as an inseparable feature of all heritage.

Drawing on the notion of instruments as a reflection of values and relations between the governing and the governed (Lascoumes/Le Galès 2007), I conducted analyses of international declarations, conventions and charters – created by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), the Council of Europe and UNESCO in order to position heritage dissonance as the object of cultural policy. The analysis is limited to key international documents as a chain of instruments and discursive texts that signal how heritage dissonance is understood and planned to be managed, both internationally and nationally. In analysing conventions prior to the 2000s, I relied on the work of Laurajane Smith (2006) and her analyses of authorized heritage discourse (AHD) as articulated through international policy documents. AHD within these policy documents acts as a framework which relies on the materiality of heritage and understands heritage values and meaning as a given feature that can be unlocked by experts. This is important for our discussion, because through the very process of selection and interpretation envisaged through AHD, a singular meaning of a particular heritage is authorized, while dissonance coming from diverging meanings is ignored and neutralized, leading to a single understanding of the past and identity of a particular community.

Since the turn of the millennium, the framework established through policy instruments within authorized heritage discourse has been open to criticism not only by external groups, but by professionals and policy-makers who operate within the discourse. In practice and academia these criticisms came as early as the 1960s in various versions of new museology (Kisić 2014a), memory studies and critical heritage studies, but the policy field remained unchallenged and unchanged. It is only partially through the three recent conventions – UNESCO *Convention for Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage* 2003, UNESCO *Convention on the Diversity of Cultural Expressions* 2005 and the Council of Europe *Framework Convention on the Value of Heritage for Society* 2005 (Faro Convention) – that concepts such as intangible heritage, cultural diversity, heritage community, common heritage

and participation were introduced. These brought about a new understanding of heritage that is anomalous to the way that heritage has been understood by AHD and as reflected in older conventions.

Multiple conceptual shifts, articulated most distinctively within the CoE Faro Convention, indicate the emergence of a new heritage discourse recognized within the policy field, which I refer to as ‘inclusive heritage discourse’ and compare in relation to the AHD. Understanding heritage within the inclusive heritage discourse is crucial for this research as it brings a different view on the concept of heritage dissonance and the aims, actors and approaches in cultural policies related to heritage. As a framework of thought, it acknowledges dissonance and plurality of values attached to heritage, which then can be dialogued and mediated. It is important to underline that, even though some *articulations* of this new framework are highly present in the spoken and written rhetoric of the policy field, the AHD is still the dominant framework for doing heritage. We can therefore talk about the competing discourses and tensions emerging between older and newer policy texts; between newer policy texts and some older policy measures and instruments for implementing them; and between newer policy texts and the way practitioners think about and practice heritage. In all this, I argue that the issue of discourse which one uses is crucial for analysing the governance of dissonance, on both the nominal policy level and in practice.

1.2 South East Europe as a testing zone

Even though there are numerous exemplary cases of working with active heritage dissonance around the world, the choice to focus in depth on South East Europe (SEE) was made for several reasons. First, SEE is a region characterized by recent wars, ethnic, class, territorial and ideological changes, that have made dissonance highly visible. Throughout these changes, heritage has been deliberately used and abused to negotiate new positions, to create divisions, walls and hatred among and within contemporary nation-states. Contested interpretations and ownership claims create dissonance both among and within nations, which impede

stabilization, trust and cooperation in the region. The SEE region is neither in 'peacetime' nor in 'war-time', but lingers in 'conflict-time', a period in which conflict is not absent, but rather transformed into proxy war, played out through competitive heritage interpretations, antagonistic *memorialization* and memory wars (Britt 2013).

Awareness and recognition of dissonance and heritage (mis)use comes from both within and outside the SEE region, and results in quite a vivid and diverse ecology of actors who intervene with policies and actions. This is the second reason for choosing SEE as an investigation ground for reconciliation policies which work around heritage dissonance. There is no other European region in which UNESCO, the Council of Europe, the European Commission, foreign foundations, development agencies, civil society organizations and professional bodies have invested time and funds to come up with initiatives which would reconcile and create dialogue among conflicting sides to the extent that this has been the case in SEE. Furthermore, the uses of heritage throughout the conflicts in former Yugoslavia inspired policy discourse on heritage and reconciliation, and fostered the creation of European policy documents that explicitly connect heritage pluralism, conflicts and peace-building, such as the already mentioned Council of Europe *Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for the Society*. The terms reconciliation, dialogue and peace-building can be heard on a daily basis in the region, but the effects of this desirable rhetoric on heritage and memory related practices are questionable. Due to this, the critical scrutiny of peace-building through governance of dissonant heritage in SEE presents a testing ground for ambitions set by diverse actors.

In analysing the politics of memory, conflicts and reconciliation in SEE, existing research has tended to deal with the destruction of heritage in recent wars, memorialization, erection of monuments, commemorations of wars, analyses of history textbooks and dealing with the violent recent past as a prerequisite of sustainable peace. These discussions have rarely addressed the practices of memory institutions and their perpetuation of historical myths and competing historical narratives in relation to peace and reconciliation. Politics of reconciliation and memory have been so closely connected to transitional justice and dealing with the recent past that they

seldom related to questioning the layers of heritage which are not directly related to violent conflicts, but which form mutually exclusive identities and versions of history expressed in museums and heritage sites. Heritage dissonance is the concept unifying all these aspects, cutting across historic periods, actors and cultural policy levels.

Finally, as “latent values appearing both in cultural policy debates and in the cultural life are a formidable challenge to any evaluation system and researchers who are responsible for the evaluation process” (Mitchell 2002, 14), my insights in the context of the SEE region made it possible to go beyond rhetoric deeper into the interrelations and socio-political dynamics of researched practices. Growing up and working in the SEE region throughout the conflicts and regime changes has provided another layer in the research, adding colour to questions, approaches and understanding of the topic.

This all being said, I find it important to underline that the terms South East Europe, Balkans and Western Balkans are often used interchangeably. As regions are not a given, but invented by political actors as a political programme (Neumann 2001), these three references have become immensely dynamic and fluid over the last two decades. Different (international) bodies not only used different terms for referring to the countries from Slovenia to Turkey, but also drew different geographical boundaries depending on their political frameworks. These terms reflected different geopolitical interests and interchangeably included: ex-Yugoslav republics; ex-Yugoslav republics plus Albania; ex-Yugoslav republics plus Albania, minus Slovenia and since 2013 Croatia; non-EU member countries; or ex-Yugoslav republics plus Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, Greece, Turkey and/or Cyprus, and Moldova.

This diversity of geopolitical frameworks used by international actors, as well as the feelings they produce within the labelled countries, has had an effect on the programmes, funds and opportunities available within the region. They have also affected the programmes and actors which are the subject of this research. Even though the case studies in this research do not cover all countries, I use the term SEE as it is the broadest one geographically and is not as connected to socio-cultural stereotypes as the term Balkans.⁴

⁴ The label ‘Balkan’ is, in the language of Saussurean semiotics, a signifier that has a complex, and sometimes rather problematic, relationship with the ‘signified’ (Demetropoulou 1999/2000).

1.3 Methods for analysing case studies

As the theoretical basis of this research is set around dissonance as a quality of heritage, heritage discourses as frameworks for the attitudes towards dissonance, and heritage practices as ways of working with dissonance. Therefore, a conscious choice was made not to select, study and compare cases of policy tools related solely to 'dissonant heritage' sites. The aim was to move ontologically from fetishizing artefacts, sites and places as confining particular memory, towards discussing practices which form heritage and negotiate certain interpretations and aspects of memory. The research is therefore focused on practices of negotiating heritage dissonance by diverse actors through which I try to illuminate the ways in which their agency, strategies, interests, strengths and limitations influence and are influenced by a particular context, as well as particular discourses, politics and policies of heritage.

Furthermore, even though the most obvious conflicts reflected in heritage in the SEE are those among nation-states, it is a deliberate choice not to focus solely on national perspectives and policies, but to include cases of international, supra-national and subaltern actors and projects. This is because the recent "transformation and proliferation of relevant fields of influence and decision-making in heritage policy work make simple state-society dichotomies difficult to maintain" (Coombe 2013, 378). Cultural policy is increasingly concerned not only with the role of authorities, but with the role of the private sector and civil society sector in the field of culture which widens the scope of cultural policy analysis beyond observation of state action and/or inaction (Bonet/Négrier 2011, 583-585). For that reason, the concept of governmentality is used, understood as assemblages of agencies, technologies, techniques and practices (Li 2007a and 2007b; Clarke 2008) as it enables a range of parties to be recognized and involved in attempts to regulate the process of meaning-making through heritage. This is of particular relevance for the governing of heritage dissonance, as national approaches and heritage policy systems are so bound into traditional AHD and protection of 'national and state interests' that they would allow an analysis of the problems, but would limit the scope of alternative practices and solutions. Therefore,

examples of the intersection of dissonant heritage, conflicts and policies for reconciliation envisioned on civil, international and transnational levels are more likely to create new spaces for dialogue as well as new, specific strategies and practices from which to learn and influence policies.

Even though the choice not to focus on national perspectives and policies has been made on purpose, it became apparent during the research that all the other policy levels explicitly or implicitly relate to national frameworks, much more so than I could have initially foreseen. For most of the actors and initiatives researched here, it is the relationship with national authorities and (mostly ‘imagined’) interests that creates limitations for actions and possible influence. The research looks at four initiatives which differ in scope, focus, approach and actors involved, but all of which worked with heritage dissonance in SEE with an aim to contribute to reconciliation and peace-building:

Case One – the process of transnational serial nomination of the medieval tombstones called Stećaks for the UNESCO World Heritage List, put forward by the Ministries of Culture of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia. The project was implemented by experts from all four states with facilitation from the UNESCO Office in Sarajevo. This case study, outlined in Chapter 5, focuses on one of the most established heritage policy mechanisms – the World Heritage List (WHL). It provides an analysis of how the prestige of this mechanism can serve as a unifying force for transnational cooperation and for crafting a common interpretation of shared heritage in SEE, which for the last 150 years has been the subject of dissonant interpretations and ownership claims.

Case Two – the travelling exhibition titled *Imagining the Balkans: Identities and Memories in the Long 19th Century*, is a project initiated by the UNESCO Office in Venice with the participation of national museums from 12 SEE countries as well as a number of foreign experts. This case is discussed in Chapter 6 and studies how an attempt to de-construct and discuss 12 competing national narratives ended up with a common interpretation of the long 19th century in SEE and stayed silent on contested or diverging issues.

Case Three – *The New Old Museum*, a project aimed at the *musealization* of Yugoslavia through the creation of a permanent display at the Museum of Yugoslav History (MIJ) in Belgrade, which brought together professionals from all ex-Yugoslav states, instead of featuring only a Serbian perspective. This case is discussed in Chapter 7 and outlines the story of a museum which deals with heritage that not only has stakeholders among other ex-Yugoslav countries, but has live witnesses among citizens. Therefore, dissonance in this case comes from the epistemological privilege of each citizen of Yugoslavia, making it impossible to create a permanent display which could feature all these views.

Case Four – Croatian Memories Archive, an online *musealization* of personal memories of wars, implemented by Documenta – Center for Dealing with the Past, an NGO from Croatia working in the field of transitional justice and dealing with the past. This project is discussed in Chapter 8, which outlines how heritage methods are used in the context of human rights to counteract a single official public memory through pluralism of individual memories of wars.

All of these case studies have been selected based on five criteria. First, they have been developed by policy actors at different levels: supranational such as UNESCO; national such as Ministries of Culture or state museums; foreign and local civil society organizations engaged in heritage; and local civil society organizations engaged in human rights and transitional justice. They all have a transnational or inter-ethnic character, since none of the actors and tools chosen focus solely on one nation-state or one ethnic community. This is no surprise since new approaches and heritage interpretations are more likely to take place when one is forced to step out of the frames and regulations of a single nation and thus become challenged by an opposing view, encouraged to start a dialogue and to find solutions that can include diverse opinions.

The majority of the studied initiatives and the tools used by them have been designed to create a platform for dialogue. They all claim to use heritage as a tool for mediation, peace-building and reconciliation in the region. For

some of them, this is spelled out explicitly in the mission statement (Documenta, UNESCO), project proposals or media announcements (*Imagining the Balkans*, *New Old Museum*), while some have it as an implicit agenda (such as in the case of the joint nomination to the World Heritage List). They work with heritage that has been the object of conflicted memory discourses and/or ownership claims. The medieval tombstones, Stećaks, that are the object of the UNESCO WHL joint nomination have also been the object of national and ethnic ownership disputes between Serbia, Bosnia and Croatia; *Imagining the Balkans* deals with the long 19th century in the Balkans and the formation of nation-states which led to conflicting narratives over heroes, territories and customs in SEE; *The New Old Museum* deals with the history of Yugoslavia, which has been contested both among and within the ex-Yugoslav republics; *Croatian Memories* archives and communicates individual memories of violence, war and oppression in Croatia from WWII until the present, which did not enter into official public memory. Finally, they all bring together diverse voices and create new dynamics of meaning-making through heritage, but do this through different approaches – from somewhat participative to more unilateral.

In order to research the case studies, three qualitative analytical tools have been used: document analysis mixed with on-site and off-site enquiries into tangible outcomes of each case study, such as exhibitions, artworks, lectures, applications, publications and press releases; narrative interviews and focus groups with agents of studied cases (policy advisors, heritage professionals, civil society actors and academics); and participatory observation mixed with action research. In each of these methods, there was a special focus on the analyses of discourses used. In addition, desk research, using indirect sources from databases such as Herein, Compendium CP, UNESCO and national governments was used in order to frame the case studies within the wider heritage policy ecology.

Each of the four case studies is structured around four levels of analysis:

- 1. Background information**, including the wider cultural policy context, history, statute and strategy of the organization (if available).
- 2. Analysis of promises**, understood as the initial aims and goals, of the

studied project/initiative reflected in project applications, speeches, press announcements, websites.

3. **Analysis of ‘realities’**, reflected in evaluation reports and records including existing visitors’ impressions, evaluations and press clippings.
4. **Critical analysis of ‘realities’**, reflected in discourse analysis of tangible outcomes of the studied initiatives, such as exhibitions, artworks, lectures, applications, publications, and press releases. This also included an analysis of interviews and focus groups with agents of the examined policies. The aim of these was to understand how they talk about and evaluate the importance of the initiative in focus, as well as how they thought the initiative had changed their practices and understanding. This analysis also took place through informal discussions and participation in events.

This combined approach allowed me to deal with the confidentiality and feasibility issues when using the data generated during my field experience. It is also important to note that the field research was limited to a certain time period and interviews with a group of people who were not only part of the larger social system to which I belong, but also part of the community in which I work. I already knew some of the people whom I interviewed, and I have collaborated with some of them. As a result, depending on the interviewee, I had a mixed identity of colleague, friend and researcher. The second important aspect was that the research was a consequence of what was observable in practice. Even though the research was limited in time, the events participated in, discussed and observed had sometimes taken place before this research was designed. Therefore it was possible to study and map some issues in a different way than when the actors knew that they were part of a research project.

Finally, during the process of collecting documents and conducting interviews, most of the organizations and individuals contacted knew, or could easily find out the topic and purpose of the research due to the CPRA Award. Even though efforts were made to collect all relevant documents related to each organization (statutes, strategies, annual plans and annual

reports) as well as for the studied initiative (project proposal, project report, records from the meetings, evaluations, press-clippings, impressions books), different organizations provided different levels of information.⁵

In total, 40 interviews were conducted and two focus groups were convened with professionals who were leading or directly participating in each of the initiatives. When it came to the two projects supported or initiated by UNESCO, it was a challenge to find participants that would respond to the request for an interview. Some interviews took place within a few months and others a year after the initial request, while a few of them never responded.⁶ It also became obvious that some of the interviewees would be politically correct or self-censored when recorded. Some would only accept to be interviewed after someone else from the group had already been interviewed. Different actors interviewed for the same case study found different information unsuitable for public use because of their responsibility towards their own state, institution, colleagues or the project itself. Sometimes the interviewee felt it important to emphasize what should be included or excluded from the research. Confidentiality became an important issue with permission to quote certain information not being granted. In most cases, these censored details were not particularly important to be quoted, but were useful for understanding the conceptual underpinnings of the broader phenomena which they represented.

Gratifyingly, even in the case studies in which a majority of interviewees would try to stick to the official project discourse, there were always at least one or two people who were willing to openly discuss some topics and critically reflect on the process and their position within it. After interviewing a few participants within a certain case study, it became possible to put together a mosaic of the key stages, challenges and achievements of a

⁵ The organization Cultural Heritage without Borders, which was planned to be included as a fifth case study, was omitted due to time constraints and conceptual divergence from the other four.

⁶ Due to the political sensitivity of certain projects, it was the aim to contact at least one representative from each country involved in the project, even though at a certain point there was enough data to make relevant observations.

particular project and to understand the relationships and positions within it. During the analysis, it became interesting to see the nuances in actors' perceptions on issues such as which information they considered important; how they constructed the process they went through; whether they reflected on it critically or followed the formal, descriptive narrative established in the evaluation documents and public speeches; how their personal and professional background played a role in interpreting the importance and significance of a particular project. For all these reasons I did not pretend to follow the processes, people and projects connected to the chosen case studies from a distanced, external position. In reality, my method of interview was fluid, shifting from the position of observer to the one of participant, discussion partner and interviewer, always conscious of how these changing perspectives influenced the research and data generation.

In order to better understand the context and phenomena, and complement collected documents and interviews, I attended meetings, events and conferences organized or attended by actors of this research, including international, national and local conferences. These events represented an opportunity to open discussions related to heritage interpretation, dissonance, participation, role of museums and museum professionals in dealing with unpleasant history, or the perception of heritage as a concept. This provided insights into the relations and interactions among different actors as well as ideas about the kinds of conversations, narratives and concepts which exist among the community of heritage professionals in the SEE region and beyond.

Three events were of particular interest. The first was the annual conference of the Balkan Museum Network, organized by Cultural Heritage without Borders (CHwB) in Tirana, Albania in April 2014, which was significant for three reasons. First, one of the key topics of the conference was 'Negotiating the Past', and I was invited to a session and workshop on working with the idea of dissonant heritage in museums. This resulted in reactions and thoughts of museum professionals from SEE on some of the key concepts behind this research. It also provided specific theories and methods for addressing dissonance in the museum context and was a dynamic setting for discussion. Second, the conference was attended by two

other organizations which are part of this research, Documenta and the Museum of Yugoslav History (MIJ). Third, the conference included a discussion on the drafted strategy of the Balkan Museum Network and official launch of the network, which was preparing to become independent from Cultural Heritage without Borders. This discussion was important because it reflected the relationships between the Steering Committee and the network members, as well as issues such as: the use of the term Balkans and its relation to the geographical scope of the network, donor politics and the relationship of museums to civil society organizations.

The other important event was a conference of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) Serbia organized in the Museum of Yugoslav History in Belgrade, June 2014, where I gave a lecture on heritage dissonance and museums, focusing particularly on the methods used to tackle dissonance. Here again, the comments, questions and reactions of museum curators contributed to the understanding of how little discussion and knowledge exist on this topic in Serbia. The third event was a high level conference on *Cultural Heritage as a Driver of Sustainable Development*, organized by the Regional Cooperation Council as the final stage of the Ljubljana Process II, in Dubrovnik in October 2014. The event was attended by officials from UNESCO and Cultural Heritage without Borders and was significant for marking the discourses which are used by different actors, including the European Commission representatives and Regional Cooperation Council.

These events raised additional questions to be addressed in the interviews and were useful for checking the definitions of terms that participants used in interviews and for observing situations later described in interviews. In the process of conducting and analysing interviews, these observations were corrective mechanisms that provided an insight into the validity, distortions or inaccuracies in descriptions provided by some of the informants (Marshall/Rossmann 1995). Furthermore, they made it possible to analyse the cases and decision-making from a multi-sited perspective (Marcus 1998) – international, national, local and individual.

The position of lecturer or workshop facilitator, created the space for not only generating research data, but for contributing to the knowledge of different stakeholders on the topic and potentially influencing their way of

thinking and future work. This was also the case in some of the interviews where the aim was not only to “understand but contribute to the change of certain practices” (McKernan 1991, 10). Particularly inspiring were the conversations about cultural policy influences, reconciliation and heritage dissonance, as these concepts have not earned much reflection by some of the actors. Some of the organizations did not see themselves as policy actors, even though they were; some were not rethinking reconciliation as a term and the philosophy behind it even though they used it; some approached heritage from an authorized discourse perspective without being aware of the power of interpretation.

These conversations engaged the interviewees in different ways and opened new areas of reflection on their work, as well as on this research. The fieldwork demonstrated the need for more regular encounters between heritage researchers and practitioners, in order for researchers to be able to address the realities of practices and for practitioners to be able to use theoretical concepts and research findings in order to be open to new possibilities and alter practices.

The strength of this combination of qualitative methods is that theoretical resources could be used to analyse a set of data in which context and change are of high importance. Even though the focus of the analysis was on the specificities of each case study, the data generated through them allowed a more general reflection on the importance of political objectives of different actors in the transition context. The interrelating themes and opinions which appeared during interviews shed light on the socio-political dynamics among intergovernmental organizations, international organizations and development agencies, states, public memory institutions and civil society organizations operating in the heritage field.

Data generated through field work was assessed using discourse analysis to identify themes and narratives embedded in generated data: in policy tools, narratives of the results (exhibitions, publications, evaluations, press clippings, etc.) and narratives present in the storytelling of actors interviewed, in particular in relation to the two discursive frameworks – the authorized heritage discourse and the inclusive heritage discourse. Policy analyses were used to critically reflect upon the relationship between inputs and outcomes

of explored case studies and to map inconsistencies, challenges and strengths of particular practices. The projects selected varied in their approaches and scopes, so I did not attempt to make thorough comparisons between the various cases. Instead there is a discussion on some of the strengths and weaknesses of each project analysed from the viewpoint of approaches used in working with heritage, dissonance and reconciliation. The interviews were aimed to assess actors' perceptions of how the process of implementing each of these four initiatives has affected their attitudes, practices and understanding of their roles, and how it has affected the policies, narratives and practices of their organizations.

Besides this, through the analyses of data generated during the field research, I pointed out the changes of discourse in heritage domain by mapping how different actors talk about heritage and how these understandings are reflected in their practices. It became particularly interesting to analyse the internal conflicts arising from the (partial) adoption of a new discourse, as well as challenges and boundaries of the imagined participative, multi-perspective and bottom-up practices in trying to find a suitable approach to heritage dissonance. The tension between the promised goal and the outcome of some initiatives is indicative, as it reflects the discrepancy between a desirable outcome promised in policy texts, public speeches and project proposals and the highest possible achievement within a given context.

The field reality showed itself to be much less rosy and optimistic than the potential of heritage for dialogue as claimed by policy texts. However, the research did show that there are individuals, organizations and institutions that are consciously working with heritage dissonance and using it in the context of political ideals such as reconciliation, peace-building, human rights and inclusion. In doing so, they are facing numerous challenges and limitations. For this reason, it was of utmost importance to analyse not only the relationship between the aim and what was delivered, but also to develop an understanding of the processes and negotiations which took place in between.

This study argues that more reflective evaluations are needed, which do not blindly repeat promises set by project goals, but also explain the weak

points, challenges and spaces for improvement. The research points out the need for cultural policies to look more deeply and evaluate more freely what already exists, in order to create opportunities for real learning and improvements that could back up the grand rhetoric of heritage and reconciliation in SEE and beyond. Even though none of the studied initiatives has a mechanism on how to measure their success in terms of reconciliation (nor do I think that we could measure it), there is a genuine value in trying to reflect on what working with heritage dissonance and reconciliation means to each of them, how they work towards it and what they consider to be achievements in this regard. Questions which help us to understand ‘what did not work, in which sense and why?’ are as important as those telling us what went well, since the reality of practices is not nearly as clear cut and rosy as policy assumptions are.

The particularities of the discourses, practices and relations within SEE served as examples to simultaneously develop and illustrate some of the arguments of the research. Even though these particularities are context-specific and case-specific, they can help illuminate some of the tensions of working with heritage dissonance elsewhere around the world. I hope that the insights in these practices will help to better understand and critically reflect on the use of heritage and reconciliation discourse in other post-conflict zones in order to move beyond the mere political rhetoric and contribute to desirable social change.

Dissonance in this research is placed at the very centre of understanding heritage as a space of negotiation, dissent and conflict, which needs to be acknowledged and mediated. It is used as a concept that allows for identifying, categorizing and analysing policies, approaches and practices that reflect on and deal with heritage contestations and heritage-based conflicts. The research explores the spaces and practices related to heritage dissonance which exist as alternatives to violence or complete ignorance, and analyses mechanisms which make dissonance visible and negotiable. Understanding these mechanisms can help to make improvements, share learning from diverse practices and eventually apply the learning to longer-term programmes, strategies and policies related to acute situations of heritage dissonance. Furthermore, as every heritage is dissonant, the

insights from the research can help in rethinking the conceptual, normative and pragmatic bases for policies related to heritage which is not actively contested at this moment.

2. Dissonant Heritage or Heritage Dissonance?

The heritage process is inherently dissonant... it becomes important within certain struggles. These struggles may occur at family, local, community, national and international levels, but central to them will be conflict over whose experiences and perspectives are valid and whose are not.

(Smith 2006, 296)

Even though celebrated as a unifying force and source of rootedness, shared identity and belonging, heritage simultaneously always works to disinherit, divide and articulate differences with 'other' groups. The process of giving meaning to the past through heritage so as to (re)construct who we are, how others see us and how we understand others is never performed for its own sake. The production of meaning is a key instrument for the stabilization of power relations, which sometimes become so naturalized and part of a common sense that they stop being questioned (Gramsci 1971). Through claiming who we are in relation to our past, we legitimize a particular social order (Connerton 1989, 11-12) and claim a particular understanding of the reality and our rights, relations and responsibilities in it. Our claims are therefore often competing with different, sometimes conflicting beliefs, values and aspirations of 'others'. The order of discourse of particular heritage is therefore never fixed, even if there is a dominant

hegemonic discourse that has been naturalized over time. Heritage gets invested with different contents by different social actors in the struggle to make their particular understanding of history and society the prevailing one.

The concept of *dissonant heritage* was introduced to the academic scene two decades ago by John E. Tunbridge and Gregory Ashworth who used this term to address the conflicting nature of heritage which arises when different actors attribute contested meanings and values to the past (Tunbridge/Ashworth 1996). These contested interpretations of objects, places, events, persons or practices from the past create dissonance and challenge the dominant perception of heritage as connected to comfortable, harmonious and consensual views about the meaning of the past. Furthermore, they notice that not only what is interpreted, but how it is interpreted and by whom, will create quite specific messages about the value and meaning of specific heritage places and the past it represents (Tunbridge/Ashworth 1996, 27).

They make an important distinction between past as ‘what has happened’, history as ‘selective attempts to describe this past’ and heritage as ‘a contemporary product shaped from history’ which is created through the processes of selection and interpretation. This distinction recognizes that dissonance is created each time something is named or selected as heritage, since the interpretative process of heritage making will necessarily incorporate some understanding, meaning and point of view but marginalize, ignore or disinherit the others (Teye/Timothy 2004, 149; Tunbridge/Ashworth 1996, 30; Smith/Waterton 2009, 295). Therefore, dissonance is a condition, active or latent, to all heritage (Tunbridge/Ashworth 1996, 21; Graham/Ashworth/Tunbridge 2000). In focusing on cases of active dissonance, they point out the four most common situations in which dissonance is made visible:

The first situation is the one in which “messages implicit in the interpretation of the same or related heritage may conflict with each other and thus themselves creating a dissonance among the consumers who have to incorporate contradictory ideas in their psychological constructs” (Tunbridge/Ashworth 1996, 29). Even though the authors discuss this

situation mainly in relationship to market segmentation in tourism where interpretations about a certain heritage site, object or practice created for diverse groups of tourists and locals are not at ease with each other. The idea of heritage relativity and interpretation has been well articulated within museology and heritage studies. The intangible information dealt with when creating, understanding and communicating heritage are always cultural, thus unfixed and dependent on the context and the interpreter (Maroević 1992; Pearce 1994, 19-30; Tilley 1994, 67-76). Memory studies reveal that in a process of inscribing selective memory as heritage, different stories or elements can be chosen, enhanced, avoided and compromised (Assmann/Czaplicka 1995; Nora 1996-1998; Misztal 2003; Kuljić 2006; Lennon/Foley 2000, 67). They are, however, made visible in situations in which contested interpretations are actively present and communicated.

The second situation of dissonance may appear if a message is received differently than intended. Despite leaving the impression that there are particular situations in which this difference is significant, the idea that every person or group will construct their own meaning and understanding of received messages is another aspect of all communication and the same holds true for heritage communication.

In the third situation, dissonance may occur if messages articulated through particular heritage continue “to be projected to a changed society, which has quite different policies and goals from those of the society for which they were originally intended” (Tunbridge/Ashworth 1996, 29). If heritage messages are dependent on the regimes of value that a certain society has, then the change of values and needs of a society will lead towards dissonance and the need to actualize not only messages, but also policies and instruments. Objects, sites, landscapes and practices go through diverse regimes of value (Kopytoff 1986; Appadurai 1994, 76-92) throughout different times and, every context will select only certain data and aspects when (re)creating heritage via interpretation. Therefore, the change, actualization of the past (Буламобух 2004; Đerić 2010; Kisić 2014b) and motivation or interest of the interpreter are central characteristics of heritage through times, regimes and cultures (Kisić 2015a), not simply the consequence of market segmentation.

The fourth and last case of dissonance is caused by undesirable heritage messages “that society, or sections of it, would rather not hear themselves or permit others to hear” (Tunbridge/Ashworth 1996, 29). This idea is closely linked to the assumption that heritage is a pleasant source of pride, greatness, enjoyment, confidence, self-assurance, positive emotions and representations. For this very reason each legatee will attempt to highlight only those aspects of the past that are not distorting the positive self-image of his/her community and that fit into current needs or demands for it (Tomić 1987, 43-46; Domić 2000, 10; Tunbridge/Ashworth 1996, 6; Wight/Lennon 2007, 527). The negative aspects that are dissonant in relationship to the dominant, positive aspects of heritage will thus be marginalized, ignored, destroyed or reinterpreted.

2.1 Dissonant heritage as a ‘special’ heritage niche

Despite the recognition that all heritage is dissonant, Tunbridge and Ashworth focus mainly on the economic uses of heritage where dissonance is created due to the process of commoditization, adaptation for tourism, sacred use, as well as atrocity sites and war heritage.⁷ As a consequence of the need to come to terms with remains of the past that can be actively uncomfortable, embarrassing, traumatic and contested, the concept of dissonant heritage has become a particularly hot topic in the series of articles and books which are using the term dissonant heritage to refer to the sites, objects and practices that are being or still are contested. In these writings the term dissonant heritage is often used interchangeably with terms such as difficult, traumatic, negative, sensitive and painful heritage.

Some of these articles deal with so-called ‘dark tourism’ (Lennon/Foley 2000; Stone 2006; Wight 2006; Sharpley/Stone 2009; Merrill/Schmidt 2010) or ‘thanatourism’ (Seaton 1996 and 2009; Hartmann 2014), ‘atrocity sites and holocaust sites’ (Lennon/Foley 1999; Ashworth 2002), ‘disaster sites’,

⁷ “Dissonant heritage is present whenever there is more than one meaning to an object, place or landscape; most often it is embedded in the conflict between tourism and sacred use of a sight or between local and global” (Graham/Ashworth/Tunbridge 2000).

'battlefields' and/or refer to 'sites of conflict' (Ryan 2007; Bunten 2011). Others refer more specifically to 'prison heritage' (Blackburn 2000; Dewar/Fredericksen 2003; Strange/Krempa 2003), 'heritage of totalitarian regimes' (Näriepa 2006; Macdonald 2008; Dragičević Šešić 2011; Kutma 2012; Williams 2012), 'memorials' such as war graves, catacombs and graveyards (Seaton 1999; Hannam 2006; Ashworth 2008; Logan/Reeves 2008), 'slavery' (Graham/Dann/Seaton 2001; Teye/Timothy 2004) or 'heritage of a colonial past' (Lemelin et al. 2013) or of 'multicultural societies' (Ashworth/Graham/Tunbridge 2000 and 2007; Graham/Howard 2008).

When discussing dissonance within tourism studies, particular attention has been given to the marketing of sensitive heritage sites in tourism (Austin 2002), selective interpretation (Wight/Lennon 2007), attractiveness of negative stereotypes and dissonant narratives and the ability of tourist narratives and routes to cross contested barriers (Dragičević Šešić/Rogač 2014). Other scholars refer to 'commoditization of uncomfortable memories' (Blackburn 2000) and balancing the needs and desires of diverse tourists and locals in ethical and practical terms (Lemelin et al. 2013).

Even though most of the above-referenced authors point out that heritage is always made in the present, by the present and for present purposes, this body of writing has implicitly created a tendency to separate heritage that is dissonant and problematic from all other 'normal', comfortable and consensual heritage. This tendency has serious consequences for thinking about and creating policies for dissonant heritage since it creates a framework that makes us perceive only certain sites as problematic and needing to 'be tackled', 'dealt with', 'managed and governed' and treated in a special way (Smith 2006, 81). As a result, the recognition of dissonance is not used to claim the need for redefinition in policy and management practices for heritage in general, but only to reconsider tools, instruments and processes for managing dissonance in particularly contested heritage sites, objects or landscapes.

In defining the concept of dissonant heritage, Tunbridge and Ashworth claim that the very concept is a useful tool not only for understanding how heritage works, but also for dealing with dissonance so as to move to consonance. Similar understandings can be found in Western music theory,

where dissonance signifies active chords (Kamien 2008, 41) which demand an onward motion, an action that moves them to more stable chords. Therefore, consonance is the ideal seen as the end of a process of dealing with dissonance, which suggests that mitigation, avoidance, elimination or diffusion of dissonance are the goal of proper heritage management and governance (Tunbridge/Ashworth 1996, 263). This idea of 'working out' the dissonance has ascribed a negative connotation to dissonance as a quality, underlined further by the fact that 'dissonant heritage' is most often used when talking about war and atrocity sites.

The wish to reduce dissonance often leads to marginalization, ignorance or destruction of a certain heritage or its aspects, but it can lead to addressing, processing and conscious demarcation of today's society from past ideas, conflicts and wrongdoings (Tunbridge/Asworth 1996). Some authors put forward the idea that tourism related to conflicting heritage is seen as a driver for a culture of peace, intercultural understanding and reconciliation (Moufakkir/Kelly 2010), while creation of cross border tourism routes and narratives based on dissonant heritage could be a tool for discursive exchange and mediation of cross-cultural barriers (Dragičević Šešić/Rogač 2014). These ideas are important since they point out that dissonance is not negative in itself but is a quality that can be used in many different directions for many different purposes, including mediation, reconciliation and dialogue.

2.2 Heritage as inherently dissonant process

Smith, in her book *Uses of Heritage* (2006), discusses heritage dissonance in a more holistic way by relating it to her discussion about authorized heritage discourse (AHD). According to Smith (2006, 4-5, 87-192), AHD is a framework and 'specific mentality' which understands heritage values as intrinsic, promotes the idea that heritage is the expression of national and community identity via intrinsic values, and implies a single past that is visible through material remains which have to be protected as they once were, with a strong 'conserve as found' ethos. Its valorisation is a consequence of universal aesthetics, taste and values determined by experts

while laics, as audiences, visitors and tourists are passively introduced and instructed to understand and protect it. AHD, according to Smith, acts as a powerful conceptual framework which hides the ideological basis of heritage creation, regulation and management. She emphasizes that all heritage is dissonant and that AHD continually works to neutralize this dissonance through its networks, management practices, regulations and pre-assumptions, which creates the situation in which only some types of heritage are considered dissonant and others are labelled as normal.

In offering an alternative understanding of heritage, Smith (2006, 82-84) moves from AHD and defines heritage as a cultural process, as a communicative practice in which the past gives resources for conflicts and disputes over what should be valued, why and in which ways. She argues that heritage is an active process of power negotiation and mediation of cultural, social and political change in which individuals and groups take positions in relation to the past. They do so by performing “a range of activities such as remembering, communicating, commemorating, passing on knowledge and memories, (re)constructing, asserting and expressing identity, social and cultural values and meanings” (Smith 2006, 83), as well as by forgetting, destroying, disinheriting, marginalizing, ignoring. These processes make dissonance visible since they open the space for negotiation over who has the right and ownership of specific heritage and identity.

Rather than viewing these conflicts as case specific, the cultural process and performance that is heritage is about the negotiation of these conflicts. Heritage is dissonant...

(Smith 2006, 82)

Heritage-related conflicts, contestations and dissonance have always existed, but were obscured by AHD and its governance models, which worked well in the then-existing paradigm. Heritage dissonance, however, has been pushed forward and made visible by human rights movements, post-colonial reflexivity, claims by indigenous people, wars and changes of regimes (Barkan 2000). Smith argues that the tendency to identify, analyse and discuss heritage dissonance as a site-specific problem that should be

managed and regulated differently from other heritage is yet another face of the AHD that tries to keep dominant heritage practices fixed and safe. This makes dissonant heritage an exception and not the rule that puts on trial the whole heritage management and governance system.

Even though I rely strongly on ideas articulated by Tunbridge and Ashworth around the concept of dissonant heritage, I use the critique articulated by Smith. I therefore refer to 'heritage dissonance' instead of 'dissonant heritage' in order to consistently point out that any heritage has dissonance as a quality and that its meanings are contingent. I do recognize that there are segments of heritage with dominantly interpreted values and meanings naturalized to the extent that they do not create any tensions. However, it needs to be underlined that not only monuments of past regimes or war and atrocity sites are dissonant, and that dissonance also arises from identity and memory politics at least as much as from the commoditization of heritage. Dissonance exists as a latent quality of any heritage – it is present as a passive potential. This latent quality becomes active only when a new voice(s) is/are articulated (Laclau/Mouffe 1985; Couldry 2010) and unlocks the already established discourse related to that particular heritage. Therefore, at certain moments and in contexts dissonance has been worked through and is no longer an active issue, since the processes of heritage management resulted in *sedimentation* of one discourse. At some other moments dissonance unlocks the dominant discourse and creates political struggles, burning tensions, confusions, disputes or conflicts which have to be addressed and renegotiated.

Importantly, the road from active dissonance towards consonance is not an irreversible process and dissonance can be recreated once there is agreement about what certain heritage is, means and represents. An earlier *sedimented* discourse can, at any time, enter the play of politics and be problematized in new *articulations* (Laclau 1990). Also, active dissonance can give way to objectivity in which one perspective is naturalized and the consensus prevails for some time. Therefore, the boundary between latent and active dissonance is fluid as is the historical boundary which reflects the boundary between objectivity and the political, or between what seems natural and what is contested.

Dissonant does not have to mean contradictory, but could also mean unstable, unusual in combination, inconsistent, incompatible, irreconcilable, clashing, different. The idea of heritage dissonance sheds light on heritage as a political process of negotiation, mediation and regulation of identities, conflicts and power relations. Ultimately, acknowledgement of the dissonant nature of heritage that questions who interprets and controls the past, for which reasons and how, presents a fundamental challenge to international and national heritage management, policies and practices established by AHD. It is therefore a tension and quality which unlocks or challenges the *sedimentation* of a single discourse and opens the space for a negotiation of meaning via diverse actions and agencies. Working out dissonance is possible through a diversity of approaches, such as destruction, oblivion, ignorance, creating consensus, negotiating compromise or presenting a pluralism of interpretations by a diversity of actors. Approaches beyond ignorance, destruction and violence can allow us to face different perspectives, try to understand them, reconsider our position and possibly construct new understandings of reality.

Particularly important in relation to dissonance is the discursive shift related to heritage in cultural policy frameworks, since the diversity of choices regarding how to resolve dissonance is influenced not only by our conscious intentions but also by the heritage discourse we choose to operate in. The next chapter aims to show that concepts such as participation, equality, inclusion and cultural diversity used in relation to heritage have articulated a new discourse that challenges AHD as defined by Smith. This new discourse, which I define as ‘inclusive heritage discourse’, acknowledges dissonance and its uses for dialogue and intercultural mediation.

3. Heritage

Dissonance as the Object of Cultural Policy

Heritage uses historical traces and tells historical tales. But these tales and traces are stitched into fables closed to critical scrutiny. Heritage is immune to criticism because it is not erudition but catechism – not checkable fact but credulous allegiance. Heritage is not a testable or even plausible version of our past; it is a declaration of faith in that past.

(Lowenthal 1998, 121)

The general lack of explicit reference to dissonant heritage in policy documents could lead to the conclusion that policies for heritage dissonance do not yet exist or are just emerging, making it impossible and useless to discuss heritage dissonance as the object of cultural policy. Implicitly, however, heritage dissonance has been the object of cultural policy since the very first heritage policy instruments. The history of cultural policy related to heritage dissonance should not be directly linked and solely observed through the use of the term 'dissonant heritage' or 'heritage dissonance' within cultural policy documents and debates, but should include a series of

actions, regulations and practices that affect how the ‘past as heritage’ is being interpreted and used, by whom and for which purposes. Furthermore, implicit cultural policies (Ahearne 2009) for dissonant heritage should not be necessarily linked only to the governmental sphere of action, but could be found within actions, practices and claims of diverse supranational and subaltern heritage groups and communities. They could also be found in educational policies which influence uses of history in the school curricula and have one of the greatest impacts on how the past is being interpreted, cultivated and transmitted to young citizens of a particular community.

This section does not aim to discuss the peculiarities and differences of diverse national and local policies related to heritage around the globe. Instead, attention is focused on an overview of key international heritage policy texts created by intergovernmental and professional organizations such as the International Council on Museums and Sites (ICOMOS), the Council of Europe and UNESCO in order to point out key ideas and conceptual frameworks constructed through them. These discursive texts are analysed as public policy instruments that frame the international heritage arena and national policies thus “revealing a (fairly explicit) theorization of the relationship between the governing and the governed” (Lascoumes/Le Galès 2007, 9) and constituting a condensed form of knowledge about social control and ways of exercising it.

As Pierre Lascoumes and Patrick Le Galès (2007, 12) point out, the legislative instruments exercise three interrelated functions: symbolic, as an attribute of legitimate power; axiological, in setting out the values and interests protected by the state, community of experts or international bodies; and pragmatic, in directing social behaviours and organizing supervisory systems. They determine the ways in which the actors on diverse policy levels are likely to behave; create uncertainties about the effects of the balance of power; privilege certain actors and interests and exclude others; constrain the actors while offering them possibilities; and drive forward a certain representation of problems (Lascoumes/Le Galès 2007, 8). Even though these texts result in “myriad adaptations to particular state and interstate modalities of building and managing heritage” (Bendix/Eggert/Peselmann 2013, 11) they make the behaviours of diverse actors more

predictable and provide conceptual guidance on what resources can be used, in which ways and by whom (Kutma 2013).

Thus, it can be observed that these declarations, conventions and charters are texts which are in dialogue with each other and which form a chain of legislative and regulatory instruments that create an epistemological framework and bureaucratic apparatus through which heritage and its dissonance are understood and planned to be managed. Through this overview, the concept of AHD is drawn upon and the analyses of key elements of this discourse is used to reflect on the main concepts and relations articulated in international conventions until the new millennium. Key concepts articulated within more recent Conventions (UNESCO 2001; UNESCO 2003; CoE 2005) are then analysed pointing to a discursive shift which emerges in these texts, particularly in the Council of Europe's *Framework Convention for the Value of Heritage for Society* 2005. Since this emerging discourse, articulated through Faro, not only differs from, but challenges the understanding of heritage and its dissonance as articulated as AHD, I term it 'inclusive heritage discourse' and reflect on the key elements and relations within it. The construction of these two discourses will serve as an important tool for analysing diverse understandings, relations and practices related to heritage dissonance.

3.1 Neutralizing dissonance: Athens 1931, Venice 1964 and UNESCO 1972

A series of international heritage policy documents developed from the 1930s until the end of the 20th century have played a key role in creating and sustaining the positivist AHD that has neutralized and ignored dissonance. The Athens Charter (1931) and the Venice Charter developed by ICOMOS (1964) are among the first to frame international philosophy and practice of heritage conservation and management. The conservation philosophy advocated throughout the Athens and Venice Charters is based on Western national practices and legislation in which the concept of innate and immutable cultural values of heritage are linked to and defined by concepts of historical monument, monumentality, aesthetics, authenticity, conservation and

expertise. The innate importance of the monument is not based on its meaning as much as on its materiality and authenticity. It is formulated through the concept of aesthetic and historic value and cultural significance which is to be identified by experts and transferred intact to future generations through conservation, restoration and excavation practices:

The process of restoration is a highly specialized operation. Its aim is to preserve and reveal the aesthetic and historic value of the monument and is based on respect for original material and authentic documents.

(Venice Charter 1964, Article 9)

[The Conference] Considers it highly desirable that qualified institutions and associations should, without in any manner whatsoever prejudicing international public law, be given an opportunity of manifesting their interest in the protection of works of art in which civilisation has been expressed to the highest degree and which would seem to be threatened with destruction.

(Athens Charter, Article 7a)

Through these concepts, heritage is defined as a static witness of the past, objective, passive, unique and authentic that just needs to be revealed, conserved and communicated further without alteration:

[...] every means must be taken to facilitate the understanding of the monument and to reveal it without ever distorting its meaning.

(Venice Charter 1964, Article 15)

The concepts of ‘artistic and archaeological property of mankind’ in the Athens Charter and ‘common heritage’ in the Venice Charter imply the universal value of historic monuments for all civilizations and prescribe universal responsibility for their preservation, exercised through States, institutional authorities and experts:

The Conference, convinced that the question of the conservation of the artistic and archaeological property of mankind is one that interests the community of the States, which are wardens of civilization.

(Athens Charter, Article 7a)

Imbued with a message from the past, the historic monuments of generations of people remain to the present day as living witnesses of their age-old traditions. People are becoming more and more conscious of the unity of human values and regard ancient monuments as a common heritage. The common responsibility to safeguard them for future generations is recognized. It is our duty to hand them on in the full richness of their authenticity.

(Venice Charter 1964, Preamble)

Similar discursive elements are present in a series of policy texts developed until 2000 by ICOMOS, UNESCO and the Council of Europe in order to safeguard, protect, conserve or manage various aspects of the world's and Europe's heritage: archaeological sites (ICOMOS 1990; CoE 1992), underwater heritage (ICOMOS 1996; UNESCO 2001a), buildings, urban areas and landscapes (ICOMOS 1982, 1987, 1999a), movable material culture (UNESCO 1970) or authenticity (UNESCO 1954; ICOMOS 1994). They all focus strongly on conservation of heritage as a political ideal for its own sake, with little recognition of its actualization and uses as a resource.

The most iconic and internationally influential of these is the UNESCO World Heritage Convention (1972), which envisioned the World Heritage Committee, World Heritage Fund and World Heritage List as tools through which the Member States nominate cultural and natural sites and manage them according to universally prescribed guidelines and methodology. The Convention follows and further develops concepts set within the Venice Charter: cultural heritage as material remains from the past (monuments, groups of buildings and sites) (Article 1); States as legal authorities responsible for the protection of heritage on their territory (Article 5); and education of the public as a way of increasing the respect for heritage (Article 27). The concept of 'common heritage' set by the Venice Charter is articulated

in World Heritage Convention through the idea of ‘outstanding universal value’ as the exceptional significance of monuments, which are to be assessed by predefined criteria:

Outstanding universal value means cultural and/or natural significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity.

(UNESCO 1972, Operational Guidelines)

Due to the concept of outstanding universal values, the act of putting a site on the World Heritage List legitimizes ownership and exceptionality of a particular site not only to the whole of humanity, but to the State in which territory it resides. This in part creates a sort of a global competition over the number of listed World Heritage Sites each State is attributed.

A commonality of the aforementioned policy documents is that they articulate AHD and present democratization of heritage as a mono-cultural, top-down approach through which the State, with the help of intellectual elites and professionals, aim to disperse dominant views and understandings of the past to its citizens. The main actors of these texts are national governments, public memory institutions and heritage professionals, while citizens, if mentioned, are treated as passive visitors, tourists and audiences. Consequently, the expert analyses and their ‘objective’ knowledge of the past make identity, interpretation, ownership and related social problems “amenable to interventions by administrators, politicians, authorities and experts” (Rose 1993, 289). In envisioning the passive role of non-experts, these conventions “create inertia effects and enable resistance of the AHD to outside pressures, such as conflicts of interest between actor-users or global political changes” (Lascoumes/Le Galès 2007, 9) which would make dissonance visible and active.

The concept of AHD is useful when illuminating the top-down elitist approach to the ‘democratization’ of culture and the privilege of professionals and institutions as gatekeepers of heritage work, as articulated in the aforementioned policy texts. This discourse, however, has been challenged not

only from outside but from within groups which authorize heritage, as reflected in the policy texts adopted in the last fifteen years.

3.2 Acknowledging dissonance: UNESCO 2001, UNESCO 2003 and Faro 2005

Over the last two decades, critical heritage scholarship, practice and subsequent policy developments have contributed to heritage being increasingly addressed not simply as static forms in need of preservation, but as dynamic resources that are both constitutive of identity and the basis for development projected into distinctive futures (Loulanski 2006). The UNESCO *Declaration on Protection of Cultural Diversity* (2001b), together with the UNESCO *Declaration on Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage* (2003), and, in particular, the CoE *Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society* (2005) (Faro Convention) have been three key international policy texts which challenge AHD as articulated in aforementioned policy documents and set new ethics for the 21st century.

The basis for a discursive shift reflected in these international conventions and declarations has come from the aspiration of linking heritage to concepts of intercultural dialogue, cultural diversity, rights to culture, pluralism, participation, change, sustainable development and reconciliation (CoE 2009). They reflect the global context in which the idea of a stable, coherent and unique national culture is contradicted by its growing internal plurality and permanent processes of change. This plurality and changes imply fragmentation of memories and worldviews and the possibility of heritage dissonance within a particular nation, region or globally (Ashworth/Graham/Tunbridge 2007).

The idea of cultural diversity formulated in the UNESCO *Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity* (2001) (and further developed in the UNESCO *Convention for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions* (2005), has set “against inward-looking fundamentalism the prospect of a more open, creative and democratic world” (Matsuura 2002). As if counteracting the idea of the ‘clash of civilizations’ (Huntington 1996), the Declaration puts forward the idea of

cultural diversity as a ‘common heritage’ of all humankind and connects ‘plural, varied and dynamic’ cultural identities with the capacity for mutual understanding and dialogue which leads to international cooperation, peace and security:

In our increasingly diverse societies, it is essential to ensure harmonious interaction among people and groups with plural, varied and dynamic cultural identities as well as their willingness to live together.

(UNESCO 2001, Article 2)

Even if one might expect that the plurality and dynamism of identities would be connected to the plurality and dynamism of heritage, heritage in this Declaration remains a fixed signifier for all those forms of the past that must be preserved, enhanced and handed on to future generations as a record of human experience and aspirations. An important contribution in this Declaration is the concept of cultural diversity and recognition of identities as pluralistic and changing, re-establishing the notion of national identity (Bonet/Négrier 2011, 577-579). Its flip side, however, is that despite acknowledging diversity, it has positioned heritage in relation to cultural determinism and as a set of distinguished unchanging values that need to be defended and protected.

The UNESCO *Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage* (2003) took further the notion of cultural diversity and applied it to heritage, thus challenging the previously established Western notions of heritage management and protection. As with the *Declaration on Cultural Diversity*, this Convention is a response to the threats coming from globalization trends, social transformation and intolerance that impacted negatively intangible heritage yet may also create renewed dialogue among communities (UNESCO 2003, Preamble). The idea of the intangibility of heritage understood as the central concept of the Convention acknowledges heritage as practice and recognizes its constant re-creation over time:

The ‘intangible cultural heritage’ means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity.

(UNESCO 2003, Article 2)

It challenges the authorized understanding of heritage as mono-cultural, static, authentic, great witness of the past and outlines the rights of communities and individuals as arbiters and engineers of heritage. It politically formulates the notion of heritage as a process that requires a practitioner/community-centred approach in order to ensure the continuity and viability of safeguarded practices (Aikawa-Faure 2009, 36). Through the practice of participation, the Convention calls for a new approach in national heritage policies that includes communities, groups and individuals in the selection, nomination, protection and evaluation processes, thus challenging the authority of experts and institutions, calling for a mix of bottom-up and top-down policy approaches.

Within the framework of its safeguarding activities of the intangible cultural heritage, each State Party shall endeavour to ensure the widest possible participation of communities, groups and, where appropriate, individuals that create, maintain and transmit such heritage, and to involve them actively in its management (UNESCO 2003, Article 15).

The introduction of communities as actors in the heritage arena creates a particular tension with AHD because of its wide ranging political implications and its close link to the plurality of meanings and heritage contestation (Aikawa-Faure 2009, 36-40).

The Council of Europe *Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society*, launched in Faro in October 2005, took further the issues

of participation, heritage rights, intangibility, pluralism and values in the light of change, conflicts, globalization and migration. The conflicts in ex-Yugoslavia and the related destruction and misuse of heritage were one of the seeds for Faro (Fairclough 2010, 30). The targeted destruction of heritage during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina shed a new light on the connection between heritage, identity, human rights and conflict, as underlined in the following passage:

[...] *After the war in Bosnia [...]*

- *Heritage evaluation became a more complex process, in which the non-material – the symbolic and ontological – value of the heritage carried more weight than the material. The very definition of heritage, as well as its significance changed – its function in maintaining social patterns and the distinctive features of society became as important as its cultural and economic value.*
- *Wherever crimes against humanity were perpetrated in Bosnia and Herzegovina, so too was the heritage destroyed. [...] The connection between the heritage and human rights has become a fact that cannot be ignored even at the global level.*
- *The heritage has been used both as a means of establishing durable peace and as a way of prolonging conflict. When the aim was to prevent refugees and displaced persons from exercising their right to return home, the heritage was invested with multi-faceted historical meaning that was interpreted as evidence of hostility and the impossibility of reconciliation.* (CoE 2008, 29)

Dissonance, conflicts and reconciliation of diverse values are therefore one of the key implicit concepts of the Faro Convention. A few concepts explicitly formulated in this Convention are particularly important both for the idea of heritage dissonance and for reflecting on changing heritage discourse. First, the Convention does not treat heritage as (only) intrinsically valuable, but underlines that it is a *resource* and a *means* for achieving larger cultural, social, human and economic sustainable development goals. In defining heritage, Faro has nominally solved the tension between intangible

and tangible heritage, between experts/public authorities and citizens/communities, and between diverse values and ownership attached to heritage. Heritage is defined as a process which has intangible nature, is constantly changing and evolving, is independent of ownership and is relative and non-exclusive:

Cultural heritage is a group of resources inherited from the past which people identify, independently of ownership, as a reflection and expression of their constantly evolving values, beliefs, knowledge and traditions.

(CoE 2005, Article 2)

When it comes to questions of ownership, rights and responsibilities, the Convention introduces a new concept of *heritage communities*, defined as “a group of people who value specific aspects of cultural heritage and act to sustain and transmit it to future generations” (CoE 2005, Article 4). People forming a heritage community do not need to be bound by a common national or ethnic identity, language, place or territory, but become a community by the fact of valuing the same heritage. Thus, the right to heritage is not formed around symbolic ownership through *passive inheritance* based on national, ethnic and territorial belonging, but around interest, engagement, valuation and self-identification. This formulation recognizes contemporary choices related to heritage in which diverse actors (might and ought to) have agency.

As a method to practice active agency, Faro sets the principle of democratic participation of individuals and heritage communities in the process of identification, interpretation and conservation of heritage (CoE 2005, Articles 4, 11 and 12). Dialogue and partnerships between civil society and citizens with institutions and public authorities aim to balance the heritage management power. Re-addressing the role of civil society was established in the Council of Europe’s *Declaration on the Role of Voluntary Organizations in the Field of Cultural Heritage* (CoE 2001). This reflects the call for a cultural democracy approach (Mulcahy 2006; Dueland 2008), which is pluralistic and increasingly bottom-up (Višnić/Dragojević 2008) rather than the framework set by authorized discourse.

Importantly, Faro acknowledges the plurality of meanings attached to heritage, as well as contestations and conflicts which may arise due to differences in its valorisation and interpretation. It recognizes that heritage values are subjective and can be manipulated for diverse political purposes, but formulates the idea that, through plural affiliation, multiple perspectives, (intercultural) dialogue and democratic participation, heritage (and the conflicting values it represents) could be utilized in building peace and understanding as a prerequisite for sustainable development. This idea is particularly important in the context of demographic and political changes as it tries to create a mindset from which different cultural identities could coexist on the basis of mutual respect and live as one community (Fairclough 2010, 29).

What complicates the philosophical framework established in Faro is the concept of *common (European) heritage* (CoE 2005, Article 3) which “constitutes a shared source of remembrance, understanding and creativity”, which follows the notions of ‘common heritage’ and ‘universal heritage of humanity’. In defining common heritage, Faro puts forward the assumption that conflicts embedded in contested interpretations of the past could be overcome by proper participative governance of the very same heritage. Long-term such a process has the potential to create a situation of peace and stability based on *shared heritage* and *common narratives*. This complicates the pluralist approach because the very idea of a common European heritage necessarily excludes those groups and histories which do not fit well into the agreement of what constitutes European heritage. Thus, even though Faro acknowledges and addresses dissonance, it proposes the concept of common heritage in order to move towards consonance, cohesion and inclusion as political ideals. The reconciliation of conflicting values and mutual respect for different cultures are seen as the desirable end results of heritage making and management.

3.3 From authorized towards inclusive heritage discourse

What took place in the Faro Convention is that the new elements and their relations within heritage discourse do pose challenges from a cultural

policy perspective. Via Faro, some of the key authorities within AHD articulated a discourse which challenges the very understanding of heritage as formulated in previous texts – a discourse whose elements and relations are positioned in a way that are no longer compatible with the terms of AHD.

In this situation and in the context of cultural policy analysis, the concept of AHD has one crucial limitation. Naming the discourse ‘authorized’ implies the notion of authorship, authority and authorization as *crucial* for the framing or closure of a discourse. In doing this it creates the dichotomy based on the authority and not on the understanding of heritage that these authorities (or those outside of it) constitute and are constituted by. It not only illuminates, but perpetuates the binary relationship between official, expert, professional, institutional and governmental practices and discourse of heritage on one side, and unofficial, community, subaltern, local, amateur on the other. Therefore, AHD assumes the fault line of the order of heritage discourse as drawn between privileged experts and subaltern communities/visitors, and makes hard to differentiate the diversity of positions and dynamics of changes within and across each of these groups. It positions UNESCO, ICOMOC, Council of Europe and ICOM, as well as other institutions and professionals, as the measure of authorization and thus of AHD. By doing so, the concept of AHD obscures the possibility of the discourse being challenged by those who are privileged by it – professionals, institutions and policy-makers – leading to a series of academic writing that reinforces institutional critique per se.

The concept of AHD risks naturalizing the argument that all expert, institutional and (inter)governmental heritage endeavours perpetuate existing power relations and positions within a society, thus neglecting different modes of how institutions and professionals can be agents of change in meeting cultural, social and political challenges (Aronsson 2014). Furthermore, it neglects the possibility that communities and citizens have expectations based on AHD provided by institutions and professionals, even when some professionals tend to unlock AHD. For these reasons, when using the concept of AHD I mark its constituting elements in a way which delimits its Western conservative aspects from some of the more recent interventions and articulations within the policy field.

Because a new discourse in Faro articulated ontologically and epistemologically different understandings of heritage which at the same time challenges and encompasses AHD, I term it 'inclusive heritage discourse'. This discourse is not about inclusion and access of diverse groups to the unchallenged AHD, but about unlocking the order of a singular heritage discourse to many other heritage discourses, thus including diverse notions of heritage and acknowledging the pluralism of values within the heritage field. This discursive shift in understanding heritage and related policy, summarized in Table no. 1 brings a different view of the concept of dissonance and on the aims, actors and approaches in cultural policies for dissonant heritage.

AHD is based on a positivist and universalist paradigm, and its policy approach is democratization of culture. The inclusive heritage discourse is articulated on the constructivist and pluralist paradigm, representing cultural democracy as a policy approach. AHD articulates heritage as a static witness of the past, consisting of material remains that have innate (universal) value. Inclusive heritage discourse articulates heritage in diachronic terms, as resources from the past which are (re)constructed in the present and for current purposes. Therefore, its value is extrinsic and instrumental for a myriad of identity-based, political, economic, social and cultural goals.

AHD claims that the past, through the concept of authenticity of material remains, can be assessed and unlocked by trained professionals. So heritage meaning is understood as the truth embedded in heritage, waiting to be recognized and deciphered. The meaning of heritage is thus closed and fixed, even if not known in its full totality. Inclusive heritage discourse relates the materiality and intangibility of heritage by articulating heritage as values, beliefs and meanings reflected and expressed through material remains through an interpretative process. It thus recognizes a plurality of meanings depending on context.

Within AHD, professionals, policy-makers and related institutions are key actors and authorities responsible for the governance of heritage (sites, objects and practices enlisted through official heritage policy mechanisms). Citizens have a passive role in the engineering and arbitration of heritage, and their active role is only as consumers. In contrast, inclusive heritage

Table no. 1: Discursive shift in heritage and cultural policy

	Authorized heritage discourse	Inclusive heritage discourse
Understanding of heritage	Static witness of the past	Dynamic, (re)constructed in the present, evolving
Scope	Material remains	Intangibility which can be materialized
Value	Intrinsic, embedded in heritage	Extrinsic, instrumental
Key concepts	Universality, excellence, professionalism, authenticity, monumentality	Participation, diversity, human rights, intercultural dialogue
Authority/actors	Governments, public memory institutions, experts	Governance as assemblages of diverse stakeholders
Level	Inter(national)	Communal, subaltern, regional, local, individual, inter(national)
Policy approach	Top-down, democratization of culture	Bottom up, cultural democracy and cultural utilitarianism
Key policy texts	Venice Charter, UNESCO 1972	UNESCO 2001, UNESCO 2003, UNESCO 2005a, CoE 2005
Attitude towards dissonance	Ignoring, marginalization, neutralization	Appraisal, negotiation, dialogue, reconciliation

discourse includes an assemblage of diverse organizations and groups in governing heritage, and does not relate heritage only to authorized (listed) features but to understandings and practices by diverse social groups, including institutions and governments.

When it comes to ownership and the right to heritage, AHD relates it to the (nationalist) idea of *blood and soil* via elements of inheritance and patrimony. The idea of a legacy to be preserved for future generations disengages the present (and, especially, certain groups) from an active use of heritage (Smith 2006, 30). The inclusive heritage discourse bases the right to

heritage on a personal preference and agency across social groups. By articulating heritage as a resource whose meaning can be (re)constructed in the present, the inclusive discourse recognizes an active agency, choices and responsibility in using it. This, however, implies that there is suddenly a range of options for relating to heritage – including destruction, forgetting or alteration.

AHD works to close the interpretation of specific heritage as a consonant structure, to neutralize and ignore dissonance of all other possible interpretations. Following this logic, AHD supports the particular cultural memory of one community as an objective ‘Truth’, causing clashes when confronted with ‘heritage as the Truth about the past’ of another community. Therefore, heritage within AHD can easily act as a dogma, since by closing a particular interpretation of a particular heritage, it fosters exclusion and provocation of the ‘other’. Within this understanding, dissonance creates or fuels the conflict. Approaching heritage from an inclusive discourse acknowledges dissonance as a quality embedded in heritage, appraises plurality of meanings and lowers the symbolic importance of heritage. It opens the space for dialoguing and negotiating heritage dissonance in a constructive way, which can lead to diverse end results.

The relationship between authorized and inclusive heritage discourses is not a binary relationship – these two are not dichotomies. Rather than being opposed to each other, they define the heritage field in different ways. AHD with its articulations excludes inclusive heritage discourse, but inclusive heritage discourse articulates heritage in such a way that it includes numerous possible discourses, including AHD. The inclusive discourse opens a space for discussing the dynamics, changes and successful endeavours within institutions and does not neglect productive aspects of institutional culture.

The underlying principle of inclusive heritage discourse is that of a radical democracy, which allows a more dynamic understanding of definitions and uses of heritage as reflected in the diversity of historical and contemporary social, political and cultural experiences. Two more things are important to discuss in the context of the Faro Convention as a policy document. The first is that the inclusive heritage discourse articulated in

Faro, has not been articulated in Faro for the first time, but has been present throughout heritage, memory and museum studies, as well as through the effort of some experts. The Faro Convention has reflected this constructivist turn in understanding the world within the humanities and social sciences, and carried these voices into a policy text.

Second, the story around the influence of Faro as a policy document is not rosy and victorious. Faro is only a Framework Convention, not legally binding. The paradox of Faro is that pragmatically and normatively it has been formulated not as a changer but as a supplement to all the previous conventions (Therond 2009, 26-27). Therefore, even though it sets a new conceptual framework for understanding and managing heritage – which forms the basis for reconstructing the boundaries of heritage established by AHD – it does not describe normative and pragmatic mechanisms. When it comes to translating policy ideals into practice, Faro gives reference to all the previous international policy documents. Some commentators say that even though unsuccessful in changing the heritage field from a policy basis, it has articulated the arguments to be used by diverse actors in contesting, subverting and challenging the dominant discourse. Through these arguments it nominally invented the space for bottom-up participation of diverse stakeholders in raising their voice, pushing their claims for rights to heritage and changing heritage management practices case by case, despite the steps taken by governments.

Third, not all of the elements within the Faro Convention are coherent with the above described inclusive heritage discourse. The element of common heritage is both exclusive and inclusive. Defining common heritage as a 'shared source of remembrance, understanding and creativity', it potentially includes a diversity of actors and practices of using this common source. The relation to the word European (from which the voice of the CoE speaks) creates identity boundaries based on territory, political entity, and a particular set of 'European values' which excludes those groups and histories that do not fit well into the agreement of what constitutes European heritage. This is one of the interventions which are discursively connected to the AHD.

All of this does not mean that AHD entered into inclusive discourse of Faro in a way which negates all ideas put forward by this document. However,

it means that heritage has become a floating signifier not only within academia and diverse practices, but also within policy rhetoric. In the context of the case studies in this research, the delimitation of authorized and inclusive heritage discourses serves as a conceptual and methodological framework to analyse texts, practices and relationships created through each of the studied initiatives. In reality, the difference between these two discourses is not clear-cut, due to the fact that they often overlap both in practice and rhetoric, and borrow some aspects from each other.

In the following chapter this mutual (internal and external) consent about dissonance and conflicts connected to heritage is discussed in relation to South East Europe and the politics of reconciliation pushed forward by international actors. The concepts of authorized and inclusive heritage discourses are particularly interesting to analyse through the politics of memory in SEE. Most national policies and heritage discourses follow the logic of authorized discourse, which can often contest the authorized discourse of a neighbouring nation-state. On the contrary, some methods used for reconciliation through heritage by international actors tried to conceptualize heritage in relation to inclusive discourse, so as to be able to work with pluralism, dialogue current positions and re-create new relations among actors and communities. Here, boundaries between common identity and pluralism, multiple voices and compromise, integration and diversity are particularly interesting to explore.

4. Conflict and Politics of Reconciliation Through Heritage

History is the raw material for nationalist or ethnic or fundamentalist ideologies, as poppies are the raw material for heroin addiction. [...] If there is no suitable past, it can always be invented. The past legitimizes. The past gives a more glorious background to a present that doesn't have that much to show for itself.

(Hobsbawm 1994, 10)

If we start from culture while defining the political identity, and if the politics become a tool for realization of some cultural program, we should expect the rise of conflicts which are hard to be solved.

(Đinđić 1990, 2)

The specific and diverse uses of the past in SEE provide a panorama of contested histories, divergent memories and conflict perpetuation that would require another thorough study. The question of when and how to track different developments and modalities of history use within specific countries, among two or more countries or the whole region famous for its multiculturalism, is yet another puzzle that will remain unanswered in this research. The uneasy relationship between former Ottoman colonies in the

Balkans and Turkey; the cultural divides between countries of the former Ottoman and Habsburg Empires; diverse democratization processes of ex-communist and ex-socialist countries; religious divides among Orthodox, Catholics and Muslims; contested memories, victimization and violence tracking back to the 19th century, WWI and WWII; ethno-national mobilization and divides within former Yugoslav Republic states; the troublesome triangle of national identities of Greece, Turkey and Cyprus; tensions with FYR Macedonia in both Greece and Bulgaria; and the unresolved political status of Kosovo are just some examples of tensions in the region.

The case of SEE is a prime example of how political geography is not just about space but is equally about its interpretation and usage. Framed as a region during the 1990s, SEE has no clear borders. SEE includes or excludes countries based on the aims of political mechanisms imposed by the EU and other international actors. It is a particularly interesting region for researching heritage dissonance, as it has been characterized by multiculturalism for centuries and has gone through numerous political and social changes which opened previously closed or hidden discourses, causing active dissonance. The fall of the Berlin Wall triggered or coincided with a series of complex transitions and changes within SEE, including the dissolution of former communist and socialist states and the creation of new national states and political orders, some followed by wars. The region has also seen the democratization of political structures and liberalization of economic reforms, Euro-Atlantic integration and incorporates divides among new and old EU Member States, as well as aspiring ones.

In the most encompassing case, the region includes countries from Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, FYR Macedonia, Albania, sometimes Kosovo, Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, all the way to Turkey, sometimes Moldova and Cyprus. The club of countries, termed 'Western Balkans' is limited to the most unstable countries of former Yugoslavia plus Albania, sometimes without Slovenia and Croatia since these countries entered the EU. In all its different mutations, the region's referential points have been Europe as an idea and the EU as a political entity. What specifies the region both for internal actors and for external

onlookers is the idea that it is a space that is 'less Europe' (Waeber 1998), in the sense that there is a gap between EU standards and the socio-economic, cultural and democratic capacities of the countries on the southeast borders of Europe. This idea has its historic roots in discourses about the Balkans as a backward space of continuous conflict, tribal warfare and resistance to full modernization set in relation to Europe as a measure of civilization and progress (Todorova 1997). States and societies in the Balkans and consequently SEE, despite their diversities, share the stigma of not matching the standard of 'Europeanness' despite their claims of belonging to Europe on the grounds of geography, history or culture (Bechev 2006).

An increased use of the term Balkans and consequent framing of SEE came with the changes of communist regimes and economic liberalization, but most of all due to conflicts and wars which followed the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the creation of new nation-states. Conflicts in former Yugoslavia have been seen by some as repetitions of earlier cycles of ethnic bloodshed, thus commonly referred to as 'the war in the Balkans', or as 'the Third Balkan War' (Hadzopoulos 2003). In all SEE countries, changes which followed the end of communism fostered intense, quick and conflicting transformations in memorial culture (Altrichter 2006; Petritsch/Džihic 2010) leading both to a pluralization and re-politicization of memory and heritage. The active and symbolic violence during and after the dissolution of Yugoslavia was perpetuated by memory wars, identity conflicts and the use of heritage as a tool in both war mobilization and destruction.

During the conflicts, reinterpretations of the past through heritage were used for radical political transformation and in service of new ethno-national cultural identities (Čopić 2011), ethno-national mobilization and other reactive tendencies (Višnić/Dragojević 2008). The 1990s in Eastern Europe and SEE made museums into cultural battlegrounds – renaming museums, opening new ones, but most of all changing labels and reinterpreting collections so that they fit new political constitutions. Ex-communist states revised museum policies so as to express a "national and to a large extent ethnic identity with reference to national narratives and national displays in museums" (Eilersten/Amundsen 2012). Nation and state-building through heritage involved physical or at least symbolic violence. Countries and

internal groups established their authorized interpretation of the past, which was often in direct confrontation with the interpretations established by neighbouring countries. The predominantly 'heroic' style of nation-building and commemorating, together with the struggle among diverse versions of histories and contested claims to heritage, has been used to justify new cycles of violence. With the help of national narratives, people have literally been put in the position of "subjects of the state as patriots of the nation, ready to sacrifice their individual lives for the sake of the survival of the nation's 'imagined community'" (Bauman 2006, 37; Anderson 1983). Therefore, even though the region shares common historical and cultural legacies, it has been difficult to create any sustainable identity bonds, as tragically demonstrated by the Yugoslav drama of the 1990s (Bechev 2006).

Contested nationalistic discourses over history and specific heritage have, in some cases, fuelled physical violence against different ethnic groups, such as during the wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Kosovo. In other cases, contested discourse remained on the level of symbolic violence, as in the case of FYR Macedonia and Greece, or Greece and Turkey. During the Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Kosovo wars, distinctive heritages of one ethnic and religious community, together with traces of joint multicultural heritage, were purposefully attacked and destroyed by other communities.

"It is not enough to clean Mostar of the Muslims, the relics must also be removed," is the explanation by the Croat nationalist militiaman, interviewed in Mostar in September 1993, when asked by a British reporter why he was trying to destroy the 427-year-old Ottoman bridge (Riedlmayer 2002). Even though the Mostar bridge is one of the most iconic symbols of heritage destruction, from 1992 to 1995 in Bosnia, the deliberate destruction of heritage of other communities has been systematically practised by the Yugoslav Army and other Serbian militant groups, by the Croatian military, and as a response from Bosnian military groups, resulting in more than 2,771 architectural heritage properties damaged or destroyed, 713 of which were totally destroyed and 554 burned down (CoE 2008, 27). The destruction of heritage that took place side by side with forced expulsions and killings demonstrates the importance of heritage in the processes of both destruction

and reconstruction of communities (CoE 2008, 28). What took place during this war is attempted *memoricide* – the cleansing of the tangible traces of culture and identity of a particular community (Haračić 2012).

Pluralism and coexistence, which characterized Bosnia for many centuries, has thus been declared impossible by nationalist paradigms. Due to war and nation-building, the memorial landscape changed in the region, through the renaming of streets, public spaces and institutions, and erecting/replacing monuments. Many communist monuments were neglected or removed from public spaces in Albania, Romania and Bulgaria; anti-fascist monuments built during the Yugoslav period were one of the main targets for destruction, especially in Croatia (with around 3,000 damaged or destroyed monuments); memorials on mass atrocity sites such as Srebrenica Potočari have been marked due to support from the international community; new monuments have been erected commemorating victims of communism, the homeland war in Croatia, Kosovo Liberation Army heroes in Kosovo,⁸ or representing the antique roots of Macedonia and national heroes of the periods before communism (Dragičević Šešić 2012).

Memorial and commemoration practices related to atrocity sites of recent wars have been followed by research on their potential for reconciliation, forgetting and dealing with the past (Logan/Reeves 2009; O'Reilly 2005; Petritsch/Džihic 2010; Pollack 2003a and 2003b; Simić 2009a and 2009b). Research shows that memorialization, commemorative practices and speeches at traumatic sites of memory can serve both as facilitators of reconciliation and as fuel for renewed cycles of political conflicts and violence (Ross 2004; McDowell/Braniff 2014). In the case of the Western Balkans, the majority of memorial practices contributed to the reinforcement of wartime divisions along ethnic lines (Pavlaković 2008a), which was again visible in Summer 2015 during discussions around the commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the Srebrenica Massacre.

The *perpetuation* of symbolic violence is not solely connected to the problem of contested war memory but draws upon a much wider spectrum of representations and creation of meaning and identities through heritage.

⁸ Under the United Nations Security Council resolution no. 1244.

Many conflicts and violence are rooted in ethno-nationalistic narratives which use the past and heritage to demarcate and track tension and identity claims back to prehistory, the Illyrian Period, Antiquity and the Middle Ages (Keiser 1996). Seemingly objective national historiographies and narratives are put forward through heritage interpretation in symbolic places of authority such as national museums. Specific antique or medieval heritage sites can be seen to craft a convincing story about their nation being the oldest, the greatest, the most heroic and the most victimized in SEE.

Narratives underlining the longevity of a particular ethno-national identity and subsequent territorial claims, are particularly dangerous as they often overlap and contest with similar claims of neighbouring countries. Museums and heritage sites throughout SEE authorize a particular cultural memory of one ethno-national community as a given, the objective 'Truth', causing clashes when confronted with heritage as 'the Truth about the past' of another community. Therefore, heritage understood as the direct innate link to the past easily acts as dogma by closing all other possible discourses related to the same heritage, fostering exclusion and provocation of the 'other'. These competing national historiographies are also represented in history textbooks, combining celebratory heroic style with victimization of its own nation, serving more as a manual for pre-military training in raising hatred, rather than providing historical understanding (Stojanović 2013).

Even though reconciliation is oftentimes considered within the framework of transitional justice, dealing with the recent past, and specific heritage of conflicts, the example of SEE shows that reconciliation with the recent war past is just one layer of using history and heritage for understanding and dialogue. For this reason, as the case studies within this research aim to show, dealing with the past in SEE cannot be exclusively connected with histories of active violence and their commemorations, but should also address exclusions, divisions and symbolic conflicts related to the interpretation and use of 'normalized' aspects of heritage, particularly those related to national and ethnic identities.

4.1 Politics of ethno-nationalization and imported reconciliation

In the Western Balkans, reconciliation, dialogue and peace-building have become common desirable and feel-good buzzwords that are often mentioned but rarely thought through by those who use them. They are shallow, empty terms by those who hear them in daily political discourse, as the following statement depicts:

A recent international meeting on reconciliation, one of the many held in these areas, gathered around a hundred participants, mostly foreigners. The majority of important and less important speakers, besides using key words such as 'reconciliation', 'cooperation' and 'tolerance' as their mantra, treated the subject as if it were a rocket science; as if it were a scientific discipline requiring a good deal of knowledge; as if only super-specialised persons could even think about speaking about it in public. In fact, their speeches were banal, just like the topic itself, boiling down more or less to those very same three words.

(Drakulić 2010)

Wolfgang Petritsch and Vedran Džihic (2010, 18) argue that, for reconciliation processes to take place, there have to be three different but complementary levels of confronting traumatic past: *legal, economic and cultural*. The legal level is the issue of retributive justice, such as war trials. The economic level works with issues of economic interrelations and social re-integration through jobs and cooperative economic infrastructure. The cultural level, which is of interest to this research, is the slowest, least technical and 'thickest' one and includes arts, monuments, museums, memorial practices, media space and post-conflict education (Bar-Siman-Tov 2004, 75) in establishing a mutual understanding of past events (Bar-Tal/Bennink 2004, 18; Petritsch/Džihic 2010, 23). This level often gets overlooked by international development cooperation and politicians because it is the slowest, least measurable and often most taken for granted.

During and after the 1990s in the Western Balkans, it was foreign donors and international organizations pushing for peace and reconciliation processes. Among them, the EU has had a particular material and symbolic power in framing the future of the region through its strategies aimed at curbing the influence of nationalist politics, promoting transitional justice and cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia, and imposing far-reaching integration schemes. Most of these actions relied on the neoliberal understanding of post-conflict transition, transitional justice and peace-building, focusing on seemingly technocratic and neutral 'rule of law' requirements, closely linked to EU enlargement policies (Vieile 2012). Therefore, the most visible post-conflict policies in the Western Balkans came within the legal framework of transitional justice, focusing on the prosecution of persons responsible for violations of human rights. As early as 1993 the International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia was established by the United Nations Security Council Resolution 872. Under EU conditionality policy, which required ex-Yugoslav republics to extradite their nationals to the Court as a precondition towards EU integration, countries in the Western Balkans cooperated with the Tribunal at a faster or slower pace. In the everyday life of Western Balkan citizens, this particular transitional justice mechanism resulted in negative societal effects since its mandate was not explained as legitimate and necessary to the electorate by domestic political elites and since there has been a common perception that the Tribunal is unfair, partial and biased (Petričušić/Blondel 2012, 3-4).

As an alternative to this process, civil society organizations established the RECOM Initiative as a regional truth commission to obtain facts about victims of the wars in former Yugoslavia, funded by foreign donors and still not supported or incorporated into governmental structures. On a wider, indirect scale, the institutional reforms through EU enlargement processes particularly related to the justice system have played a role in building stability in the region.

When it comes to economic and social cooperation in the region beyond the judiciary system, the leading body has been the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, established in 1999 in order to enhance regional cooperation and strengthen peace, economy, democracy and human rights. From 2008 it continued to exist as the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), which works to

strengthen regional cooperation “in relation to economic and social development, infrastructure and energy, justice and home affairs, security cooperation, building human capital and other cross-cutting issues” (Taleski 2013, 5). Post-conflict integrative normative solutions aimed at nurturing “respect for and protection of minority rights,” such as assurance of minority participation in public life and power-sharing mechanisms has also taken place (Petričušić/Blondel 2012, 1). State reforms that allowed the equal treatment of different ethnic groups in multi-ethnic societies, include quotas in Parliament and separate schools for Macedonians and Albanians in FYR Macedonia, or a tripartite ethnic entities system with quotas for voting and employment in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

However, this engineering of a system based on ethnic belonging did not result in rapprochement among communities, since it actually “further deepened the ethnic cleavages instead of reducing them, except that there is no open warlike violence” (Omladinski ambasadori pomirenja 2015). Therefore, on a grassroots level of society, legal mechanisms for engineering diversity often prevented the crossing of ethnic lines in all spheres of public life, and thus prevented cultural levels of reconciliation from taking place. Throughout legal and economic reconciliation processes in the Western Balkans, it remained obvious that “in order to achieve reconciliation the ‘slow moving institutions,’ such as culture, beliefs and values have to change” (Židek 2015).

Even though in international development cooperation, plans for recovery and rebuilding after wars or natural disasters are often quickly drafted and implemented without much reflection on the social and psychological importance of cultural heritage (Kälvemark 2007), the situation in the Western Balkans has been somewhat different. As in other areas, the use of the term ‘reconciliation’ as a political ideal came from outside, by actors such as the EU, UNESCO, Council of Europe and Cultural Heritage without Borders that have taken on the role of post-conflict reconstruction through culture and heritage. There are few comparative examples showing similarly intense international and transnational involvement in the restoration of destroyed heritage and relationships as in the countries of the Western Balkans. Involvement practised through direct on-site involvement, donor politics, joint programmes, networks for professionals and expert missions. The practices and actors appropriating

the word 'reconciliation' have been numerous, but hardly any of these practices articulated the meaning, philosophy and policies behind this term. For this reason, it is only possible to analyse some of the tools created and used by different actors in the name of reconciliation and try to reflect on their logic.

Because the international community has been an active agent in memory politics, an analysis of heritage dissonance governance throughout the Western Balkans and SEE requires a reflection on local, national and inter/transnational actors, their interests, interactions and power hierarchies. Furthermore, to understand the cultural level of reconciliation, it is crucial to reflect upon the position of cultural institutions, civil society organizations and international actors engaged in culture. Interestingly, despite the term 'reconciliation' being omnipresent in everyday political discourse, cultural institutions and cultural policies in SEE, the opposite of fostering dialogue can be observed. Primarily, after the changes of regimes and conflicts, the aim has been to strengthen national identities and national belongings (Čopić 2011). National cultural policies in SEE have been conceptualized as 'ethnic community-driven cultural policy', which, despite being multicultural and multi-ethnic, use ethnicity as a synonym for a nation (Dragičević Šešić/Dragojević 2006). In Bosnia and Herzegovina, where three official ethnic entities constitute the nation, cultural policy is far from 'territorially conceptualized' according to the idea of a 'democratic constitutional state' (Habermas 2001), as all three ethnicities are finding ways to put ethnic belonging before common citizenship.

When it comes to mainstream cultural institutions, the old, traditional meanings and functions of culture mainly associated with national cohesion, identity and distinctiveness continue to serve as a symbolic reservoir for ethno-national mobilization and other reactive tendencies (Višnić/Dragojević 2008, 47). This conservative ideological position of equating culture and heritage with national interests (Katunarić 2004, 24, in Čopić 2011) has been combined with reactionary attitudes towards society – a professional, technological and infrastructural stagnation – as well as with increasing dependence on political parties. Museums and heritage institutions are left 'vulnerable' to political demands, as they receive mandate and funding from national parliaments, tasked with articulating the meaning of the nation they represent (Aronsson 2013) or imagining this task. Direct influence of the party system on the election

of Ministers of Culture, board members of cultural institutions, as well as directors, led to a situation in which, even if the nominal cultural policy has not been articulated in relation to nationalistic tensions, its implementation has often been guided by self-censorship of directors and cultural workers in relation to imagined 'national interests'.

Therefore, in public memory institutions, ethno-national unity and interests have been pursued in parallel with international goals and attempts at intercultural dialogue and reconciliation. Due to extensive foreign funding, the NGO sector emerged as the bearer of a more open and democratic approach to culture. Consequently, instead of the overall democratization of the cultural system during twenty years of transition, two parallel systems emerged. One system, represented mainly through NGOs, has been intensively modernized via internationalization, capacity building and professionalization, while the other, mainly institutional, has been preserved within old operational patterns of traditional bureaucracy and state paternalism (Čopić 2011).

This is the atmosphere and context in which the call on culture and heritage in reconciliation processes has been voiced and supported by numerous international actors – UNESCO, the Council of Europe, the European Commission, Cultural Heritage without Borders, Pro Helvetia Programme, the Open Society Foundations, the Balkan Trust for Democracy, the Goethe Institute, the Aga Khan Trust for Culture (Geneva), World Monuments Fund (New York), IRCICA (Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture), the Council of Europe Development Bank and the World Bank, to name a few. For their part, the process of 'normalization' of interstate politics in SEE has involved the idea that heritage can be used to create dialogue among contested sides and also to frame a common identity for SEE, closely connected to EU integration processes.

The destruction and rehabilitation of heritage during and after the wars contributed to a much tighter relationship between heritage and human rights and articulated more clearly the idea that heritage has been (and can be) used both as a means of establishing durable peace and as a way of prolonging conflict." It also contributed to the idea that the "non-material – the symbolic and ontological – value of the heritage carried more weight than the material" (CoE 2008, 29). In 2003, the UNESCO Venice Office put a particular focus on

cooperation and intercultural dialogue in SEE. Furthermore, the establishment of a UNESCO Antenna Office in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina took place to actively implement UN initiatives at the country level. At the highest political level, the UNESCO Venice Office established and coordinates the Regional Conference of Ministers of Culture and organized joint capacity-building programmes, exhibitions, inter-state institutional cooperation, as well as establishing numerous centres for excellence across the region formed around the idea of regional cooperation.⁹ Within the framework initiative *Culture: A Bridge to Development*, approved by the General Conference of UNESCO at its 36th session (November 2011), to “promote innovative and creative approaches to culture as a bridge to sustainable social, economic and human development,” a special programme component was created for SEE entitled *Heritage and Dialogue*.

Conflicts in the Balkans during the 1990s reinforced the Council of Europe’s core values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law as vital elements for conflict prevention and peace-building (CoE 2011). During the 1990s the CoE carried out the *Dialogue and Conflict Prevention Project*, described in the CoE *Ministerial Declaration on Intercultural Dialogue and Conflict Prevention* (Opatija, Croatia, October 2003), and adopted in the *White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue* in 2008. Parallel to the Ministerial Conference of the SEE region started by UNESCO, CoE has established its own Ministerial Conference, with the same Ministers, discussing similar topics. The two ran in parallel for almost 10 years, showing the competitiveness and lack of synchronization of different international actors, and were finally merged in 2013. CoE has carried out an evaluation of national cultural policies (CoE 2008), with established monitoring tools in the field of cultural heritage¹⁰ and cultural policies,¹¹ and influenced the

⁹ International Centre for Underwater Archaeology (Zadar, Croatia); Regional Centre on Intangible Cultural Heritage (Sofia, Bulgaria); Regional Centre on Digitization of Cultural Heritage (Skopje, FYR Macedonia); Regional Centre on the Restoration of Cultural Heritage (Tirana, Albania); and Regional Centre for the Management of Cultural Heritage (Cetinje, Montenegro).

¹⁰ HEREIN at <http://european-heritage.coe.int>

¹¹ Compendium at <http://culturalpolicies.net>

ratification of the *Faro Convention* among countries of SEE. In 2003, the CoE started the *Regional Technical Assistance Programme* in SEE, with the aim of rehabilitating heritage as part of post-conflict reconstruction processes, which from 2008 has been titled the *Ljubljana Process: Rehabilitating Our Common Heritage* and supported financially by the European Commission (Rikalović/ Mikić 2015).

Cultural Heritage without Borders (CHwB), a Swedish NGO, founded heritage professionals from Sweden and mainly funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, was established as a direct response to the targeting and destruction of cultural heritage during the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina (Walters 2014). It has been restoring heritage sites destroyed by the wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as Kosovo over the last 20 years, bringing together professionals from divided communities to work on heritage sites together. Through the framework of the *Regional Restoration Camps*, it has been bringing together students and young heritage professionals from all Western Balkans countries and creating a neutral professional space for their encounters and relationships. Finally, CHwB has initiated two regional networks: the South East European Heritage Network, which has an independent legal entity bringing together NGOs working with heritage in the region, and the Balkan Museum Network, which became an independent legal entity in 2015, bringing together museums and museum professionals from the region.¹²

¹² The case study of Cultural Heritage without Borders, and in particular the Regional Restoration Camps and Balkan Museum Network, is inspirational and was intended to be one of the case studies for this research. A unique example of voluntary professional engagement, assisting heritage restoration after the conflicts in Bosnia, it became the long-term framework for using heritage in post-conflict international development assistance funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency and implemented by three local offices in the region and the secretariat in Stockholm. This year saw its successful transition into three strong independent local offices. Unfortunately, despite numerous interviews and documentation which CHwB has openly supplied, due to time and space constraints it was not possible to include this case study. Therefore, a thorough analysis of this case will be published elsewhere.

4.2 From post-conflict reconstruction of heritage to a dialogue around heritage dissonance

Practices and actors appropriating the words *peace-building*, *post-conflict action* and *reconciliation* have been numerous, but hardly any of their practices explicitly articulate the meaning, philosophy and policies behind these terms in relation to heritage actions and programmes undertaken.¹³ Even within post-conflict studies, the word reconciliation has been a vague term signifying concepts of both looking backwards as ‘reconciliation with history’ or ‘coming to terms with the past’ (Petritsch/Džihic 2010, 23) and looking forward as ‘rebuilding relationships’ (Lederach 1997, 24) or ‘the restoration of friendly relations’ (Oxford Dictionaries 2012). Elin Skaar, Siri Gloppen and Astri Suhrke (2005, 4) talk about different levels of reconciliation, from a thin level, such as laying down arms, to thick, as “associated with forgiveness and creation of mutual trust, often expressed in the construction of a common narrative of the past and a shared vision of the future.”

For reconciliation to start, opposing sides should be engaged as ‘humans-in-relationship’ (Lederach 1997, 26), at least interacting even if they may continue to disagree (Gloppen 2005, 17). This is crucial for our discussion, since reconciliation as a political ideal envisions a process in which all sides are willing to step beyond their conflicting divides, enter into active dialogue and cooperate in creating new values and patterns of interaction. This is important to have in mind when trying to pin down at least four broad different approaches and logics that use heritage on the cultural level of

¹³ The exception is the Council of Europe document *The role of culture and cultural heritage in conflict prevention, transformation, resolution and post-conflict action: the Council of Europe Approach*, published in 2011, which retrospectively sums up the role of some of the programmes and tools used by this organization. The philosophical framework of understanding heritage in this document is, however, more in line with heritage as a material feature and a basis of one’s identity that should be protected than something dynamic, plural and around which meaning can be dialogued. Furthermore, the document is full of declarative statements, without unpacking some of the terms used or the practices promoted around these terms.

reconciliation in post-conflict situations in the Western Balkans.

The first, most common and least contested philosophy behind the majority of heritage-related post-conflict projects and programmes in the Western Balkans has been to restore, reconstruct and rehabilitate cultural heritage destroyed during the wars. This approach, which can be termed *post-conflict heritage reconstruction*, insists on rebuilding the environment and identity symbols which were destroyed hand in hand with the exodus and killings of people from a specific community, so as to ensure the right conditions for the return of displaced persons, give back a sense of 'normalcy'. The assumption here is that material heritage sites are the most visible sign of restoring one's identity. Numerous religious and public building restorations implemented by CHwB in Bosnia and Herzegovina, have been helpful in giving back a sense of normality and pride to local communities, but has questionable results when it comes to inter-ethnic dialogue and relations. This approach aims to reconstruct community relations to those before the conflict. The notion of being able to restore relations as before the conflict is highly problematic, as it implies that time could and should be put back, without recognizing that establishing relations after the conflict can only be made when informed by the conflict which takes on a new quality. Furthermore, in aiming to put things back as they were, this assumption observes heritage and identities as static and does not ignite dialogues around heritage.

The rehabilitation of heritage sites in themselves does not necessarily – and sometimes even intentionally – open the discursive space for dialogue among conflicting communities. It can lead to non-violent coexistence, but its potential for reconciliatory processes are questionable. One of these examples is the case of the restoration of three highly symbolic religious sites in three towns in Bosnia and Herzegovina initiated by UNESCO – the Ferhadija Mosque in Banja Luka, the Orthodox Cathedral in Mostar and the Franciscan monastery in Plehan. As opposed to the restoration works implemented by CHwB who restore religious sites where there is a community that will use and cherish the site, the case of the restoration done by UNESCO took place in towns where the ethnic community which can nurture and use the monument no longer exists. Thus, these restoration

projects served mainly as a symbolic gesture and had the potential to ignite new tensions from the dominant community (whose military forces destroyed the monument).

Another approach is the effort to use heritage as an opportunity for encounters among professionals from divided communities. In this approach, which can be termed *building relationships through heritage professionalization*, it is the identity of a person as heritage professional that has the primacy over the identity of a person as a member of a particular ethnic community. The idea is that professionals can be brought together and will interact on professional issues of restoring a particular monument, the technical aspects of museum collections and non-conflict related issues in heritage and museum management, which will slowly lead to other kinds of conversations, creating links and relationships. These encounters happen in relation to the materiality of heritage sites, as with the *Regional Restoration Camps* instigated by CHwB, seminars and excellence centres organized by UNESCO as well as technical improvements in heritage management such as in the *Ljubljana Process: Rehabilitating our Common Heritage* by the Council of Europe. In these projects there is no discussion around the challenging issues related to meaning, the history of violent conflicts and contested identity politics. This approach believes that the basis for new relations and peaceful coexistence has to be created as a side effect of encounters beyond the conflicting issues.

The third broad approach is the one of *creating professional and political networks*, which takes the second approach one step further and tries to establish more permanent structures for encounters, which might or might not at some point start to address contested issues. Examples of this are the SEE Heritage Network and the Balkan Museum Network initiated by CHwB, as well as the Ministerial Conference established by UNESCO. These were primarily established with the goal of professional encounters that are non-project based, so there is no need to work on a specific monument or museum project or to produce tangible results. They do, however, combine professionalization aspects with conferences and seminars, and may result in declarations on particular issues related to heritage. They do not have to deal with contested heritage, but they can act as a voice of the profession

over which those interests are shared – such as working on accessibility, leadership and human rights in the case of the Balkan Museum Network. The Ministerial Conference is a more policy-driven and political mechanism through which particular heritage-related policies and priorities of participating states are discussed, but most of the outputs related to contested heritage are declarative. For this reason, networks can, but do not have to programme in a way that puts forward challenging issues related to heritage and identities in SEE.

The fourth approach to which the case studies in this research belong relates to the *creation of discursive spaces for dialogues around the meaning and interpretation of heritage*. This is important because it is in line with the cultural level of reconciliation as a long-term process that differs from all other conflict-handling mechanisms (Ross 2004), which presupposes *voluntary initiative* of the parties to *engage and bring together all sides* in pursuit of *changing identity, values, attitudes and patterns of interaction* (van der Merwe 1999) in order to *build relationships* that are not haunted by conflicts and hatreds of yesterday (Hayner 2000, 161) and which would remove enduring and new forms of structural and cultural violence (Galtung 1990). The concept itself is inclined to go beyond the primordial positivist identity formations and conflicts and use a constructivist dialogical approach in dealing with conflicts. For this reason, the imposition of a monolithic, official unified history and interpretation may be counter-productive, as those who hold conflicting memories are left feeling disenfranchised (Gloppen 2005, 38).

SEE and the Western Balkans in particular, show that reconciliation should not be limited just to certain determined periods, specific historic events or to specific wars, since all of them have both prehistory and consequences that might last for several generations and that play a role in cultural violence. The wider historic context and dynamic should also be addressed and used as an important lesson that provides engagement with diverse historical perspectives and contributes to the prevention of violent conflicts in the future. Being more remote from people's direct experiences and more 'naturalized' within discourses of ethnicity and nation, heritage sites, practices and museums not directly connected to the war and atrocity

sites are often an invisible basis for cultural violence, that “make direct and structural violence look, even feel right – or at least not wrong” (Galtung 1990, 291). It could also be argued that precisely because they are less directly painful and more remote from people’s direct experiences, museums and heritage sites and practices can offer a discursive space in which to unlock closed mono-cultural discourses and facilitate and provoke dialogue.

This is where the concept of heritage dissonance is of particular importance, as it signifies a ‘discord value’ (Schofield 2005, 111), a value of unlocking the discursive space and having to enter into a conversation, which might de-naturalize the basis for cultural violence and lead to new ways of understanding and meaning-making. Discursive space established through heritage dissonance as understood through inclusive heritage discourse should be thought provoking, de-naturalizing, non-dogmatic and include multi-vocal narratives. This is why in the context of this research I was not interested in exploring the effects of simply restoring certain destroyed heritage if the process of restoration does not involve inter-community encounters and conversations. Nor was I interested in solely exploring human rights initiatives which deal only with the recent past without addressing the wider context and more longitudinal historic circumstances. Neither was I interested in exploring initiatives which technically support cooperation and professionalization in the heritage sector throughout the region, without ever addressing the questions of interpretation and meaning-making.

Each of these is necessary and crucial for bringing back the dignity of people’s lives after violent conflicts, but they do not necessarily create the space for changing long-prevailing identities, values, attitudes and patterns of interaction. Therefore, the initiatives analysed in the following chapters are exactly those rare examples, which claim to use heritage for reconciliation processes, but which also created (intentionally or not) the discursive and physical spaces for dialoguing around heritage dissonance. Some of these, purposefully leave dissonance visible and plural, while others create a new more encompassing narrative for shared heritage. Some create dialogue around meaning only behind closed doors, while some open the space for broader public and citizen-led contributions. Today, when international

support, arbitration and funds for reconciliation are disappearing and shifting to more acute post-violent-conflict zones, it is important that the achievements and limitations of these initiatives do not remain a matter of mere political rhetoric, but receive some sort of scrutinized analyses when they get applied in new contexts.

5. Creating Common Heritage Through the World Heritage List

The culture of Stećaks has crossed political borders of our states and has become a component of national cultures in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro. We shall work together in the future to analyse and popularize phenomena that are common to us.

(Božo Biskupić, Croatian Culture Minister, November 2009)

“Former Yugoslav foes join forces in seeking tombstone protection!” – Reuters reported about a ceremony taking place on 10 March 2015 in Sarajevo, marking the completion of the formal nomination process of Stećaks tombstones to the UNESCO World Heritage List (WHL). Six years before this event, a professor of medieval history at the Faculty of Philosophy in Sarajevo and the author of the most recent comprehensive research on Stećaks, Dubravko Lovrenović had suggested to the Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina the idea of nominating Stećaks to the WHL. The Ministry put forward this idea through the Ministerial Conference on Cultural

Heritage in South-East Europe¹⁴ in 2009 and sent official letters to the Ministers of Culture of Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia, proposing collaboration on a joint nomination of Stećaks. The unanimously accepted proposal was followed by a Memorandum of Understanding between the four states in November 2009 in Sarajevo and five intensive years of work. On 10 March 2015, numerous stakeholders addressed participants attending the ceremony including the Minister of Civil Affairs of Bosnia, the Ambassador of Montenegro, the Head of the UNESCO Antenna Office in Sarajevo, representatives of teams from Croatia, expert coordinators from Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Mayor of Tuzla Municipality. All representatives expressed their pride on the successful completion of the joint nomination dossier for Stećaks.

As an outsider who knew only a few of the people present there, I could notice the excitement within the team of experts. That was a group who evidently knew each other quite well and was happy to arrive at the moment when the negotiations and extensive technical work were behind them. It was a point of relaxation for many of them, while for me it was a first occasion where I could interview and talk to some of the participants. Attempts to approach some of them before the nomination was fully compiled had been fruitless and one could sense a hesitance to commit to interviews as though it could have threatened the nomination process. Everyone was aware of the political weight to succeed with the first official multilateral cooperation of former Yugoslav states. Everyone also hoped that for UNESCO this would give added-value to an impressive 1,400-page-long nomination file which involved 30 cultural properties in 26 municipalities in four states.

This nomination was special for being an inter-ministerial cooperation, supported officially and from the very beginning by the Ministries of Culture of each of the four states, plus supported both technically and financially by

¹⁴ The annual Ministerial Conferences on Cultural Heritage in South-East Europe was launched in 2004 in Mostar by the UNESCO Office in Venice in close cooperation with the Italian Government, as a political platform that enhances regional frameworks for cultural cooperation in SEE. See: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/venice/culture/safeguarding-cultural-heritage/cultural-heritage-in-south-east-europe/> (accessed 24 March 2016).

the UNESCO Office in Venice, through its Antenna Office in Sarajevo. The incentive for cooperation was crystal clear – for participating states the goal was to have the Stećaks protected and inscribed on the WHL, while for UNESCO the goal was to use the WHL as a tool not only for the protection of Stećaks, but more importantly to encourage tangible cooperation among these states. The Ministerial Conferences on Cultural Heritage, through which the cooperation was announced, has been one of the frameworks that UNESCO created in order to strengthen the “importance of shared heritage as a necessary step to further dialogue, reconciliation and mutual understanding.” The joint cooperation by four states on a nomination file could therefore become an exemplary case of working with shared heritage in the context of dialogue and reconciliation.

The shared heritage and object of nomination were Stećaks, medieval monolith tombstones dating from the 12th to the end of the 15th century. The tombstones are located throughout the overall territory of today’s Bosnia and Herzegovina, and parts of the territories of today’s Montenegro, Croatia and Serbia. Impressive in their monumental appearance and multitude (numbering a total of approximately 70,000 tombstones throughout 3,300 sites¹⁵), Stećaks “testify associations with prehistoric, ancient, pagan and early medieval traditions of both East and Western Europe” (TLF no. 5619). For centuries many of them have been preserved due to folk superstition, as the Stećaks inspired numerous folk stories and traditions, as well as artistic practices. Importantly, people belonging to all three medieval religions living in the region (Serbian Orthodox, Catholic and Bosnian Church) as well as all ethnicities and different social strata have been buried under Stećaks. The

¹⁵ Out of 70,000 recorded tombstones from about 3,300 sites, some 60,000 are in Bosnia and Herzegovina, about 4,400 in Croatia, about 3,500 in Montenegro and some 4,100 in Serbia. Besides their regional differentiation manifested in shapes, ornamental motifs and quality, the medieval tombstones are usually found in clusters – in cemeteries belonging to same families, containing only a few stones, then in cemeteries of whole clans, with about 30 to 50 stones and in village cemeteries, sometimes with several hundred tombstones. See the Tentative List File no. 5619, at <http://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/5619/> (accessed 24 March 2016).

notion of Stećaks not only being spread over the territories of four states, and exemplifying inter-confessionality and shared practice for different ethnic communities was an important message within the current political context of ex-Yugoslav countries and an important point highlighted in the nomination dossier.

While Stećaks are an ideal example of shared heritage in the region, they are also the site of dissonant confrontations, different opinions and opposing views as to their archaeological, artistic and historical interpretation. These confronted interpretations coincide with the creation of nation-states and rising national awareness in the region. Researchers and historiographers from Bosnia, Serbia and Croatia have all claimed ownership of Stećaks for their national community by linking them with medieval Serbian, Bosnian or Croatian states. Medieval states through which each of today's countries legitimize ownership over certain territories. Not only in the national historiographies of these countries but also in popular science, arts and literature since the 19th century, one can find claims of national and religious identity in relation to the medieval practice of burying one's dead under Stećaks.



Stećaks from Radimlja necropolis, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Credit: Wikimedia Commons, author: Litany

For all these reasons, the project of a joint transnational serial nomination of Stećaks to the UNESCO WHL is an exemplary case for analysis of how such a policy tool can become a framework for cooperation and dialogue between post-war states. Above all, it should be interpreted as a process in which the nomination to the WHL, as the issue that was bringing actors together, prevailed over the issues that were pulling them apart. However, in the context of this research, it was important to access the process and space between the first agreement and successful nomination, in the context of working through the dissonance of Stećaks. How did the process of engineering the nomination dossier function and what were the tensions created and negotiated within it? How did the dissonance of this heritage (and the discursive space which was created due to the new framework of inter-state cooperation) rupture and unsettle the authorized heritage discourse in which all of the professionals operate? How did the dissonance of interpretations within different national historiographies unsettle the use of science and materiality of heritage within the discourses used by participants? What is the strength and the potential of the common interpretation created through the nomination process? Which messages are communicated through it and how did it work through dissonances? What are the side effects of the cooperation created through the effort to compile the documentation for the WHL? And how did the actors reflect on the ideal of reconciliation through this particular case?

5.1 Transnational nominations to the World Heritage

List: beyond competitive national practice

The WHL, foreseen as an international legal instrument within the UNESCO *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage* from 1972 has for the last 40 years been the most prestigious and “the most effective international legal instrument for the protection of the cultural and natural heritage” (Strasser 2002, 215). The WHL is ratified by 187 countries and currently encompasses 1,031 sites, with a growth rate of approximately 30 new sites per year. Studies analysing the benefits of inscription to the WHL show that these sites gain wider attention by both

politicians and media, ensure the general public is better informed about these sites, enhance opportunities for tourism development (Lazzarotti 2000; Yang/Lin/Han 2009), increase monetary benefits within the heritage industry (Johnson/Thomas 1995), attract donors more easily, provide branding possibilities within the tourist industry and are icons of national identity for the respective country (Shackley 2006, 85).

Having a site inscribed to the WHL is therefore a highly competitive and politicized process and, as such, is subject to extensive political lobbying (Buchanan 1980). The vagueness of the concept of 'outstanding universal value' that a site on the list should possess is still criticized as non-objective, despite the detailed *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* (UNESCO 2005b). Both insiders and outsiders of the processes warn that often national interests dominate over global ethics to protect sites of utmost importance for humanity: "The rhetoric is global: the practice is national" (Ashworth/van der Aa 2006, 148).

The structure and procedures of the WHL are based on an interplay between national authority and international arbitration, forming a particular policy construct. The instrument is conceived in a way that different local authorities and heritage experts may suggest a site for the Tentative List, but nation-states have the exclusive authority to nominate a heritage site to the WHL, securing the highest political backing of the state on whose territory a site resides. After nominating a site by following detailed operational guidelines and requirements, the nomination is evaluated and proposed for inscription by two expert Advisory Boards, the International Council on Museums and Sites (ICOMOS) for cultural sites, and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) for natural sites and by the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM). After this, the World Heritage Committee, formed by 21 of the member countries elected on a rolling basis by the General Assembly, make the final decision about inscription of the site to the List.

In the last ten years, UNESCO has made steps to promote governance models which complement the state through stakeholders' involvement and transnational cooperation. The new Operational Guidelines for the World Heritage Convention from 2005 require the nomination dossier to be followed

by a management plan for the site, securing not only preservation but also sustainable use and involvement of related stakeholders. Furthermore, UNESCO's *Global Strategy for a Representative, Balanced and Credible World Heritage List* highlights the need for balancing representation and distribution of the sites by encouraging transnational serial nominations for heritage sites (WHC-08/32.COM/10B), which up to now account for only 31 out of 1,031 entries on the WHL.

A transnational serial nomination is a nomination that consists of two or more spatially distinct components which create a thematic, functional, historic, stylistic or typological series with other, spatially distinct components and can be found in two or more countries. Even if much more complicated than a single country nomination, transnational nominations have the potential to de-nationalize competition for the WHL and promote international understanding through inter-state cooperation both for the nomination and in managing the site(s). This is therefore one of the desirable and recommended futures of the WHL, a future that acknowledges that numerous historical phenomena reflected in material remains are not the sole ownership and responsibility of one nation-state.

The idea of having all four countries nominating Stećaks (especially as they were states that had gone through war 20 years ago) was an important factor. In the process of creating a nomination dossier, it is standard practice for UNESCO experts to be available for technical support to state experts preparing the nomination dossier. In this case, however, the standard process of remote technical support from UNESCO was mixed with another more political need to create a stable and constant space for cooperation among the former Yugoslav republics.

5.2 Politically desirable narrative of the nomination process and its divergent aspects

Approaching this case was challenging because the actors who were part of the project were aware of its political fragility in terms of implied disputes and compromises which have taken place, and not all were willing to share the dynamics of the process. Furthermore, they had the awareness that this

project had a different level of support from UNESCO than the standard. Both of these caused uneasiness and diverging responses from the interviewees, which is the reason why they are quoted anonymously. In some interviews the responses seemed guarded as if they were aimed at journalists, while others were willing to mention in confidence some of the tensions and problems during the process. In order to set the tone for understanding this project it is worth noting five focal points of the most politically correct story on one side and the most revealing responses on the other.

Politically desirable version of the story

The first focal point of this story is that the motivation and the ultimate goal of this nomination was to save endangered heritage which deserves to be protected for the future – a classic professional aim for nominating a site. The second point is that for Bosnia and Herzegovina it was the first and obvious step to invite its neighbours to cooperate, not because of the WHL but again, because of the need to save Stećaks. The third point was that in this exercise governments gave political support and consent, and then the process was turned over to the experts and continued in a fully depoliticized way. The fourth point was that this expert cooperation functioned in an excellent way with the only challenges having been the managerial and technical aspects of compiling the nomination file, because of the number and complexity of the sites included, which required extensive and intensive work. The issue of common interpretation is non-existent in this version of the story since the universal value of Stećaks is obvious to the experts and transcends the question of interpretation. Due to this, the fifth point recognizes the role of UNESCO as solely giving valuable technical advice in the last phase of the process and ‘surprisingly’ contributing financially to the process.

UNESCO as a supreme arbiter had to stay aside during the whole process. They offered technical support in the sense of explaining things in the Annex 5. That role was taken at the very end when we were checking many times with their representatives whether we had compiled the document well in a technical sense (not content). Also,

part of the production of documentation for the sites was financed by UNESCO, which surprised us.

(Interviewee involved in the WHL nomination process)¹⁶

The most revealing version of the story

Some interviewees revealed slightly divergent elements and twists compared to the focal points of the above desirable version. They noted that the joint exercise of the nomination was driven by the desire to have a site on the WHL as a matter of prestige, recognition and incentive for future economic and tourism development. The WHL was also understood as an underlying motive for uniting experts, institutions, politicians, local municipalities and citizens. The experts were motivated by gaining international recognition for their work and safeguarding heritage that they care for, while for local communities, authorities and politicians it was about local prestige and potential economic benefits.

Somehow, people don't understand enough how big the importance is for the humanity, because, if something is on the World Heritage List, that is the contribution to whole humanity, as well to the sector of heritage protection. It is a proof that you have been seriously dealing with it, that this represents a value, not only for you. [...] We were in countries that were not in good relations, and we found a way to do something together. For me that aspect is not important... Maybe it is to someone. Neither is the fact that we participated in this because we have got money from projects for post-conflict countries. You cannot negate that something has a value... not only in a sense that it can serve to the development of some region, some city or village, that it can serve for tourist promotion, and so on, when you have something that is World Heritage.

(Anonymous interviewee)¹⁷

¹⁶ Online interview, 21 May 2015.

¹⁷ Interview conducted in Belgrade, 30 April 2015.

This account reflects not only the value assigned to the WHL, but also the awareness of the expert that the political context of post-conflict countries might be important to others and might have allowed the process to happen, but that this is irrelevant for his/her identity as a professional. This awareness of the political context and UNESCO's push for cooperation was one more aspect in this story. Bosnia and Herzegovina wanted a single country nomination due to the fact that Stećaks are spread throughout the whole territory of this country, but were advised by UNESCO that the nomination would only stand a chance if it was done as a serial transnational nomination. In this story the experts have been supported, more or less, by their Ministries of Culture, but they have been aware of the fact that they were not representing only their professions, but also their nation-states. This resulted in specific dynamics during the process, sometimes seeming more like a diplomatic meeting than a professional discussion.

The nomination process was not removed from political interference, especially within Bosnia and Herzegovina, which had to be careful about the involvement and consent of all three ethnic entities and to provide fair representation of the chosen sites within the country. Apart from the challenges of giving equal representations of sites, there were obstructions by the Republic of Srpska at the last phase of the process, related primarily to the interpretation of Stećaks, which could have stopped the whole nomination. This story recognizes that, apart from the technical complexity of the nomination, issues of interpretation and related ownership of Stećaks have been among the main challenges in the process. The experts worked closely on joint parts of the nomination, reworking and harmonizing the texts, removing everything that could disturb any of the parties. The UNESCO Antenna Office in Sarajevo also played a crucial cohesive role, with a representative of UNESCO being present in each meeting and through email correspondence. Financial support of 30,000 US dollars from UNESCO enabled the joint meetings and preparation of documentation by each team. This exceptional involvement is of course seen as political support for cooperation in the region.

The two stories vary depending on the interviewee and what he or she thinks is important to hide for protecting the group or the process. The first

story is important since it represents what actors consider to be an appropriate narrative for the public. When it comes to the hidden version of the story, it is important to underline that none of the interviewees told the story by revealing all the focal points. Different interviewees found different things important to hide or reveal, making it possible to compile a mosaic of divergent points into an alternative story that has more in common with what I could observe or hear about in informal talks with different people involved in the nomination since 2009.

5.3 Creating the framework for the nomination process

Even though the World Heritage Convention text is “designed to incite action rather than to prescribe action” (Musitelli 2002 324), the Operational Guidelines generate specific bureaucratic apparatus that the experts need to interpret and apply to the national heritage protection system of a specific country (Bendix/Eggert/Peselmann 2013). Each of the four countries involved in the nomination of Stećaks has its own set of actors and national procedures for inscription and management of World Heritage Sites, adapted to national legal frameworks. In a transnational serial nomination, one had to ensure that the process would take into account all the particularities of each participating state while at the same time offer an umbrella management and description system.

In the case of Stećaks nomination, a Memorandum of Understanding among the four countries defined that two teams would be formed – one to act as an administrative and political body (consisting of representatives from the Ministries) while the other would be an expert body which would conduct the majority of the work on the nomination file. This expert body held their meetings much more often than the administrative body. The expert group consisted of twelve people with two coordinators, both from Bosnia and Herzegovina, who were in charge of two parts of the nomination – one for the preparation of the nomination dossier and one for the preparation of management plans. Lovrenović, as the most prominent scholar on Stećaks, and originator of the idea for nominating them, was appointed as the coordinator of the whole nomination process.

While the political administrative group came from the Ministries of Culture,¹⁸ the structure of the national expert teams of each country varied.¹⁹ Each of the national teams was in charge of the coordination of the nomination dossiers and management plans at a national level in cooperation with local municipalities and ministries (other than culture) while together they were in charge of preparing joint sections of the nomination dossier. A big challenge in preparing the nomination dossier was the fact that 70,000 Stećaks tombstones are distributed over a huge territory, over 3,300 sites. From these, each country needed to select the most representative examples, which narrowed down to 30 sites based in 26 municipalities in four different countries. This complexity of dispersed cultural property required a complex management system. None of the team members had previous extensive experience of handling even a single World Heritage Site nomination and management plan, and none had any experience in designing a serial transnational nomination. Similar examples of transnational serial nominations of dispersed sites throughout the world were also lacking. After initial enthusiasm, the team was stuck with the question of how to design a model that would work:

Now, when I am telling you all of this, it might look as if some people were meeting and had a good time, had to make some decisions a few times during the year, nominate something which will be accepted one day, etc. But it wasn't like that at all. From the very first day we were sitting together, we did not know what to do. One day someone from Bosnia came and brought something from UNESCO's website and

¹⁸ As Bosnia and Herzegovina does not have a national Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Civil Affairs was involved in the project coordination.

¹⁹ The Montenegro team consisted purely of experts from the Ministry of Culture – one for the development of management plans, another one for the nomination dossier; the Croatian expert team was formed partly from by the Ministry of Culture and partly the Conservation Department of Imot; the Serbian expert team involved experts from the State Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments; while the Bosnian expert team was from the Commission to Preserve National Monuments.

said: 'Here, they have something similar!' And these were some tombstones in Africa. And we were sitting together around the table and reading and thinking about how we should do it now.

*(Anonymous interviewee)*²⁰

What was also clear is that the group had to decide under which criteria it could prove the outstanding universal value of Stećaks and find a good concept around which to make a story about their value, a story agreeable to all four states. In this sense, during the whole process the four states were jointly engineering the documentations and inventories for nominations in a way that was new for all of them. From the start, the expert and administrative teams were financially and technically supported by the UNESCO Antenna Office in Sarajevo, combined with an unusual arbitration and mediation, led by the head of the office, Siniša Šešum, who was present during the meetings to keep the cooperation going.

We had financial and permanent support from the Sarajevo Office, and Mr. Šešum absolutely supported us from emails to other things – he really got involved! There have been diverse problems, sparks, barrages, tensions, but then, we simply asked for his opinion and advice and overcame this. Problems which seemed unsolvable, we succeeded to solve with their help, even those that could have let down the whole project.

*(Anonymous interviewee)*²¹

UNESCO aimed to stay neutral when it came to the content of the text, and all interviewees backed this. Even those who criticized the countries for putting themselves in the position of always needing an arbiter underlined that Šešum's support and UNESCO's authority was crucial, as a cohesive factor that encouraged, nudged, mediated and backed the process politically.

²⁰ Interview conducted in Belgrade, 30 April 2015.

²¹ Interview conducted in Sarajevo, 9 March 2015.

5.4 Caught between political correctness and contestations

In March 2010, in Sarajevo, selected team members met for the first time at a formal celebratory meeting. The first step was to make the documentation for the submission on UNESCO's Tentative List and then create a Nomination Dossier with related Management Plans for the WHL. The first working meeting was held in Podgorica, Montenegro, in May 2010 and each national team presented the sites they intended to select for the nomination dossier: Bosnia and Herzegovina presented 10 sites and agreed to select five-six among these; Croatia presented two sites; Montenegro varied between three and four; Serbia considered selecting between three and five sites. All of these presented sites were already listed cultural properties under national systems for protection of cultural monuments and, according to members of the group, could be related to the criteria of authenticity, integrity and physical protection for the WHL.

The first step was then to make the documentation for the Tentative List, consisting of two parts: a common description of Stećaks as phenomena and justification of the criteria for inscription to the WHL and a second part in which each country explains the sites that are in its territory. As a conclusion to the meeting in Podgorica, the teams agreed that Lovrenović, as a coordinator and scholar on Stećaks, would produce the common text for the Tentative List, while each country would make final selection of the sites in its own territory and produce descriptions related to these. For almost a year after that meeting, until February 2011, the teams worked separately without much communication. The fund of 30,000 US dollars received from UNESCO was shared and used for research, documentation, travel costs and per diems, since some of the Ministries had not planned to allocate funds for this process during 2010.

In February 2011, a new meeting was organized in Belgrade, with the urgent issue of submitting the nomination document to be admitted to the Tentative List. This was when the first problem among the group appeared. Everyone gave the texts describing each of the particular sites in each country, but no one was satisfied with the common text for the Tentative List,

since the common text was solely related to sites within Bosnia and Herzegovina. An additional surprise was the significant increase of sites in Bosnia. While Croatia selected two sites, and Serbia and Montenegro selected 3 sites to nominate, Bosnia and Herzegovina presented 22 selected sites instead of 6 as agreed at the previous meeting.

The way this first problem was dealt with indicates the high level of cautiousness and restraint from open tensions. Even though the teams from Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia were concerned that the number of sites in Bosnia had multiplied, no one raised the question openly. Due to the fact that the majority of Stećaks are located in Bosnia, the new number of 22 sites was tacitly accepted. Though many experts were unsatisfied, no one wanted to openly raise the issue and be the one to create conflict. This restraint from confronting openly was mainly due to the fact that all the experts knew that in this situation they were also the representatives of their own nation-states and as such their professional responsibility was interwoven with their responsibility towards the interest of their countries. From the start till the end of the process these experts did not have decision-making powers and each decision made during the expert meeting was not official until it was checked and approved by the Ministries. For these reasons, and in the fragile political relations among these four states, no one wanted to get into the situation in which professional criticism regarding the quality of joint work could instead be used to raise diplomatic disputes among the countries.

At the start no one was open and transparent. Meetings had a truly political connotation, since no one wanted to criticize anyone openly. They had that inter-governmental, political level of communication, in a sense of political correctness. Everyone acted as representatives of their states, constraining from reproaching, from criticizing, from facing different opinions.

(Anonymous interviewee)²²

This general atmosphere was interrupted finally by an expert from Serbia,

²² Interview conducted in Belgrade, 29 April 2015.

who displayed text on a projector to the rest of the participants and pointed out problems with the common text. This act is one of these few critical moments in which the need to prepare a decent nomination file was above the need to keep imagined political correctness in the process.

The correctness among participants was not solely related to their restraint from creating conflicts among the countries, but was also caused by respect which the experts shared for Lovrenović, who is an excellent academic historian, the most important academic expert on the history of Stećaks in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The text for the Tentative List was agreed during this meeting, but the difference between academic and expert formulations and texts continued to be evident in the next important phase – the creation of the Nomination dossier, something that the majority of participants had never done before.

So, we all have this enormous respect for him and give him the task to write the text for point 2a of the nomination file, which is a common description of Stećaks. From February 2011 until February 2012 we haven't even met. Until then we are waiting for him to do the point 2a. He actually gave this to us much earlier and we read it, but due to political correctness no one wanted to comment on email, and none of us communicated over the phone at that time. Why aren't we commenting? Because that extensive text was related only to Bosnia and Herzegovina, and it was actually a revised text from his monograph.

(Anonymous interviewee)²³

With this unraised issue the next meeting took place in May 2012 in Sarajevo, a meeting in which the Minister of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina congratulated the whole team for almost finalizing the nomination. Lovrenović, unfamiliar with the methodology of nomination dossier, also thought that the team's work was almost done. One by one, representatives from national teams that were connected to UNESCO National Commissions explained in an implicit, political way that “the

²³ Interview conducted in Belgrade, 29 April 2015.

criteria of UNESCO have to be respected,” but none of them directly said anything against the existing text.

Everyone is dissatisfied, and implicitly deprecate, but all of them talk like political officials. No one says that something like that cannot pass further and that in reality no one agrees with this text. Some of us met a few times in between that meeting for other occasions, and representatives from Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia were nodding, but no one said anything special, it is just evident that the dissatisfaction exists.

(Anonymous interviewee)²⁴

Again, the expert archaeologist from Serbia, prepared detailed comments and arguments and interrupted the talks with a 25 minute presentation giving reasons for a need to revise the existing text. Lovrenović suggested that the whole team make another version of the document and from that point onwards members of the team started to cooperate more closely and informally changed roles to work on common parts of the dossier. The archaeologist conservator from Belgrade who openly commented on the text, together with the architect conservator from Bosnia and Herzegovina and archaeologist from Croatia, were in charge of reworking the common text based on the work undertaken by Lovrenović. All of them were working in institutes for the protection of monuments or conservation departments of ministries of culture, therefore being more familiar with the exercise of listing and describing particular property for protection purposes. At the next meeting in July 2012 the coordinator was unavailable and no one met again from July 2012 until April 2013 in Belgrade.

From April 2013 until December 2014 the core team worked on the dossier including Lovrenović, together with one more expert from Montenegro. They were the ones who came to each of the fifteen meetings organized during this period, while others participated from time to time. In the meantime, coordination of management plans was going on in

²⁴ Interview conducted in Belgrade, 29 April 2015.

consultation with 26 local municipalities. In Serbia, the experts were working directly through workshops with local stakeholders in two municipalities. Montenegro on the other hand followed its legal procedure of creating management plans working with different ministries and municipalities. This process was most intense and complex in Bosnia and Herzegovina, since they had to work with 21 municipalities and take care about national quotas within three entities of the country – Bosniak, Serbian and Croatian. Municipalities in which sites were not selected complained about the choices as they feared that their sites were being conveyed as ‘second class’. Also, the tension between the ambitions of municipalities and professionals became evident, as some mayors rushed to plan roads and works near the sites to obtain better accessibility. Efforts had to be made by the experts to explain why sites have to stay intact and protected.

5.5 Dissonant interpretations of Stećaks within ethno-national imaginations

From April 2013, until the submission of the nomination in January 2015, the team members started communicating extensively via emails. The process of crafting the final text of the dossier was one of constant negotiations and harmonization of texts. It was important that the text did not contain something that would be problematic in any of the countries, and the team worked on a principle of unanimous consent.

We were trying to ensure that everyone agreed with the formulation, that there is no imposed interpretations, and everyone participated in forming the text... but not forced, everyone consented.

(Anonymous interviewee)²⁵

The importance of the interpretation of Stećaks became obvious in October 2013, when the team again thought it had finalized the dossier for submission in early January 2014. They were waiting for each state to ratify the text within its own institutions, local commissions and other authorities. While they

²⁵ Interview conducted in Sarajevo, 9 March 2015.

discussed technicalities, the new director of the Institute for Protection of Cultural Monuments of the Republic of Srpska put forward critical objections that the document did not represent enough Serbian national context of Stećaks and therefore he did not want to give consent for the submission of the dossier. He wrote letters of complaint and travelled to Belgrade to urge the State Institute for Protection of Monuments of Serbia and the Ministry of Culture and Information of Serbia to support him. At the same moment of this disagreement, elections took place in Serbia and a new government inclined to keep close relations with the Republic of Srpska entered power.

The new Minister of Culture and new management at the Institute for Protection of Cultural Monuments, elected by the new government and not having previous knowledge about the nomination of Stećaks entered into the dialogue. After internal meetings with the expert in charge of Stećaks, the new management realized that the project was of utmost importance and decided to back the existing document instead of supporting the complaints from the Republic of Srpska. The statement from Bosnia and Herzegovina noted this to be an intergovernmental cooperation which had its procedure and the team decided on everything jointly and transparently, and that each state should make decisions within its own institutions and frameworks.

This was a most turbulent moment which demonstrates the fragility of this cooperation. It showed that it was enough that only one man in a significant institutional position disagreed with the project for the whole thing to fail. Therefore, the issue of interpretation and dealing with contested versions of Stećaks became central for the nomination file.

This is when a new phase starts, the phase of problems and the phase of disputes over this heritage. Until then, this question was appearing, but we were overcoming it, because the majority of the team was ready to overcome it due to the significance of this project and the stubbornness to do such a project. It's out of question that Croats think that this heritage is Croatian, Serbia that it is Serbian and that all of it is Serbian, Bosniaks that it is Bosnian.

(Anonymous interviewee)²⁶

²⁶ Interview conducted in Belgrade, 29 April 2015.

This statement shows that nationalistic claims over Stećaks existed, despite the fact that the team tried not to mention them explicitly and instead offered a more encompassing interpretation of Stećaks in the dossier. The issue here was that, since the second half of the 19th century, different historiographies have produced different interpretations of Stećaks and their links to particular religions (Serbian Orthodox, Catholic and Bosnian Church) and particular ethnicities and nations respectively. Furthermore, the understanding of other phenomena connected to Stećaks was also the object of diverging interpretations and theories. The interpretation and terming of the alphabet used for inscriptions on Stećaks vary – from Cyrillic (ćirilica) and Glagolitic alphabet (glagoljica), an older variation of Cyrillic alphabet used in Croatia until the 18th century, to Bosnian Cyrillic (bosančica).²⁷ The same stands for understanding of the Bosnian Church as being an

²⁷ The exact nature of the relationship between the Glagolitic and Cyrillic scripts has been historically a matter of great controversy and dispute in Slavic Studies, especially pertaining to the question of chronological precedence and mutual influence. Several traditional accounts on the origin of the Slavic script they describe are ambiguous in their statements of what particular script they pertain to, which is furthermore complicated by the occasional mixture of terms used for them in some sources. A version of the Cyrillic alphabet is until today the official alphabet in Serbia (as well as FYR Macedonia, Bulgaria, Russia) and is connected to modern Serbian language and national awareness, while the Glagolitic alphabet has been prevailing in Croatia until the 18th century and has therefore been connected to Croatian national awareness. The polemic is therefore also one about 'ethnic affiliation' of alphabets, and relations to Bosnian Cyrillic. Serbian scholars claim it to be a variant of Serbian Cyrillic, ranging from the contention that other nations had been using a form of Serbian script to the idea that all who wrote in Bosnian Cyrillic were ethnically Serb. Croatian scholars challenge the idea that the script is Serbian and claim its belonging to the Croatian cultural sphere, arguing that the script should be called Croatian Cyrillic. Another school of Croatian philologists acknowledges that a 'Serbian connection' did influence Bosnian Cyrillic, but that script innovations have been happening both before and after the mentioned one. Bosniak scholars unanimously dismiss any claims of Croat or Serb affiliation, instead maintaining the Bosnian Cyrillic as ethnically Bosnian and, consequently, Bosniak, in legacy of medieval Bosnia and the Bosnian Church.

independent church or just a divergence from Orthodox or Catholic.²⁸ The interpretation of these phenomena is important because it has direct implications not only on understanding Stećaks, but on the legitimization of particular views of history, which in turn influences nationalistic political claims of territory and country.

From the late 19th century, Stećaks were the object of a few interpretative phases. All of these were based on the certain historiographical theses, and therefore certain implicit or explicit ideological claims on the nature of medieval space in which Stećaks reside. First and longest was the attribution of Stećaks to Bogomils,²⁹ which lasted from the end of the 19th until long into the 20th century (Lovrenović 2009, 19-23). This thesis had its variations which claimed continuity from Bogomils to today's Bosnian Muslims, usually backed by the claim that the alphabet used for Stećaks is a particular Bosnian version of Cyrillic, *bosančica*.³⁰ Parallel to it there were theories which interpreted Stećaks as Croat (Catholic, Dalmatian) linking it to their vicinity of Catholic churches in Dalmatia and parts of Bosnia, while insisting that the Bosnian Church emanated from the Catholic Church and that the alphabet used is Glagolitic script (Lovrenović 2009, 23-24).

²⁸ The Bosnian Church was a particular independent Church on the territory of today's Bosnia, considered heretic by both the Orthodox Serbian Church and the Catholic Church. There are, however, theories claiming that the Bosnian Church emanated from Catholicism 'gone astray' (Fine 2007), while some claim that it is just a modality of Orthodox Christianity.

²⁹ Bogomilism was a dualist religious-political sect active from the 10th to the 15th century, and founded in the First Bulgarian Empire by the priest Bogomil as a form of political movement and opposition to the Bulgarian state and the church, calling for a return to Early Christianity. The movement spread in the Balkans and further to Italy and France and was announced as heretic in both Dalmatia (today's territory of Croatia) and Raška (today's territory of Serbia, considered the first Serbian state), but found a refuge in Bosnia during the rule of Kulin Ban in the 12th century. Some theories link Bogomils with the Bosnian Church.

³⁰ Some Bosniak Muslim authors connect the Bosnian Church with the Muslim community which lives in Bosnia today, claiming that practitioners of the Bosnian Church took to Islam in the 15th century. This disputed thesis is recent and provides political continuity to the Bosnian Muslims.

Serbian historiography linked Stećaks to the Serbian Orthodox Church and Medieval Serbian State, again describing the Bosnian Church as a divergence from Orthodox Christianity, citing the vicinity to Orthodox churches and Stećak's necropolis and the use of the Serbian Cyrillic script (Lovrenović 2009, 23-24).

These versions 'bosnianized', 'croatized' and 'serbianized' Stećaks,³¹ and created claims over the territory where Stećaks can be found, by linking them to territories of medieval states which are considered to be cradles of today's nation-states.³² Even though the borders and names of these states were changed numerous times throughout the 10th-15th century, nationalized versions of history from the four contemporary nation-states focus on the period of largest strength and territory of their supposed medieval ancestors.

These are ethnic theories based on the idea about eternal nation, a nation which sleeps and, as Anthony Smith says, gets awakened one day. It is an attempt to put into the context of nation and national movement all that what has been people's history, and to give national prefix to culture. That was a time of awakening of national awareness and it is normal that people searched for argumentation. But, we have been put back to political practices of 19th century, to ethno-politics, ethno-capital, pseudo-democracy.

(Anonymous interviewee)³³

Besides exclusive national theories, Stećaks have been the object of interpretations that were much more focused on artistic qualities and

³¹ As analysed by Gorčin Dizdar (2010), these direct deeply politicized efforts to subscribe Stećaks to only one of three constitutive ethnic nations of Bosnia and Herzegovina are still present, but there are also more subtle ideological forms which try to classify Stećaks according to seemingly universal categories such as East/West, religion/sect, copy/originality, which can be implicitly linked to contemporary political projects.

³² Zeta and Duklja (today's Montenegro), Bosnia (today's Bosnia), Hungarian and Croat States, and towns/states in Dalmatia (today's Croatia) and Serbian Medieval State (today's Serbia)

³³ Interview conducted in Sarajevo, 10 March 2015.

influences – especially suited to the period of former Yugoslavia. One of these is *Illyricum Spectrum* by Miroslav Krleža, who understands Stećaks in the Nietzschean sense, as a reflection of the ‘spirit’ of a homogenous cultural space of South Slavs, characterized by a mixture of diverse cultural and artistic practices from both East and West, paganism and Christianity (Dizdār 2010).

In terms of research qualities, the most comprehensive book on Stećaks during the Yugoslav period has been *Stecci – kultura i umjetnost (Medieval Tombstones – Culture and Art)* researched in cooperation with centres for protection of cultural monuments, museums and archaeological institutes throughout the four former republics of ex-Yugoslavia (Bešliagić 1971 and 1982). Here the author observes Stećaks as unique phenomena of the Bosnian and Hum (Herzegovina) medieval state, but recognizes that its borders were fluid, and that its citizens included Bosnians, Serbs and Croats which were all buried under Stećaks despite their ethnicity or faith.

Similar interpretation of Stećaks as a Bosnian and South Slavic phenomenon can be found in the writings of Lovrenović, where he negates any connection of Stećaks to ethnic groups of today’s Bosnia and Herzegovina, actually negating the assumed continuity between the Middle Ages and today’s inheritors (Lovrenović 2009 and 2010) and explaining the nationalization of Stećaks as a model of change of historic memory (Lovrenović 2002). His thesis of discontinuity is strengthened by the fact that, until the end of the 19th century, communities of all ethnicities living near Stećaks interpreted them through folk legends, myths about giants and other superstitions without need for ethnic claim.

Finally, the thesis of archaeologist Emina Zečević, a leading expert on Stećaks in Serbia, put forward the idea that Stećak is a folk term that signifies medieval tombstones and is highly problematic when applied as a scientific term. According to Zečević, the very term Stećak and its related interpretations are problematic because they foster theories whereby Stećaks are particular to the territory of Bosnia and blur relations with similar necropolae which are spread throughout the much wider territory of South Slavic countries (Zečević 2005).

What is specific about Stećaks is that these different theses are not

strictly reserved for disputes among historiographers and archaeologists. Just an ordinary Google search of the word Stećaks reveals that these disputes exist in citizen's forums, media, citizen's comments on media articles and in diverse amateur blogs. Historiographic interpretations make an even larger number of competing meanings. Considering the wave of citizen-led disputes that emerged in the 1990s when there was a growing interest in one's ethno-national identities and roots, the team had to be cautious not only of official national historiographies and politicians, but also the fuzz which might be created if their work on nomination was distributed publicly before being completed.

5.6 Crafting a discourse of interrelatedness: Stećaks as a bridge of diversities

The nomination process represented a big step whereby the expert team created not only a common technical dossier, but followed interpretations which recognize Stećaks as common phenomena unrelated to contemporary nation-states and national identities. For the nomination file the team crafted a discourse of acceptance, intermingling, permeability and interrelated influences of different religious communities, ethnicities and even social classes in which Stećaks act as the common denominator:

Bridging confessional, political, ethnic and geographical divisions within a broader South Slavic region, bringing together the two, otherwise distinctly separated, medieval cultural concepts – the aristocratic (the court or the cleric) and the one of the common people – making universal the concept of the end of human existence by combining pagan and Christian motifs and expressions the complex mediaeval tombstone art is an expression of the deepest truth about the world, and then made whole by their inscriptions – epitaphs.³⁴

³⁴ UNESCO WHL Tentative List, ref. no. 5169. See: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/5619/> (last accessed 7 May 2015).

The discourse presented in the dossier reconciles competing interpretations of Stećaks (capitalized by diverse national claims) and forms a discourse of a more interconnectedness among communities in the Middle Ages. The text of the dossier interprets Stećaks as a medieval phenomena characteristic of the fragmented states of Bosnia, Serbia, Duklja, Zeta and Dalmatia, which belong to both the Catholic West and the Orthodox East and reflect various cultural influences, including associations with much earlier, prehistoric, ancient and early medieval traditions. Furthermore, this interpretation recognizes the burial of members of all social classes under Stećaks regardless of their ethnic, religious or political affiliation as a common practice. Stećaks of each of these communities cannot be differentiated due to the very fact that, in their own particular way, they created a genuine expression based on intermingling of different cultural influences. Purposefully, the nomination did not go into detailed historical explanations and focused on the value of artistic qualities and aesthetic influences.

Importantly, the dossier interpretation also formulated the value of Stećaks for local communities throughout the last five centuries, recognizing that Stećaks have been the source of admiration, artistic inspiration, folk tradition and superstition. This value acts as a reminder that each of the communities and many intellectuals and artists were moved by the appearance of Stećaks beyond their national significance. Interestingly, however, the bare fact that Stećaks have been the object of conflicting interpretations within contemporary nation-states is acknowledged in only one sentence within the dossier, that simply notes that diverging discourses have not been presented or discussed.

Bearing in mind the existence of competing interpretations and the reluctance of interviewees to touch the issue of interpretation, it is crucial to understand how the actors within the group, as potential agents of change, reflect upon, relate to and support this new interpretation. In interviews, many avoided the question of interpretation and instead commented on technical management but, when asked directly, they defended the interpretation of the dossier:

The image of common heritage is grounded. If experts, scientists, citizens would go a bit deeper into this they would come to the same conclusion. But since the broader circle of experts does not have a will to be tolerant or at least understand better, the disagreements still rule. But we who worked on this, we really put in effort. I am not less Serbian/Croat/Bosnian/Montenegrin because I accepted that the dossier is not serbization/croatization/bosnianization, in a sense that everything is Serbian/Croatian/Bosnian/Montenegrin, and that is my contribution.

(Anonymous interviewee)³⁵

What can be seen here is that the interpretation presented in the joint dossier, even if unanimously agreed by the team members, had required a continual process of justification. Experts needed to explain that this interpretation is not contrary to the interest of one's own country, that one is not less a member of his/her national community because he/she aligned with this shared interpretation, or that the issue of interpretation is irrelevant for the WHL. It seemed as if this common interpretation could not stand alone, without further additions or explanation.

5.7 Supporting a common interpretation: critique, disclaims and unease

Due to the link between politics, history and heritage, the ways in which interviewees talked about the interpretation of Stećaks in the nomination dossier was double-binding, inconsistent and blurred. They recognized contradictions among national historiographies, recognized the complexities and constant changes throughout the Middle Ages and linked all these to inclusive interpretation within the dossier, as if the dossier solved these problems and provided closure on dissonant meanings. But did it...? From their statements it seemed as if it solved issues in a particular way, which is almost not 'whole', 'full' or 'proper' and is in need of disclaimers:

³⁵ Interview conducted in Belgrade, 29 April 2015.

Scientists already gave their judgement and science is full of these judgements, in which each state in its literature says that it's theirs – in Serbia Serbian, in Croatia Croatian, in Bosnia Bogomil, Bosnian, and so on. And that is going on even now, since the 19th century, because Stećaks are very conflicting and contradictory. They have been researched for a long time and science is full of controversies, and in this sense the need to nominate it from the side of four states, as advised by UNESCO, increased the validity and significance of Stećaks. Personally, whoever's they are, they are extraordinary and they really are world heritage, but it is our personal problem how to overcome what defines us nationally and tie a scientific thought to this. Even science is disputable and in many cases nationalized. And this was exactly the significance of the dossier, that it achieved political correctness – since that is a political not a scientific document. So when I heard from a few colleagues that they will relate to and cite the nomination dossier in further research, I told them not to do that, but to relate to scientific literature, presented in numerous books, monographs, journals.

(Anonymous interviewee)³⁶

Or:

From the 12th to the beginning of the 16th century it is a time of fragmented territories, as opposed to former Roman or Byzantine Empires. Everyone rules his own small territories, and people in the Balkans have their own small states. And it is just a matter of historic interpretation of when each of the states gets formed. I think we are bound by these national histories and as long as these national historiographies of ours exist, it will be hard to interpret the history of the Middle Ages objectively. In that sense, we made a dossier by excluding national context. We put in effort, in order not to go too much into history, which is not the topic of a dossier. The topic is

³⁶ Interview conducted in Belgrade, 29 April 2015.

interpretation of a cultural property, which is practically identical everywhere; the differences are just in the craftsmanship and period.
(Anonymous interviewee)³⁷

In these statements it is as if despite being aware of the relativism of national historiographies and science – even going as far as to criticize them – the interviewees are prescribing the problem-solving potential to the interpretation in the dossier, but they are not standing fully behind it. Instead of backing up the interpretation as relevant and theoretically grounded, they are escaping into justification that it is the nature of the exercise of creating a nomination file, which allows ‘solving’ the problem. It solves it by ‘excluding national context’, ‘not going too much into history’, ‘focusing on the cultural property’ or ‘achieving political correctness’ – culminating with the statement that “it is a political, not a scientific document.”

What is obvious from these statements is that the thesis that science and heritage are always linked to politics is not accepted as a framework of thought, and that there is the need to somehow distinguish science from politics in order to find some sort of safe ground. This uneasiness can be noticed in the floating uses of terms ‘science’ and ‘scientific’ when referring both to relativism of contested interpretations and strictly scientific ‘proved theories’ that the team relied upon, or that will be left for future research. In the case of Stećaks it was not as if some interviewees were more relativists and other positivists, but the shifts of uses and inconsistencies were present in the statements of individual interviewees almost sentence after sentence.

All those problematic things, which cannot be agreed by everyone and where different interpretations exist, all these should be left to science, and that science creates these theories, instead of politics intervening in order to solve the situation. You can never be wrong if you stick to science. Although... It is coloured sometimes. Practically, you are already defined by what you read and which literature you have chosen to read and then you accept different theories, which can lead to

³⁷ Interview conducted in Belgrade, 29 April 2015.

conflict. But I hope that we found a compromise with Stećaks.
(Anonymous interviewee)³⁸

These statements are signalling dissonance in some of the nodal points of the expert discourse, in particular the concepts of objectivity and science. Within authorized heritage discourse that these experts are used to using, they could use claims about objectivity of their judgement backed up by scientific findings. When it comes to Stećaks, the authorization of science within the expert discourse clashed with the obviously visible biases of scientific judgements. Interestingly, this situation of unlocked discursive space relating to both Stećaks and heritage discourse, resulted neither in the claim that science and expertise are always contingent, relative and political, nor in an unquestionable fixation on a new inclusive meaning of Stećaks. The thesis that a common interpretation within the dossier is not fully backed up within team members, is further demonstrated by the use of terms such as 'middle ground' or 'solution acceptable for everyone' when describing the common interpretation, indicating more a compromise than a consensus:

I think that is the modus operandi, to respect the opinion of the others, not to be exclusive, to make a compromise without changing the essence – compromise that is voluntary and where no one has to make big concession.

(Anonymous interviewee)³⁹

And:

There were different interpretations of certain phenomena, but we found some middle ground. We did not go into disputes. And we left the space for future research, because this phenomenon is not researched enough. So we took some middle solution, acceptable to everyone. We

³⁸ Interview conducted in Sarajevo, 9 March 2015.

³⁹ Interview conducted in Sarajevo, 9 March 2015.

based decisions on compromise. There were dissonances over bosančica, which is a type of Cyrillic script. Some call it Bosnian Cyrillic, some bosančica, some Croatian Cyrillic, we just wrote Cyrillic.

(Anonymous interviewee)⁴⁰

The treatment of Cyrillic script is an excellent example of how the team decided to exclude specific interpretations for the most encompassing one, without then needing to discuss in details each of the specific options. This approach of weaving a meaning of Stećaks while leaving some of the contested signifiers to float made a new, more inclusive meaning, but did not directly negate any of the exclusive ones. Leaving some of the discursive spaces open came as a consequence of uneasiness in the team to rely on science, mixed with political implications of this common interpretation in relation to previous, more nationalistic ones.

Question: I'm interested, on a personal level, does each of you believe 100% that this is common, shared heritage, or this interpretation has been accepted as the biggest common denominator?

X: Yes, this is the biggest common denominator. I still think we have done a high quality product, dossier, but I think that all participants who were involved in the production of the dossier have kept opinions which they had before, related to what you are asking me now.

(Anonymous interviewee)⁴¹

These statements put forward the option in which participants crafted a nomination based on compromises instead of changed understanding, using the narrative suitable for (and expected from) politics of reconciliation and dialogue of UNESCO and the international community. They developed an interpretation which served a purpose, without being fully willing to back it and promote it in their individual roles and national settings.

⁴⁰ Interview conducted in Sarajevo, 10 March 2015.

⁴¹ Interview conducted in Belgrade, 29 April 2015.

5.8 Engineering for the World Heritage List: leaning on the authorized heritage discourse

The nature of the UNESCO nomination allowed turning towards materiality and aesthetics of heritage which supposedly transcend interpretations and borders. This was done by referring to extraordinary and universal values of monuments:

Actually, all that makes Stećaks universal (its number, diversity of forms, sculptural richness, and emergence of inscriptions) is not an object of diverse interpretations. At least not for a document compiled for the nomination to the World Heritage List. In this document, you are not putting assumptions, thoughts, speculations, etc. It is not a document from which you will learn something new about Stećaks – it is a place where you should put clear facts in order to prove the Outstanding Universal Value! For example: we can dispute whether Stećaks have more East or West influences, but for someone from UNESCO this does not mean anything. To him it is important that these influences exist and how they contribute to Stećaks.

(Anonymous interviewee)⁴²

Interestingly, for those interviewees who wanted to hide the issue of contested interpretations in the nomination process, the nature of UNESCO's WHL nomination dossiers was a favourite thing to turn to. It was as if on one side clear facts existed including numbers of sites, observable characteristics, materiality and physical diffusion of sites, while interpretation was on the other side as mere speculation, irrelevant for the nomination file. The same is visible in a conversation with a representative of UNESCO, who insisted that the complexities of the Stećaks nomination did not have anything to do with dissonance, arguing that the diversity of interpretations is not relevant for the WHL, thus distancing himself from all contested issues:

⁴² Online interview, 21 May 2015.

U.R.: *But I do not think it has anything to do with the dissonant nature of this heritage, but rather the physical characteristics – how it is distributed and presented over the territories.*

Question: *Stecaks are heritage that is claimed by each of the countries and national historiographies, linking it to medieval states, true?*

U.R.: *And this is why it is important to have all these inscribed in the framework of the World Heritage List, because all these things are not relevant for World Heritage! The only relevant thing is where... in which territory of which country is this heritage present today.*

Question: *But, the group did have a problem in coming to agree on a common description, didn't they?*

U.R.: *There was a challenge... there of course was a challenge in the description. As you say this was part of previous kingdoms and has subscriptions... It does not matter.. They cannot present a nomination file for something that is not part of their country. That is why they have to work together if they want this inscribed.*⁴³

Statements like this reflect the deeply bounded (or desirable) understanding of the WHL as a mechanism that makes intercommunity disputes around heritage irrelevant by awarding heritage with the higher status of belonging to the whole of humanity. The use of the term 'description' instead of 'interpretation' is just one of the markers of AHD. In some ways, it is as if the whole process the group went through was the one of qualifying for inscription, both technically and content wise:

We were slowly going through each sentence harmonizing the whole text. Of course, when a larger number of people is included, all of them have their own idea, but here everything went in one direction in order for nomination to be as good as possible and in order to satisfy the form

⁴³ Skype interview, 15 July 2015.

– that there is not too much text, that we present well the reasons why Stećaks deserve to be on the list and to prove their universal value.

(Anonymous interviewee)⁴⁴

As such, it required harmonization and consents to suit the rules of the game, using concepts such as ‘to satisfy’, ‘deserve’ and ‘prove’ and creating almost a human quality relationship between Stećaks and the WHL. As if the WHL is a supreme authority to whom Stećaks had to subordinate. And, as if this particular relationship and the desire to prove the global significance of this heritage was the basis for working on compromises. Without explicitly written rules it was understood by everyone that the nature of the World Heritage Convention would not appreciate diverse, mutually exclusive interpretations of Stećaks and that a middle solution had to be found. Interestingly, the UNESCO representative describes this dissonance if not as a threat, then as a risk that has to be mitigated within the management plans:

The process was never politicized to extremes. We had one conversation when discussing serbisation, croatisation, montenegrification of Stećaks. And in one of these meetings I asked the question: You can put it like this, but don't you realize that it can be seen as a risk? How will you mitigate that risk within the management plan? Then they thought it through and gave up from putting it.

(UNESCO mediator of meetings)⁴⁵

The power of the WHL meant that much broader social and ethnic conflicts could be reduced to disputes over the seemingly apolitical management of heritage sites and artefacts. This was also visible through the management plans for the nomination, which focus on governance structures and protection of physical integrity and authenticity of selected sites. The plans did not include the issue of a future common interpretation of the sites nor its use for educational purposes.

⁴⁴ Interview conducted in Sarajevo, 11 March 2015.

⁴⁵ Interview conducted in Sarajevo, 11 March 2015.

5.9 Sustainability of shared interpretation: strength or a threat?

In summarizing the strengths and weaknesses of this initiative, it is important to bear in mind that Stećaks have not yet been inscribed on the WHL and that even when inscribed, the process will not be over.⁴⁶ This analysis could therefore be observed as a mid-term analysis of the past five years. Although the joint nomination of Stećaks is a first step and requirement on the way towards the WHL, the importance of the five-year long process and the outcomes of this cooperation go beyond satisfying technical requirements for inscription to the List. Side effects could be categorized as four main contributions: first to the technical protection of Stećaks through igniting on site research, protection and interest; second to the acquisition of new knowledge about Stećaks and new skills in heritage management planning as well as the creation of the nomination dossiers by experts involved; third to the creation of links, trust and respect within a group of professionals from four countries; and finally to the new de-nationalized interpretation of Stećaks as shared heritage.

Although Stećaks have been attracting the attention of historians since the late 19th century, the most extensive investigative field work within the goal to map, document and protect Stećaks within a heritage protection framework has been carried out during the period of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia. With the dissolution of Yugoslavia, these monuments did not attract much attention from researchers and were neglected in terms of protection. The value of this project is that together with a monograph by Lovrenović (2009 and 2010), it ignited a revival of interest, generating new official research and protection of Stećaks.

The preparation of the dossier and management plans alone involved more than 4,000 joint emails, more than 20 international meetings and continuous work of key experts within the team as well as many other experts and collaborators on a shorter term basis. The work also mobilised key institutions and 26 municipalities. Due to preparations for nomination, experts from both Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina conducted new archaeological

⁴⁶ In July 2016 in Istanbul when this book was in the final stage of preparation for printing, the successful inscription of Stećaks on the WHL was announced.

research and assessments and some sites have been valorised or re-assessed after almost three decades of neglect. The funds from UNESCO were used both for this research and for technical documentation related to the sites including maps and photographs in all countries. In addition, the ministries of cultures allocated funds to conserve some of the sites that were chosen for nomination. The process of nomination itself could therefore be said to have created a higher level of protection of Stećaks.

The completion of a transnational serial nomination dossier is a highly complex work that contributed to the acquisition of new skills and knowledge related to both Stećaks and UNESCO's procedures for nomination and management plans. While the new legal system for heritage protection in Montenegro recognizes heritage management plans and prescribes procedure for creating, adopting and implementing them, in the other three countries they are legally recognized in indirect ways, through Operational Guidelines related to the World Heritage Convention. Therefore, management plans are not a common mechanism in heritage protection practice in all four states: only a few had been carried out for UNESCO sites in Montenegro and Croatia, while in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina management plans created for the nomination of Stećaks are the first ever site management plans.

In this context, management plans for the nomination process in each country covering a total of 30 sites and 26 local municipalities are a pioneering effort. In Serbia, for example, a number of workshops with local municipalities and local communities took place explaining the value and importance of Stećaks, resulting in mobilization of local citizens in clearing roads to the sites and taking pride in this heritage (Đorđević 2012). A subject for further research is to assess how active the local communities and municipalities have been and which interpretation of Stećaks has been promoted through consultations and workshops.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ The responses from experts were contradictory or vague in this regard, and suggested that when approaching the local community the joint nomination was explained, but the interpretation given was more inclined towards national appropriation of sites on the territory of one's own country. Further research would be needed within local communities to verify this.

The project was followed by a promotional exhibition organized in each capital city of the four states after submission of the documentation for the Tentative List.⁴⁸ This exhibition presented Stećaks through photos and locations but did not detail the common interpretation of the monuments. Neither was the common interpretation of the nomination process widely promoted at national or local levels. Furthermore, the experts refrained from giving media statements until the moment when the nomination would be submitted. A more active involvement and promotion of Stećaks and the process by Lovrenović faced accusations of betraying Bosnia and Herzegovina and for 'serbianising' and 'croatising' Stećaks through a common interpretation in public forums and media.

Inspired by this project, the agency of the Dubrovnik-Neretva County in Croatia, Dunea, started an EU IPA financed cooperation project *Her.Cul* among the four states from 2011 to 2014 and involved some of the experts from the team for drafting the nomination dossier. The focus of this project was mainly on cooperation, involvement of local communities, presentation and tourism promotion of Stećaks, particularly those sites not selected for nomination.⁴⁹ Bearing in mind the low intensity of public promotion of the nomination process, this project gave much more visibility to Stećaks as phenomena and complemented the nomination process.

The process and steps required for nomination to the WHL, have evidently mobilized numerous actors to improve the condition of Stećaks. Both participants and UNESCO representatives underlined that unlike many other cooperation projects being undertaken by civil society and artists from these four countries, this project was significant for the political backing by the highest decision-making authorities in all four states:

⁴⁸ The exhibition was organized by the Ministry of Culture of Bosnia and Herzegovina and financed by the UNESCO Office in Venice. It opened on UN day, 21 October 2011, in Sarajevo, Zagreb, Podgorica and Belgrade. Exhibition panels were used and exhibited on further occasions, including at the Tara Nature Park in which some of the selected sites with Stećaks are located.

⁴⁹ <http://www.dunea.hr/projekt-her-cul> (last accessed 24 May 2016).

This is something common and should be safeguarded jointly, which is much better than if each of the states would do it separately. I think that this is good, to start working on something in common, after all of the conflicts. Because we are just experts and operatives, but behind us countries have agreed on something, we are representatives of these countries. All of this required that four countries accept and cooperate, and we were that second line. So, through the nomination UNESCO has influenced four Ministers, four governments, from four states to cooperate. Because, besides Stećaks, this context of political cooperation from the top is really important.

(Anonymous interviewee)⁵⁰

Unlike other UNESCO tools, the nomination on the WHL requires state backing. This backing legitimizes the process, but it also implies a higher focus of professionals on respecting their state interest. As evidenced by the way professionals acted during the meetings, the weight which this inter-state cooperation restrained open disputes, even when disputes reflected professional viewpoints. More important for the context of this research was the trust, respect and good collegial relations among the experts in this group observed in Sarajevo during the nomination ceremony for Stećaks. They acted almost as comrades, ‘brothers in arms’ that survived difficult times together, referring often to ‘stubbornness’, the personal drive to succeed with this project, the drive to overcome problems.

Some of them reflected on the difficulties of the process and successfully overcoming conflicts which made them stronger and more related as a group. Particularly those who had regularly attended meetings and put a great deal of time into the nomination could be seen to respect each other highly. The interviewees welcomed the fact that they now have a person to call in other countries and expressed a wish to work together in the future. Moreover, some of them took the role of diplomats when talking about this project, as if this process made them more aware of their possible political role and the role of this project in relaxing tensions among countries.

⁵⁰ Interview conducted in Sarajevo, 9 April 2015.

I think it wasn't just professional reasons, but that we all felt an intimate need for this project to succeed and that we would experience the failure of this project as our own incapability. In the third year the biggest crises happened and created the biggest theoretical chance for the project to fail, but we had already befriended and had trust in each other – we worked on that and we succeeded. So, I am not talking about a broader circle of people here. A broader circle serves to trip, to critique, to speak misinformation.

(Anonymous interviewee)⁵¹

One needs much understanding when working together. Because this region, despite the fact that we speak the same language, we started to confront, but this project is an example of how dialogue in scientific and all other sense is the best recipe. This could be a model for future cooperation.

(Anonymous interviewee)⁵²

It is important to note that most of the experts participating in this cooperation project are middle generation professionals who were all born and raised in Yugoslavia, but started working during the 1990s when all contacts among some of the countries were cut. When talking about the importance of this project, many of them referred to Yugoslavia and the current political situation, creating connections with colleagues from the former country was personally important as a way of giving an example to the rest of their colleagues.

For me, this project is extremely important, not because I took a significant role, but because I participated in the first cross border project that was related to culture and connecting these four, practically warring states. [...] And I think that was the most valuable, that 12-15-20 of us created bonds and that we are now a small basis for the future. And, I think that due to us, following our example, many others will get

⁵¹ Interview conducted in Belgrade, 29 April 2015.

⁵² Interview conducted in Sarajevo, 9 April 2015.

connected. Because I have the impression that despite of this project being desirable or not on the level of our governments, by doing it and submitting it to UNESCO we have done the best thing for connecting other experts which will continue in other projects.

(Anonymous interviewee)⁵³

This project is a new basis for the future use of heritage in bridging people across four neighbouring states by promoting de-nationalized shared heritage of the region. During the interviews some of the experts reflected on the difficult position for culture in transition periods, not in financial terms as much as in terms of xenophobia, stereotypes and mental borders fostered by politicians – referring to it as a position of anti-culture. This project should be interpreted as an attempted model of culturalization using the WHL as a tool which fosters the universalization of Stećaks as potential heritage for the whole of humanity. The five-year long cooperation of four states on an issue that is disputable in national thinking, during which ministers and governments have changed, was possible exactly because the WHL inscription has been a central interest that professionals, politicians and local communities in all four countries shared. The brand and importance of this mechanism had obviously more weight than the problems which the team faced.

No less important was the initial financial support by UNESCO for post-conflict countries, and the presence of the UNESCO representative during meetings. Even though this was an aspect of the project that UNESCO was not happy to share and underline, the interviewees within the group highlighted the importance of this facilitation. It was in moments of silenced conflicts, lack of communication and cooled relations among the participants and states that UNESCO's representative had the legitimacy, reputation and position from which to push for new meetings and deepen the value of this project in front of newly elected ministers or directors of participating institutions. Instead of being hidden as improper or outside the technical guidelines for the nomination process, this is the aspect that should be

⁵³ Interview conducted in Belgrade, 29 April 2015.

promoted as the added-value of UNESCO when designing transnational nominations among states which have been through violent conflicts.

Finally, this case study acknowledges the issue of interpretation. The WHL as a tool promotes the concept of a common, shared heritage of humanity, the concept which implies that the model of culturalization of memory through Stećaks should also be based on the concept of shared heritage of four states. This common interpretation is a consequence of both the newest historical academic interpretations, and the structured process of inscription which asks for a common denominator, and neutralizes dissonance through the creation of common meaning for the application. In this process, the recognition of shared heritage implies shared ownership and the interpretation which goes beyond national claims, but does not threaten any of the sides. Even though some of the experts negated that the nomination has anything to do with the current political situation, most experts were aware of the political potential of this interpretation:

Stećaks are a bridge, connected to Orthodoxy, Catholicism, the Bosnian Church, so they have this similar symbolic. It is a complex cultural good which contains western European, Byzantine, Christian, Gothic, Romanic, and pagan elements. In this sense it is not a clean cultural good, and I think it is one of the most important values of Stećaks. They truly synthesize all the dialectics of cultural, economic, political, artistic and religious development of this medieval space.

(Anonymous interviewee)⁵⁴

The interpretation outlined in the nomination dossier has embedded messages of cooperation, mutual influences and coexistence in the South Slav area. The nomination process created the space for dealing with mutually contested identities and values attached to Stećaks, deeply rooted in singular understanding of one's own heritage and history. For some of the interviewees, this project has an evident political weight in making

⁵⁴ Interview conducted in Sarajevo, 10 March 2015.

parallels with the former Yugoslav state and space, in which diversities were coexisting, but are destroyed today. In this sense the interpretation of the dossier created a narrative that frames the South Slav space of the Middle Ages through common phenomena, but implicitly nudges discussions related to today's political situation.

I think that probably we are yet not aware of which project we started and continued. I believe that projects like this force us to think in terms of political categories of South Slavic world. Are we today better and happier people, living in these banana-states, than when we lived until 1992? I think that this is a basic historical, psychological and anthropological question. How dangerous this question is for political elites, proofs are numerous! I don't think that all answers can be given, but questions should be raised. The question of political integration of South Slavic area, besides others through this project, will be of importance in the future.

(Anonymous interviewee)⁵⁵

I think this is the opportunity that should be used to ignore these borders, to open up a little bit, to allow this area to breath together and to interpret this jointly.

(Anonymous interviewee)⁵⁶

The interpretation offered through Stećaks is both the biggest strength and biggest potential threat in terms of promoting messages of shared and interconnected history. In dealing with the past and relations to the past through heritage, it can be recognized that heritage-making is the process of generating specific meanings and values in society (Kisić 2014b and 2015b). Therefore, it is possible to claim that the interpretation of Stećaks within the nomination dossier promotes the values of coexistence, interconfessionality and multiculturalism, not only as shared past but values which institutions are willing to communicate for a shared and peaceful future. As such, in a

⁵⁵ Interview conducted in Sarajevo, 10 March 2015.

⁵⁶ Interview conducted in Sarajevo, 10 March 2015.

social and educational sense, it has the potential for counter-acting nationalistic appropriations of both Stećaks and medieval history, and serves as an example of how history and heritage are used to create borders. However, this interpretation of the WHL needs to be communicated and promoted through future management of Stećaks. And, in order to achieve this, it has to have strong ambassadors such as those who created the nomination dossier.

This research showed that the project is still politically fragile and that participants themselves have not fully backed the common interpretation. This restraint is a result of personal dissonance when talking about shared interpretation; political pressure in terms of confronting interpretations which are still present in the public space; the nature of AHD; and the nomination process which is seemingly disinterested in interpretation. For all these reasons, the interpretation articulated in the nomination file has not become widely promoted discourse in any of the countries. In general the interpretation is not considered as voluntary long-term consensus but rather a desirable compromise. This desirable compromise, which resolved dissonance on paper and in the eyes of UNESCO, is therefore not likely to be promoted publicly in any of the states.

This case study shows that heritage does not exist without and cannot be defined outside interpretation. Interestingly, the attitude of UNESCO's representatives and most of the professional participants accepted to undermine the issue of interpretation within the WHL nomination process and thus distance themselves from the responsibility of creating meaning, identities and borders through heritage. This detachment from responsibility leaves a large grey zone for uses of particular interpretations and its political implications. In this grey zone, the biggest failure of this compromise would be that it only served as a short-term tool for the purpose of a joint nomination, and that no future work is required in talking about the common interpretation on each of the sites. If used, it has a potential to be a long-term source for intercultural dialogue and understanding, through future presentation, interpretation and educational activities at every single site.

Furthermore, since competing discourses still exist, instead of ignoring their existence, the future educational and interpretative work could address

them in exemplifying how the diversity of understanding can be attached to heritage and how certain theses are created to fit particular interests. Promoting this critical dialogue instead of hegemonic normative relation to heritage would be of importance not only for communicating the message of long-standing mutual relations and coexistence, but also to avoid misusing heritage for the perpetuation of political tensions.

This work, however, would need to be planned and carried out through cooperation, and should preferably be put into the management plan. The strength of the WHL as a tool is that this five-year effort, despite being a short term project, has ensured a continuous joint action and inter-state coordination to protect and take care of Stećaks. This potential long-term cooperation and long-term monitoring by the WHL as a mechanism is very different from all the other cases that are a part of this research in terms of sustainability. This is why, instead of ignoring the issue of interpretation, it is recommended that UNESCO should push for more extensive educational and communicative aspects within future cooperative work.

6. Interpreting the Common History of the Balkans

Those perspectives which cause disagreements are more useful for the mature relation towards the past, than those perspectives which offer comfortable impression that “we are right” because someone else agrees with us. Disagreements are the prerequisite for permanent self-questioning; of course with the condition that contested memories do not become so explosive to cause the war as in 1990s. In other words, progressive instability of the image about the past is a must, because only the image that is not dogmatic can warn.

(Kuljić 2006)

The inauguration of the exhibition *Imagining the Balkans: Identities and Memory in the Long 19th Century* in Ljubljana, Slovenia on 8 April 2013, attracted a number of important international and national officials: Director-General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova; Minister of Culture of Slovenia, Uroš Grilc; European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth, Androulla Vassiliou; President of the International Council of Museums (ICOM), Hans-Martin Hinz; as well as Ministers of Culture who are part of the Council of Ministers of Culture of SEE. The political legitimization was important, since this exhibition for the first time gathered national

history museums⁵⁷ from SEE including: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The aim was to interpret the 19th century in SEE, a period of nation-state building and a highly contested period among national historiographies in the region, and offer a transnational memory perspective (Kisić 2016). Such a highly political exhibition needed strong political backing.

The initiative for a joint project came from UNESCO's Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe, Venice (Italy), who coordinated, facilitated and largely financed the exhibition. The exhibition was created within two and a half years, through five meetings of participants and extensive online correspondence and work. Besides the representatives from 11 museums of history (a twelfth participant, a museum from Turkey, decided to step out of the project a few months before the exhibition was due to open), UNESCO

⁵⁷ Participating museums were the National History Museum, Albania; the Museum of the Republic of Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina; the National History Museum, Bulgaria; the Croatian History Museum; the Leventis Municipal Museum of Nicosia, Cyprus; the German Historical Museum; the National Historical Museum, Greece; the National Museum of Montenegro; the National History Museum of Romania; the Historical Museum of Serbia; the National Museum of Slovenia; and the Museum of Macedonia. Not all participating museums are purely historical museums as some of the selected national museums have mainly archaeological and art collections. Also, some of them cannot be called 'national' institutions in an all-encompassing sense, but were chosen as the best alternative to a proper national institution: the Museum of the Republic of Srpska in Banja Luka reflects the Serb-Bosnian community, and its inclusion came as a result of the impossibility of the National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina of Sarajevo to participate. Cyprus does not possess any National History Museum, so the private foundation of the Leventis Municipal Museum of Nicosia was the closest alternative to be found. In Turkey, there was a long and tedious effort to find an appropriate partner, which ended only at the third group meeting with the inclusion of the Sabanci Museum, after two abortive efforts with other museums. The decision on which museums to invite rested with the national UNESCO committees in each country, although personal contacts of the steering committee of the project played a role in identifying them (Mazarakis-Ainian 2015).

invited cooperation from relevant international organizations such as the: International Council of Museums (ICOM); ICOM International Committee for Exhibitions and Exchange (ICEE); Council of Europe; International Association of Museums of History; Eunamus/European National Museums Network; EUROCLIO (European Association of History Educators); as well as the German History Museum and Museum of Italian Risorgimento. Each entity provided specific know-how and wider acknowledgement and legitimization of the process.

Once opened in Ljubljana, the exhibition aimed to travel to each of the participating museums. It has so far reached Belgrade, Bucharest, Skopje, Athens and Cetinje and is about to go to Banja Luka. Due to diverse financial, organizational and political reasons it has not been to Sofia, and will most probably not go to Zagreb, Tirana or Nicosia.⁵⁸ The exhibition is composed of objects on loan from all 11 participating museums and aims to travel to 11 countries across EU and non-EU borders. Many of the participating museums in the region had not previously dealt with international loans and as such, the technical know-how exchanged among both colleagues and experts from ICOM has been praised by all interviewees. Professional contacts and cooperation among colleagues from the region was another aspect that participants highly valued. But what was claimed as the biggest success is that this was the first time such a complex cooperation project involving so many museums has been attempted in the SEE region.

You know, it meant so much for me personally to be able to bring together the 12 countries in the region to work really on the common, but relevant project – not just the capacity building or stuff like that, but a real project with real exhibits, real commitment, engagement, with the support of the Ministers, Director General, the whole package, you know. It's really rare, and that's why it meant so much. Both in terms of work, but also... It's stupid to say that, but, you know... Once we saw the whole exhibit, we all felt so proud that we were able to make something like that. It's not the best exhibition in the world, and there

⁵⁸ The reasons behind these are explained later in the text.

will be better ones in the future, but to see them to be so proud that they were able to make it. Just to bring that little thing that makes 12 countries with difficult history and difficult context to be able to make a meaningful project... It was also, you know... lot of them took risks. From that point of view it was very satisfactory.

(Anthony Krause, Project Coordinator and former Head of the Culture Unit, UNESCO Venice Office)⁵⁹

Anthony Krause's statement says a lot about the exceptionality of the project, not so much in terms of being a high quality final exhibition, but in terms of the meaningful cooperation, engagement and responsibilities mixed with the challenges and difficulties of creating a joint exhibition. As part of the implicit politics of reconciliation in SEE pushed forward by the international community, this specific project aimed not only to "enhance cooperation and dialogue among national history museums in the region" but to pursue a more ambitious task of "placing national histories in a global context, comparing disputed narratives and reviving shared memories," showing "that Nations and their History need not be just a matter of division" (UNESCO website, 3 April 2013).

As opposed to the joint nomination of Stećaks to the World Heritage List, this project did not have a formal and well-known UNESCO tool on which to be based, rather it was an experiment in cooperation among 12 states. Reports from the meetings and press releases make it apparent that the exhibition was expected to be a tool to address disputed narratives, divisions and conflicts around histories and nations in the SEE region. The project aimed to use museums as "active players in the healing efforts in *complex political situation and in the construction of a harmonious coexistence*" (ICOM press release of 7 March 2013, address of Julien Anfruns, the then Director General of ICOM). Even though it had support and potential to actually reflect on contested national narratives in the region, the project gradually moved towards creating a cohesive story about common processes in modern nation-state building in the Balkans. On top of that, few hints of

⁵⁹ Skype interview, 4 May 2015.

divergent interpretations at the exhibition demonstrated explosive potential for political and public scandal.

6.1 Creating peace in the minds: UNESCO Venice Office as a reconciliatory force in SEE

In order to understand the project *Imagining the Balkans* within the cultural policy field, it is critical to acknowledge the important role that the UNESCO Office in Venice played in the SEE region since 2002/2003, as a mediator of intercultural dialogue and cultural cooperation. The office was not only a funding body, but also a programming body, providing technical support, as well as a body which often implemented, facilitated and coordinated projects and programmes. The UNESCO office in Venice was founded 50 years ago with the aim to support the preservation of Venice. It later converted to the regional office for science and technology, and only from 2002/2003 UNESCO and its host country, Italy, added a cultural dimension and focus on SEE. Under its new name, UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe gained the mission of promoting cooperation, intercultural dialogue, reconciliation and post-conflict rehabilitation of heritage; a mission further supported by the UNESCO Antenna Office in Sarajevo.

The UNESCO offices took the role in initiating and facilitating a number of projects – from symbolic ones such as the reconstruction of the Old Bridge in Mostar, to technical and capacity-building projects such as opening regional training centres for heritage. Its importance and legitimacy as a cultural policy actor in the region and its special focus on the region is reflected in the High Level Ministerial Cooperation Platform – Conference of Ministers of Culture from SEE, which UNESCO established in 2004, following the reconstruction of the Old Bridge in Mostar.

Well, for a long time UNESCO had this Ministerial head of states of SEE, the meeting of Ministers of Culture and Head of States of SEE. It was started after the wars and has been the ongoing process... this is one of the regions where UNESCO strongly pushed to dialogue and

reconciliation... UNESCO has never had such a close link to heads of states or ministerial platform. This was really specific to SEE.

(Anonymous UNESCO Venice Office representative)⁶⁰

Within this “strong push for dialogue and reconciliation” there were few initiatives which focused on ‘difficult heritage’ or contested issues in the Balkans as a way of moving forward.⁶¹ The *Imagining the Balkans* exhibition was part of a specific component for the SEE region entitled ‘Heritage and Dialogue’ of the global UNESCO’s conceptual framework of *Culture: a Bridge to Development* which “seek to develop innovative and creative approaches to heritage safeguarding and culture-sensitive development projects as powerful tools for the enhancement of dialogue and reconciliation in the South-East European region”.⁶²

In conceptualizing and putting into practice the broad UNESCO guidelines and objectives of work on reconciliation and intercultural dialogue in the Balkans, my interpretation is that Krause, the then Head of the Culture Unit at the UNESCO Office in Venice, was willing to try out a more critical approach to dialogue around some of the burning or underlying issues. He recognized UNESCO’s potential and legitimacy as a ‘neutral’ actor in the region and as he holds a PhD in history he was able to personally explore the uses of heritage and contested heritage. He was theoretically equipped to approach heritage in the SEE region from a post-modernist point of view and therefore encouraged discussions.

This is not to say that the UNESCO Office in Venice was imposing the topic of ‘difficult heritage’, or insisting on working on conflicting issues, but

⁶⁰ Skype interview, 15 July 2015.

⁶¹ At a conference for young heritage professionals and postgraduates called *The Best in Heritage in Dubrovnik* in 2011, and in dialogue with the UNESCO Venice Office it was decided that the subject of the conference should be focused on ‘Difficult Heritage’. Another such example is the cooperation among ex-Yugoslav republics to create a joint display at the Yugoslav Pavilion in Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial, launched by UNESCO, following a similar method to the one of *Imagining the Balkans*.

⁶² UNESCO website: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/venice/culture/culture-a-bridge-to-development/>

that this more critical approach has been both acceptable and encouraged through initiated frameworks of cooperation and facilitation. *Imagining the Balkans* was exactly one of these frameworks of cooperation, where just a comment on the reasons behind working with national history museums reveals that the attempt was to unlock unquestioned sediment discourses:

Historical museums are those that construct national identities, which are often not questioned.

(Anthony Krause, Project Coordinator and former Head of the Culture Unit, UNESCO Venice Office)⁶³

This willingness to use the neutral position of UNESCO in order to question sediment discourses of national histories in the region was an advanced idea that during the work on the exhibition was shaped and changed into highlighting commonalities and shared memories in the region. The following analyses will explore the *Imagining the Balkans* exhibition as an experiment by UNESCO and as a representative case which opened the *discursive space for dialoguing* around interpreting the period characterized by the creation of national narratives and states in the Balkans.

6.2 Reading the exhibition: creating a common narrative for South East Europe

The exhibition, as an end result, tells a story about the common processes and strategies of change from old pre-national world to the creation of modern national states in South East Europe (SEE) during the 19th century. Its narrative is structured around 10 themes and aims to “present shared key processes and experiences, common features and historical interactions, rather than exclusive and contrasting parallel national histories and narratives.”⁶⁴

⁶³ Skype interview, 4 May 2015.

⁶⁴ ICOM Press Release, 7 March 2013, available on <http://icom.museum/press-releases/press-release/article/icom-supports-the-exhibition-imagining-the-balkans-identities-and-memory-in-the-long-19th-centur/> (last accessed 31 October 2015).



Traveling exhibition *Imagining the Balkans. Identities and Memory of the Long 19th Century* was first opened in the National Museum of Slovenia, Ljubljana. Each of the 10 topics had separate movable walls on particular colours so that visitors could distinguish them both spatially and visually.
Credit: © National Museum of Slovenia

The exhibition is not a chronological overview of the long 19th century and it is not a usual historical narrative composed of events and specific actors: it is more a storyline about certain changes and phenomena of the 19th century with particular focus on the idea of nation-building, emancipation and modernization. It does not have a necessarily linear path that the visitor should follow, but it has a starting and ending theme that frame the rest of the eight themes discussed.

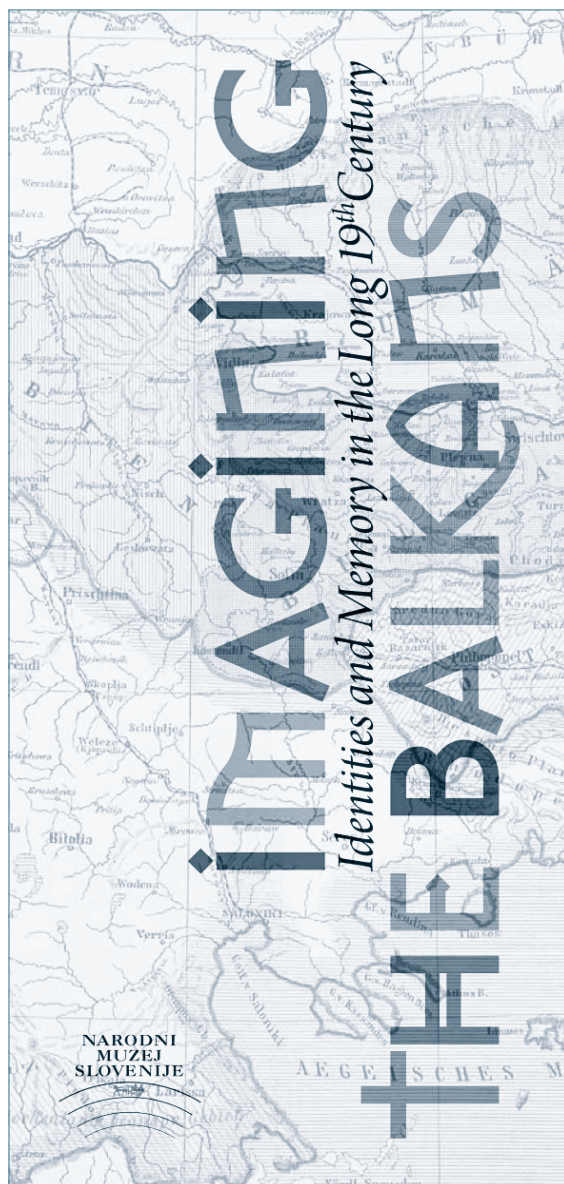
It starts with the theme of 'Coffee Culture', a shared practice in the 19th century throughout the Balkans, which had a different character in two very different empires which ruled over Balkan territories – Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman throughout the 19th century. The second theme is 'Living in the Old World', and this presents the context and culture of pre-national societies where identities were linked to religion. The next two themes, 'Traveling, Communicating' and 'A New Social Order and the Rise of the Middle Class' interpret the social, technical and economic aspects of modernization and

democratization that were parallel processes of nation-building.

Five more themes followed including: 'Creating and Disseminating Knowledge'; 'Mapping'; 'Using History, Making Heroes'; 'Public Celebrations'; and 'The Image of the Nation'. These are the 'bravest' themes at the exhibition because they underline the notion that nations did not always exist but were constructed and shaped through a number of private, public, educational and symbolic practices as well as by the extensive use, modification and manipulation of history, ethnography and language. These five themes are particularly strong in communicating the message that all nations in the Balkans were formed through similar practices, strategies and processes, all of which tried to define their exclusive, unique and *primordial* identity, in order to create cohesion among members of the new national community and demarcate them from the 'others.'

Even though some were cracking the storyline of usual national narratives, the interpretation and contextualization of artefacts within the theme did not further explore, dialogue or exemplify the themes. This treatment of artefacts was achieved through the seemingly basic cognizance, keeping only an objective description for each. The artefacts served merely as the image, illustration or representation of the end result of the processes discussed in thematic panels. Therefore, when it came to treating the artefacts, the exhibition was fearful of interpretation and therefore silent about how layers of meanings of an artefact relate to the topic. It leaves the visitor to intuitively guess and read between the lines, or interpret it through their own knowledge of history.

The final theme 'Whose is this song?' is represented by a single object – a documentary movie. This is the only section of the exhibition that explicitly exemplifies how common folklore practice can become a matter of multiple ownership disputes caused by the processes of construction of the nation-states. It serves to highlight the exhibition message that new national social orders and their exclusive narratives have masked the commonalities among peoples in SEE and the identities that have been constructed through the folklore of the pre-national societies. The following few sentences directed towards the visitor frame and resolve the interplay of commonalities and differences in a particularly 'cohesive' manner:



The exhibition banner of *Imagining the Balkans. Identities and Memory in the Long 19th Century*. Credit: National Museum Slovenia

So, whose is this song? Don't we, after all share a common past, a common tradition, a common culture? Having become overwhelmed by our differences we have forgotten our closeness.

(Imagining the Balkans exhibition panel; Mazarakis-Ainian 2013, 117)

Through interpretative strategies the exhibition does challenge and restructure exclusive national narratives, and in doing so creates a new cohesive narrative of the Balkans around the concept of 'shared heritage'. This narrative is not a conversation, but a cohesive prose on the commonalities of SEE that could be suitable at a political level because it frames the region in the context of EU integration processes. It is important to note that, in creating this new narrative, the exhibition held on to the authoritative voice of the museum and avoided a dialogue on any of the themes or objects displayed.

This is something I did not understand before... of how theoretical it is and how difficult to understand it is... and how the silences of the exhibition cannot be understood by people who are not very much specialized in the issues dealt with in the exhibition. So the impact it can have... it's mainly in the sphere of getting a hunch, let's say... an impression... for those people whose minds are intuitive... so... I think it's more like getting an intuition of the alternative path of history... it's very limited. I don't expect Greek, Macedonian, Bulgarian historiography to change because of the exhibition. It is just a small step to promote... well just the right to talk alternative. Not to be bound by official historiography.

(Anonymous interviewee)⁶⁵

What interested me in particular is how it was possible that after announcements of this project, which clearly referred to disputed narratives and conflicting histories, the exhibition became so consensual and ignored conflicting or interrelating aspects of collective memories in SEE? How is it

⁶⁵ Interview conducted in Athens, 28 May 2015.

that most of the object labels did not make any explicit connections or explorations of the themes, did not compare or contrast and did not make visible an incredible amount of latent dissonance? How was the surplus of meanings managed through extensive negotiations among the curatorial teams? What were the turning points in framing the concept of the exhibition and crafting its meanings? What tensions arose between dialoguing and presenting, between differences and commonalities; between raising difficult questions and creating a new common narrative for the SEE region; between representational and critical approach? What are the forces which aim to lock discourse and frame it within a particular common narrative and those who want to unlock the national and identity discourse not only for participants but also for audiences of the exhibition? What are the arguments put forward by these different actors and forces and how do these relate to conflicts and reconciliation in the region? These questions could only be answered by exploring the processes, tensions and dynamics which remain behind the scenes.

6.3 Setting the tone for *Imagining the Balkans*

In 2010 a letter from Krause was sent to the National Commissions of UNESCO and the Ministries of Culture of each SEE state, from Slovenia to Turkey and Cyprus, asking them to appoint one person from each national history museum to participate in the Thessaloniki conference titled *National History Museums in South-East Europe: Learning history, building shared memories*, October 2010. The conference was part of UNESCO's 'International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures' and was dedicated to the challenges of national history museums and the methods and strategies of working on intercultural dialogue. It was the first time that representatives of national history museums from 12 SEE countries came together to present their museums and the challenges facing them.

Krause, the coordinator of the conference on behalf of the UNESCO Venice Office, wanted to use this gathering to further capacity building by working towards a concrete joint project that would be coordinated and supported by UNESCO. The primary goal, to cooperate and create bridges

among museums, was communicated to all participants. From this first conference until the launching of the exhibition in Ljubljana three years later, Krause was the key person who imagined this cooperation to be possible and formulated a method to implement it, taking an active role which transcends usual technical coordination practised by UNESCO. Discussions over the form of cooperation and particular ideas took place among participants in Thessaloniki, even though some interviewees reflected that they had a feeling that topics and framework were actually planned in advance by UNESCO. It was decided that a joint exhibition would be more useful than a scientific conference, since there is a need to reflect scientific discussions on uses of history to broader audiences in the region. Therefore, from the start the project had the ambitious goal of not staying locked within a professional and academic community, but opening (a Pandora's box) of multi-perspectivity and critical approaches to a broader audience.

The intention to encourage questioning of how nations, heritages and identities are constructed was reflected not only in the choice of museums, but also in the choice of topics and exhibitions. The second group meeting, titled *Best practices in museum management: dealing with difficult heritage, educating on history*, took place at the German Historical Museum (Berlin) in January 2011. The meeting included a study visit and discussion on the exhibition *Hitler and the Germans: Nation and Crime*, focusing on topics of difficult heritage and intercultural dialogue.⁶⁶ Based on this exhibition the meeting was structured around three topics:

- A museum's mission and interrelated roles: dealing with 'difficult heritage' issues in historical museums, being a conceptual discussion on the mission and responsibility of museums.
- The making of a historical exhibit from an operational point of view:

⁶⁶ The programme of the meeting states that the aim of the meeting is to discuss "how to deal in history museums with 'difficult heritage' and conflicting memory discourses," and how to "enhance the history museums' new responsibilities with regards to intercultural dialogue" (UNESCO website, 14 January 2011).

financing; preparation; exhibition's design; approaches and methods; pedagogical tools and; communication and outreach activities.

- The social and educational role of a history museum: educating on history and building shared memories.

All the above aimed to build the capacities of participants and inspire a conceptualization of a common exhibition. During the meeting the topic of 19th-century Balkans was agreed as appropriate among participants. Two historians from the group who were the most experienced in 19th-century Balkan history and nation-building, Philippos Mazarakis-Ainian, curator of the National History Museum in Athens and Ana Stolić, Director of the Historical Museum of Serbia, were asked to propose a concept for the exhibition at the next meeting in Turin. Both seemed to share ideas on de-constructing nationalism as a phenomenon and they continued to play important roles in the Steering and Scientific Committee within the group.

If the topics of the meeting in Berlin aimed to inspire discussion and reflection on dealing with difficult heritage and contested narratives, the exhibition in Turin was a good example of constructing national narratives and identities, as a 19th-century phenomenon. The third group meeting titled *History, memory and dialogue in South-East Europe: Exploring the identity of Nations* took place in Turin during October 2011, at the National Museum of the Italian Risorgimento. It included a study visit and discussion around the exhibition *Making Italians: 150 years of Italian history*. All three conference-meetings, in Thessaloniki, Berlin and Turin, were formed around topics and examples of exhibitions that challenge traditional narratives within national history museums and that re-construct previously unquestioned discourses. In many ways, these set a specific tone and gave specific hints on what approach the common project might take. Or, to put it more clearly, what kind of topics and approaches would be desirable as seen by UNESCO. As part of the whole process of producing the exhibition, these meetings not only served the purpose for participants to meet and get to know each other, but to do so while experiencing and discussing some of the cutting-edge topics connected to historical museums, thus building awareness of recent trends.

6.4 The first turning point: from critical to consensual, from concept to artefacts

Attempts to compare, de-construct or reveal mutually exclusive national narratives of participating museums from SEE was not easily accepted nor implemented within the project group. In Turin, when the discussion on a concrete concept for the joint exhibition started, the first critical turning point took place – the point from which the joint cooperation was shaped more in the direction of presenting commonalities and avoiding conflicting narratives. At this meeting there was evident lack of mutual confidence among participants; an implicit or explicit pressure due to the fact that participants were put in the role of simultaneously being museum professionals and representatives of their own nation-states. Some of the participants were dependent on political authorities; there was a heterogeneity in terms of their educational (and ideological) background, and a lack of previous experiences in similar kinds of cooperation – all factors causing divergent ideas about the future of joint cooperation.

The following accounts paint well the atmosphere of the meeting and the silent political pressure that was felt by participants, which is important to bear in mind when analysing the development of this project:

I've never been to a dinner more silent than the dinner on the first meeting I was attending in Turin. I was sitting with these ladies, female directors, and chitchatting a little bit with my academic colleagues... but the others, they were close to completely silent, watching each other very suspiciously... very, very, you know, 'what can I say, what can't I say.' So I can understand the cautiousness, not really, being insecure on, or rather... They were knowledgeable about the ubiquities of their own positions, that they are both the politicians in a way, because, many of them were politically appointed, and there were elections coming... And that they were sitting in a very loose position and they might be out... and they were... So you could really feel the tension.

(External scientific project advisor)⁶⁷

⁶⁷ Skype interview, 3 August 2015.

Yes – What is expected of me? And expected is this: I have exactly specified coordinates within which I have to move, which have not been imposed on me now, before the start of the project from the side of the Ministry. Maybe they even were imposed to some directors, but even if there were these cases, these directors would not communicate this explicitly. But in some cases it was just about the fact that these coordinates are so simple and unquestionable things... that there is no conversation nor diverges from that - you have to follow that route. Because now (with this project) you are going out of that one narrative which exists in your permanent displays, and for that you need knowledge, or courage or I don't even know what else...

(Anonymous interviewee)⁶⁸

The situation created was obviously one outside the comfort zone, in relation to participants' previous knowledge, the discourses and practices of their institutions, the official collective memory and historiography, as well as curatorial and diplomatic responsibility. No one ever openly raised the issue of how limited they are from their governments. As reflected by the participants, those who are limited do not say they are, but they just try to avoid discussion.

As reflected in the second statement, there was no need for clear instructions from governments, because each participant was aware of the coordinates established by the official collective memory and national historical discourse, reflected in the permanent display of their own institutions and in historiographies based on which they themselves have been educated. The established national discourses were the mechanism that governed the conduct of most participants. Therefore, everyone was working within his/her own implicit knowledge of what was acceptable and what not. As a result, most participants were unwilling, cautious or uncomfortable with questioning their national narratives or with comparing them to the narratives of neighbouring countries.

⁶⁸ Interview conducted in Belgrade, 6 May 2015.

But, in Berlin, it was still OK, while in the next meeting in Turin, at the time when a big museum of Risorgimento was opened, it was very difficult, because the whole idea to put national history into a kind of comparative context or some broader context that has to do with the phenomenon of European nation-states [...] was really hard to explain here and one could see that people could not understand that this future exhibition is not the presentation of their nation or state on some representative level, but is supposed to be exactly the opposite. And already in Turin, when everything looked as if it will blow up, even the question was raised publicly by participants why is this political project pushed. I, of course, knew from the beginning that this is a political project, but I said that everything is politics, so are our museums and presentations, so we should not run away from it.

(Anonymous interviewee)⁶⁹

What happened in Turin is an evident clash between participants who wanted to take a more post-modernist stand and reveal the mechanisms of nation-state building including conflicting issues that this process can cause, and those who wanted to make things less political, avoid conflicting themes and talk affirmatively about common heritage. This second group, wanted to diverge from the idea of dealing with history towards the idea of an ethnographic overview of everyday common culture void of any political implications. The clash of thinking behind these two groups is well expressed in these two reflections:

They insisted that we should not talk about things that conflict us, but should talk affirmatively about common grounds. I thought we should talk about both, because both are part of specific collective memories and some broader phenomena. The explanation was that conflicts should not be part of an exhibition like this and that this is now considered a desirable museological practice, but that we should insist on these positive insights of the past, because no one would feel

⁶⁹ Interview conducted in Belgrade, 6 May 2015.

pleased to look at certain things again. Now, this is a matter of understanding, because, if we put things on more general level, and if we observe whole context of nationalism as one general phenomena... that represents a big threat for representatives of national museums. Most museums of the 'newly made' nation-states had a big problem with this.

(Anonymous interviewee)⁷⁰

I have been very cautious from the beginning of the project, and I have to admit that I tried to avoid it in this project, since that is my general attitude that I don't like to mingle with things that are problematic. That is why we introduced some additional themes like coffee drinking, education position of women in society, in order to soften this political shadow that hung over the topic of the exhibition. Not so much in getting to problematic relationships and political issues. I was not alone in this... we tried to make this a bit easier, together with colleagues from Turkey. It was in Berlin that we tried to talk more about the festivities, the everyday life, and somehow we did as much as we could, but unfortunately after everything was completed Turkey decided to leave the project.

(Anonymous interviewee)⁷¹

In this and many other accounts it is interesting to observe how curators who did not want to address contested interpretations thought that the 'politics' and 'the political' were foreign notions to museums and therefore should be avoided. As opposed to curators who were willing to reflect on tensions created by the construction of national narratives, curators who wanted to skip this implicitly positioned their own museum practices as apolitical and positioned the talk about everyday culture as apolitical as well. Both approaches – one that wanted to take a critical de-constructivist stand and address not only positive but conflicting sides of

⁷⁰ Interview conducted in Belgrade, 6 May 2015.

⁷¹ Skype interview, 22 July 2015.

national identities, and the other that wanted a harmonious, comforting, balanced interpretation as a way to present the common heritage of the Balkans – were legitimate and had their pros and cons for the enhancement of dialogue in the region. Neither of them wanted to perpetuate conflicts and neither of them wanted to stay bound to exclusive national narratives.

The first group, however, thought that conflicting narratives should be made visible, deconstructed and dialogued not in order to make a revision of ‘historical truths’, but in order to create critical awareness among citizens and make them understand exclusive and manipulative aspects of national historiographies. This is exactly what I would call the understanding heritage within inclusive heritage discourse. The other approach, however, strongly felt that the comparison and display of conflicting narratives might become problematic to participants, museums, participating states and citizens and thus potentially trigger and deepen conflicts. Therefore, they advocated for the creation of an alternative narrative which capitalizes on the concept of shared history and shared heritage – a concept which focuses citizens’ minds on the commonalities of historical experiences.

What is evident in the framework of a multilateral cooperation mediated by UNESCO such as this one is that it was impossible to experiment with the first approach, if someone in the group did not feel comfortable with it. If individual participants were bound by the imagined or imposed political interests of their nation-states, UNESCO as an organization was in its own way bound not to offend the interest of its member nation-states, as ‘symbolic stock-holders’.⁷² Therefore, despite its

⁷² Even though UNESCO as an organization does not have stocks in a market sense, meaning that Member States cannot own its stocks, there is a sort of symbolic stock holding going on in the relationship of UNESCO and its Member States. This comes from Member States being the founders and important part in the governance of this organization, so in different actions the interests of the member-states are protected. The stocks owned correspond in this case with the strengths of the symbolic capital of particular Member State, which is usually correlated with economic and political capital of a state in wider geopolitics, as well as the funding provided for UNESCO.

authority and potential to bring different sides to the same table, it was limited by the sum of interests appearing around that table:

They [the governments] are our main, not stakeholders but 'stockholders', because we are an inter-governmental organization. We are composed by our Member States and our first national partner and counterpart in state authorities and governments. Then for our daily work, it is very important for us to engage local stakeholders – local communities, municipalities, local agencies, etc. But of course, for the very nature of the organization it is necessary that what we do is agreed with the state authorities because they are our partner, our governing body. So we have to respond and report on what we do on our Member States.

(UNESCO Venice Office representative)⁷³

So with Imagining the Balkans, the whole issue was to have the countries working together and define, through representatives of national history museums, define among them a common concept, a common vision of telling, you know, part of their common history and through a movable itinerary exhibition. We facilitated the process but we did not steer it! Of course it was not up to us to indicate what we should interpret in history and to shape the exhibition concept! Of course we facilitated the process and have brought them together at the same table.

(UNESCO Venice Office representative)⁷⁴

From these accounts one can read that despite first intentions and hints by UNESCO, the very nature of this organization went against provocation. This tension between the legitimacy to work on peace and the will to solve conflicts, mixed with a fear of transparently entering in dialogue on conflicts, is the tension deeply embedded in UNESCO. Therefore, the most

⁷³ Skype interview, 15 July 2015.

⁷⁴ Skype interview, 15 July 2015.

important goal for UNESCO as a mediator was not to cause additional political conflicts but, to try to make everyone willing to cooperate within the group. Therefore, it was decided that it was not the time to ‘deconstruct the evilness of nationalism’. As one of the external expert advisors states:

And that made me sure that one of my main advice was really a good one – and that was to tap things down. Cause academic historians, they were pushing this sort of relativist, critical constructivist too hard. Because in my view you need to be able to work through the conflict, you need to analyse where are they and how close they are to blood, to reality and how can you deal with them... Because in my view you can go straight on the conflicts only after two or three generations, you need to take a much more cautious roundabout to work that through... Because if we stayed on this official historical level and how to deconstruct the evilness of nationalism, it would have been impossible for people to do that so early after people have died for this sort of national stand.

(External scientific project advisor)⁷⁵

This statement could have been challenged in many ways – first, for not openly addressing the ‘evilness of nationalism’ that all generations in SEE had lived through during wars in which people were dying for the national idea. Nationalism, therefore, was not something that people have died for only during the 1990s, but an idea that perpetuated armed conflicts in numerous uprisings in the 19th century and seven wars during the 20th – affecting two or three generations. Krause calmed things down by focusing the group on proposing lighter topics – education, industrialization, celebrations – all following the discourse of modernization in the region. The group drew a list of stray potential themes which seemed important to tackle and categorised them under three major thematic lines as follows: ‘Living in the Balkans’, ‘Educating in the Balkans’ and ‘Representing the Balkans’.

⁷⁵ Skype interview, 3 August 2015.

Most importantly, Krause also proposed a change of approach. Instead of discussing the exhibition concept from a blank slate, he proposed that each museum select 10 objects from their collections which would cover some of the topics relating to 19th-century history of the Balkans. This was a turning point and a calming point as the curators went back to their museums with a task to connect with collections and select 10 objects and stories to present at the next meeting.

6.5 The second turning point: from mutually exclusive celebration to inclusive construction

The presentations of 10 selected objects from each museum took place in March 2012, in the Slovenian National History Museum in Ljubljana. This meeting showed once again a conceptual divide and caused another turning point. From the selection of the objects, it was evident that three different approaches and readings of the objects appeared, which demonstrated very different attitudes towards museums, national identity and politics. One group approached artefacts from the perspective of economic and social history, recognizing the process of constructing national identity, myths and heroes. Another group approached the subject from an ethnographic everyday common culture, while the third group presented its nation in a celebratory way, finding it important that their country “participates and show part of its history within a joint presentation about the 19th century.”

In Ljubljana we were sitting and looking at the selected objects for the first time. And that was really interesting! There was a sort of divide and two kinds of argumentations co-existed. One insisted on the national narrative par excellence, with monarchical crown but without reading it in any other way, with achievements, medals, etc... The other offered one totally different reading, which had a critical perspective. When it was seen how it all looked together, that was wonderful to me... suddenly people started changing the objects they have previously selected and adapting it overnight... That was an

excellent sign, and I said to Krause: ‘This is a shift! This shows something!’

(Anonymous interviewee)⁷⁶

This moment in Ljubljana is an excellent example of small steps that take place during ‘forced cooperation’. There were at least two partners willing to expose themselves and step out of their usual practice. This kind of exposure gave a tangible example to the rest of the group that had stuck to the national narratives because they really believed them to be objective or because they did not have trust in the group and did not want to be exposed. Once an example appeared it became easier for the group to build trust and it became inappropriate to stay bound to one’s own exclusive narrative.

After a sort of adjustment and self-censorship, some participants changed some of the artefacts to relate to the selection from other countries because they had gained new insights. Some participants removed artefacts that directly infringed on the territory of a neighbouring country. Based on the objects, concrete themes were outlined and the project group worked together online to make a final selection of objects and to write and review texts. One more meeting was organized in Bucharest to discuss the details of the exhibition content as well as to the preparation and organization of the travelling exhibition.

6.6 ‘Spirit of cohesion’: silencing the dissonance

Backstage processes in the creation of the *Imagining the Balkans* exhibition, even if not intentionally focused on selecting and interpreting artefacts in a way that would make dissonance visible, had developed a way of engineering and arbitrating the interpretations of each artefact in order to reach a unanimous consensus. If dissonance related to Stećaks (discussed in the first case study) came from different interpretations imposed on a particular material heritage, here the dissonance could be

⁷⁶ Interview conducted in Belgrade, 6 May 2015.

presented or avoided both through the selection and interpretation of selected artefacts. The following accounts testify how the process of working through common meaning and consensus took place:

At this point, it proved necessary from those of us who had assumed a coordinating role as a de facto Steering Committee,⁷⁷ to insist upon our partners the necessity of following a historical path and not an ethnographic one, and also for eliminating some historical interpretations which did not meet with the approval of the rest of the group. The content of each member's proposition (object selection and accompanying historical information) was reviewed in a spirit of cohesion, with the explicit agreement that any reference colliding with the national perceptions of other partners would have to be discussed and would not be accepted at face value. Repetitive readings of all the material would be proposed at each subsequent phase of the project and any individual criticism would be negotiated and incorporated or refuted by unanimous agreement.

(Mazarakis-Ainian 2015)

It can be seen nicely through this example how one serious, tricky, even dangerous international project is done. Despite all the efforts to ensure that everyone is ok with everything, you can never know what someone else will say and we always had the texts available for control and final checks.

(External scientific project advisor)⁷⁸

The challenges connected to the content of the exhibition are the interpretation of some specific elements and exhibits in order to avoid political sensitivities. It has a price, when you come to a consensus

⁷⁷ The Steering Committee consisted of Anthony Krause, Administrative Coordinator for UNESCO, Ana Stolić, Director of the Historical Museum of Serbia and Philippos Mazarakis-Ainian, Curator of the National History Museum in Athens.

⁷⁸ Skype interview, 3 August 2015.

solution. And the cost is that sometimes you present an exhibit with background information that is not complete since you want to avoid all the information, and you hide it from the visitors and this has a cost.

(UNESCO Venice Office representative)⁷⁹

Reviewing ‘in the spirit of cohesion’ meant that anything disturbing for any of the partners would be discussed and left out of the texts – creating a new narrative par excellence. As some of the participants noted, the negotiations were never explicit – “you could never hear ‘we object to’” – much of that was worked through during person to person conversations or in other subtle ways. In the exhibition, this spirit of cohesion is reflected in the fact that contested or interrelated personalities, events, myths and symbols were either not selected, or were not interpreted as such. No exhibition artefact was explicitly interpreted as an example of multiple meanings it represents for different nation-states. And, the authority of museum artefacts as something having innate meaning, has not been questioned through the exhibition’s interpretation and presentation. Indicative of this process and of participant relations is the proposal to talk about heroes and anti-heroes, which was overruled in the last phase of the preparations.

Another challenge was the topic of heroes and anti-heroes. We did not want to get into the celebration of national pride, and it was evident that a hero in Serbia is an anti-hero in Turkey... this was a situation similar in all countries. However, this has been understood by the others as pushing too far the boundaries, and being too post-modernistic. I would personally like it if we would have been able to do this, but from the role of the mediator, we have not gone further with the anti-heroes theme, instead we talked about heroes as ideological constructions, which was still an important progress...

(Anonymous Project Coordinator, UNESCO)⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Skype interview, 15 July 2015.

⁸⁰ Skype interview, 22 May 2015.

The half of them [curators] do not read artefacts as they should, but have the representative image which they want to show. The topic hero/anti-hero that I proposed to do didn't stand a chance! The topic did not have to be even verbalized as anti-heroes. My idea was that, for example, in the catalogue we state that Karađorđe, which is the hero as a founder of modern Serbia, was at the same time the enemy no. 1 of the Ottomans. So, you see... just on that tiny level... But Turkey asked that we cut the legend out before the exhibition opened.

(Anonymous interviewee)⁸¹

These statements say a lot more than the main dispute about Karađorđe. First, they show that there was a persistent effort on one part of the team to display at least some basic level of contradictory meanings through the interpretation of artefacts providing meaning on a specific historical person or event that obviously differed in national narratives and microcosms of different countries. Second, it also shows that a part of the group had perceived any attempt to acknowledge this multiperspectivity as going beyond the 'boundaries' – linking these meanings to either pride or shame. The issue about being too post-modernist for a historical exhibition is further illuminated by the 'post-modernist's' complaint, giving a hint about different philosophical and methodological approaches to museum objects, in which some curators are simply not equipped with post-modern constructivist theories to be able to use them in museum space.

The clash therefore is not only about conflicting national historiographies, or those who are ready to deconstruct the evilness of nationalism and those who are protecting nationalist narratives, but about professional standpoints and two different understandings of history and heritage – authorized and inclusive. These different perspectives often result from the background and education of the participants. Similar remarks by interviewees about understanding heritage within authorized heritage discourse could be heard throughout the research period, with participants referring not only to other project participants, but to curators in their own museums:

⁸¹ Interview conducted in Belgrade, 6 May 2015.

If they have read 3-4 books lastly, that would be enough for them not to experience everything as a provocation. I want to cut my veins when I hear curators say 'the object speaks for itself'!

(Anonymous interviewee)⁸²

Or:

I think that for most of them heritage is the unquestionable artefact that represents what they and their past are. I think that this is the case with majority and that in majority or cases people really do believe it to be that way, that meanings of artefacts are exclusively singular and there are no other meanings.

(Anonymous interviewee)⁸³

Furthermore, Krause indicated that if someone was against something he/she found disturbing or unsuitable, or wanted something to be removed from the text, the approach from UNESCO (as a mediator) would be to create a framework that does not disturb anyone. So even though some of the curators claim “they would like the exhibition to be braver, more explicit and less silent,” they were aware of UNESCO’s mediator position:

Yes... It's very political [the exhibition]... and you know, we had to follow not only our own bilateral problems, but also the political balances of UNESCO. UNESCO is about history, but it is mainly a political organization. So it has to follow the rules, it cannot risk offending...

(Anonymous interviewee)⁸⁴

In order to avoid offending any of the partners, UNESCO felt it to be important to involve ‘significant outsiders’, such as international museum

⁸² Interview conducted in Belgrade, 6 May 2015.

⁸³ Interview conducted in Belgrade, 6 May 2015.

⁸⁴ Skype interview, 14 July 2015.

experts and academics with proven track records in the field. As with the conferences and study visits in Berlin and Turin, the involvement of these experts was a way to build knowledge and expertise and also gain professional legitimization. These invited experts were not bound by the same kind of pressures and interests as UNESCO or the participants were. Some of the experts performed the role of scientific advisors and read all the texts so as to ensure academic rigour and factual accountability. However, they also acted as moderators and mediators together with Krause at times when there was mistrust or silence among participants.

6.7 Haunting ghosts from the past: drop offs, diplomatic disputes and audience reactions

Despite all cautiousness and revisions of the exhibition texts, it did not pass without disputes, tensions and political backlashes. Turkey stepped out of the project a month before the opening, even though it went through the whole selection of objects, feeling that they were on the other side of the common Balkan 19th-century story.⁸⁵ This is no surprise, as the national narratives of most of the Balkan states were created simultaneously while gaining independence from Ottoman rule. National mobilizations were based on a process of Europeanization and de-Ottomanization, characterized by a constant effort to distance themselves

⁸⁵ "It was challenging to keep Turkey on board, since the 19th century was a time of Ottoman Empire relocation and a period that the nation is not proud of. In addition, most of the countries have difficulties talking about Ottoman heritage in a positive way. This was particularly evident with Cyprus, which initially did not want to participate, because they did not consider themselves as part of the Balkans. Furthermore, this was the period when Cyprus was occupied by the Turks, which obviously was another topic they did not want to talk about. Turkey left the project a month before the opening, even though they went through the selection of objects, writing of labels... This was not because of the museum professionals, but because the overall political situation had changed and became more nationalist focused that the museum could not back this exhibition." Participant during a Skype interview, 14 July 2015.

from the former Ottoman/Muslim occupier and to appropriate the position of 'last bastions of Christianity' (Negojević 2015).

In this process, the image of 'bloodthirsty Turks' was the image which promoted the idea that the Ottomans are the bearers of an essentially different civilization and the cause of backwardness in the Balkans in relation to other European countries (Todorova 2006, 63-64). The issue of Balkan countries' relations with Turkey as well as with Austria (as inheritor of the Habsburg Empire) has deep roots in colonial history of the Balkan region and is at the core of two different cultural models that separate Balkan societies even today. For Turkey, therefore, participation at this exhibition had a different weight than in other countries, but the exhibition ignored these issues.⁸⁶

The second tension happened a few months after the opening in Ljubljana, just before the exhibition was to be opened in Belgrade. The Bulgarian National History Museum complained about the contents of two captions of artefacts selected by the Museum of Macedonia, which related to disputed heritage between the two nations – the appropriation of the hero Goce Delčev and the uprising of Kruševo by both nations. The dispute moved beyond the backstage discussion of the participants, outside any examination of the historical validity of the dispute by external scientific advisors and was brought to the attention of the press, the Ministries of Culture in both countries and the UNESCO headquarters. The solution was negotiated at the highest political level with the replacement of two captions and the printing of a new version of the exhibition catalogue. The exhibition never travelled to Bulgaria.⁸⁷

In order to avoid similar disputes around FYR Macedonia in Greece, the Greek National History Museum negotiated some changes in the

⁸⁶ In the context of interconnected issues of colonialization and nation-building in the Balkans it is interesting to observe how the framing of SEE within UNESCO programmes provoked the situation in which Turkey is to be included in joint projects while another big colonial influencer of the Balkans (Austria, and partly Hungary) are not.

⁸⁷ More details on this and other disputes and their relation to historical narratives of each country can be found in Mazarakis-Ainian 2015.

display and labelling of some objects from the Museum of Macedonia. The aim was to 'avoid the provocation of Greek citizens' when the exhibition was to be hosted in Athens. Despite this care, a third public scandal emerged around the exhibition – this time, not related to specific objects but to the name 'Museum of Macedonia' (the official name of the National Museum from FYROM) written on labels within the Greek National History Museum.

The incident happened on one of the first guided tours when a lady, seeing the label stating 'Museum of Macedonia' started shouting at the curator, outraged because of the title. Soon after this, the International Association of Greek Macedonian Ladies directed an official protest letter via popular press in Greece, to the Minister of Culture, the Hellenic National Committee for UNESCO and all Members of the Parliament. This forced the museum to make a public announcement in its defence (Mazarakis-Ainian 2015). The outrage of some visitors has been reflected in both direct complaints and in negative comments about the exhibition in the impression book, particularly during the month when the provocative articles were published in the press – comments calling it a 'disgusting exhibition', or saying 'This is treason!' or 'Mr Mazarakis should be ashamed of himself!', underlined with red, to better express the outrage.⁸⁸

In fact, for financial, organizational and political reasons the exhibition will not be hosted in Nicosia, Tirana or Zagreb, while with UNESCO financial support it will travel to Banja Luka.⁸⁹ The planned two years life

⁸⁸ There were also comments of people expressing how proud they are to be Greek – comments that appear on every single exhibition made by the museum. The curators interpret from these comments that they have not understood the message but recognize there will always be a group of people who will make a stand using national pride.

⁸⁹ The responses from interviewees relate mainly to the lack of funding that the state allocated for hosting the exhibition (as the costs of travel and insurance were to be covered by the local museum and government). These funding issues, however, speak of the willingness of the Ministries to support this kind of regional cooperation as a political priority. The Croatian Historical Museum wanted to host the exhibition in 2015 as part of the opening

on loan has passed and some museums had to take back their objects and substitute them with copies. From UNESCO's side, the very active and involved approach of Krause was substituted by a much more distanced and administrative approach, leaving most of the coordination up to the participants themselves. This shift came after the inauguration in Ljubljana and coincided with both the Bulgarian and FYR Macedonian disputes. Krause was moved to the Paris office of UNESCO, leaving participants with the feeling they had lost important political backing.

When Anthony left, I somehow became the only coordinator of the administration of the joint moves. But I didn't have the authority... Anthony could openly discuss with the Ministries of culture in different countries and with directors of museums... not only with the participant curators. So he could find ways of pushing things politically in favour of the exhibition, which... I don't have this power, and frankly speaking I don't have a wish to get involved in this.

(Anonymous interviewee)⁹⁰

This and other statements of interviewees, as well as the whole research process and atmosphere around it, indicated that UNESCO was extremely cautious about the project and how it was portrayed. It was important for

of the museum's new building and permanent display, but the museum has not moved to the new building. Furthermore, even though the museum has been putting this project in its annual plans, it has never received any financial support from the government through the Ministry of Culture of Croatia. Both curators which worked on the *Imagining the Balkans* exhibition regret this, saying that no one in the group would believe that this is just a financial constraint. The Leventis Municipal Museum in Nicosia had issues with participating in the project since the beginning, due to the fact that they did not consider themselves as part of the Balkans and the fact that the period that the exhibition dealt with was a period of Turkish occupation of Cyprus. The National History Museum has had a shift of directors, and the former director who was in charge of the *Imagining the Balkans* project is no longer employed within the museum, so information from this museum is limited.

⁹⁰ Skype interview, 14 July 2015.

UNESCO to try to distance itself from any political repercussions, from any attempt to work on contested issues and from the active involvement of the former coordinator. What is also evident is that, as with the Stećaks nomination, it was UNESCO and its representative who had the power to negotiate political support for the project and push things when they slowed down. In this sense, it was clear that the exhibition was a political tool for achieving politically desirable goals of dialogue and reconciliation in the region, but that as such, it needed political support to make it happen.

The exhibition was clearly not a one-size-fits-all endeavour and some countries were less comfortable and less free to talk openly about nationalism, making it difficult to gauge what might be pushing a boundary of one country. The exhibition had different missions in each country and left each museum space to deal with its content in their own way. The Coffee Room at the exhibition was designed as a meeting and discussion space and it was imagined that deeper discussions would be held in that space. Each museum organized additional programmes or guided tours, for example: presentations of different minority groups within the country (in Slovenia); weekly public discussion and lectures about history and the Balkans (in Belgrade); focused sessions with universities, academia and guided tours in order to address silent parts of the exhibitions (in Greece). These oral presentations acted as a substitute for what was silent, unclear or not shown in the exhibition and they gave space, particularly to those participants who wanted to approach the topic in a more open and dialogical way.

In the exhibition we present a story by not discussing actually. Because the differences in historiography and sensitivities are so strong that even referring to the fact that the other side has a different story is considered as treason. You can just shut up and not say anything or I tried to fix this situation by making many guided visits. And these visits were more like, let's say... ah... well, they lasted very long and this is why I always tried to make a very big introduction on how to deal with the issues that are not dealt with... And, how do you try to negotiate when negotiation is excluded. I think it was quite successful, because I think that many people were very happy to see that we are able to talk

about problems with other countries, without taking their side, but showing that the way we are dealing with issues today is not correct. But you always have to balance the way you speak. I made 25-30 guided visits, and each had approximately 30 people. And I think this was the most important part of it.

(Anonymous interviewee)⁹¹

Positive responses and comments from the audiences were much more numerous than negative ones and the exhibition was much more visited than other temporary exhibitions at the same museums. The exhibition attracted some niche groups of visitors that would not otherwise come to the museum – in particular students of international relations, history students, university lecturers and private associations. All of these presumably interested in alternative approaches to understanding history and often critical of traditional displays in some museums.⁹²

In addition to the mainly positive comments in the impression books, there were comments praising the fact that visitors for the first time could see such cooperation and a vision of national history in a broader context. Some comments indicated that some visitors were conscious of the silent part of the exhibition and some complained about it being too superficial – expressing that they would like to see more and know more about the topic.

6.8 Exhibition as the excess within a limited space for movement

In hindsight, I would like to have been much more free to discuss contested issues... Aaah... and not be... in some cases you have the feeling that we are a joyful reunion of schoolchildren! Sometimes the image of the exhibition is too joyful and too politically optimistic. I

⁹¹ Skype interview, 14 July 2015.

⁹² It was not possible to get a copy of the comments from all the impression books or press clippings from all the participating museums. Therefore the research was limited to those that could be seen in situ or were referred to during interviews.

would have liked more to be centred on the painful aspects of our common history. And... although I know it would have created even more reactions and that it would not have the backing from UNESCO... we would not have probably the backing from my museum either... but I would have liked it to be even more... more aggressive. I don't really know (who has the freedom to make these aggressive exhibitions)... I don't really know because the attitudes in our societies are very centralized and based upon the official version of history as seen by the Ministries.

(Anonymous interviewee)⁹³

This statement sums up well the tensions and limitations of participants who have been ready and willing to push the exhibition into more painful topics and show dissonance in contested national narratives. After this process, it was clear for them that the more provocative exhibition would not have been backed either by national museums, ministries or by UNESCO. They saw clearly the ideological use of museums in addressing history critically, but realised that currently there is not the space for museums to start redefining their practices.

Interestingly, those directors and curators who did not want to deal with difficult topics, in interview were quick to say that museums should be the place for difficult histories. Some however then underlined that their museum is not the appropriate one to do this because it deals with archaeological heritage which is 'unproblematic'. Others even went so far as to say that this is the approach they normally have, even though it is visible from their annual programmes, publications and displays that this is not the case. At the same time, for those who were actually trying to push forward a more critical approach to history and heritage, the space for change seemed extremely narrow and marginal.

Ahhh... It's very difficult... It's very sensitive... The margin of movement is very limited... And this is why... Actually this was the first

⁹³ Interview conducted in Athens, 27 May 2015.

time that such an exhibition took place... [...] But you always have to balance the way you speak so as to be clear that you not... that you maybe are criticizing the mainstream perception about these things, but that you are not criticizing the main basic points, these basic assumptions that are central not only to politics but also in perception by the public, as it has been trained by the politicians, of course.

(Anonymous interviewee)⁹⁴

For the participating curators, it was like a deadlock, because the majority of curators, museum boards, audiences and ministries all had traditional expectations of museums as a source of national pride and identity. Even though they would have liked to see museums at the core of critical thinking, they were pointing out that the alternative voices are still reserved for universities and non-governmental organizations. This project was one more proof of the limited space for movement, but it did stretch some traditional boundaries.

Despite having the flavour of 'a joyful reunion of schoolchildren', this project should be evaluated from the perspective of positive excess⁹⁵ – a deviation that usurps the rules. First, it created the possibility for meeting, learning, cooperating and some discussion among participants, which would otherwise not have happened. The practical importance of the cooperation is that participants highly valued the opportunities to learn and share museographical knowledge and experiences among colleagues – in terms of international loans, writing labels and texts and creating a multilateral exhibition. Furthermore, the fact that they were able to get insights into each other's collections has made them more aware of the commonalities and more interested in future bilateral cooperation.

No matter whether some of them had strict directions from governments, whether some had a strong belief that their own national history is unbiased, whether someone wanted to avoid or acknowledge the conflicting issues, the

⁹⁴ Interview conducted in Athens, 27 May 2015.

⁹⁵ The word excess is used here to refer to something that is more permitted or desirable, a deviation that usurps the rules (from Latin *excessus*).

experience of cooperation made them more aware of the ideological role of themselves and their institutions. This awareness did not necessarily come from the open conversations at the table, but could be tracked during coffee breaks, in one-to-one conversations, in self-censorships that took place during the selection and interpretation process, as well as in the public and political clashes that resulted due to the exhibition. Even if some people remained bound to their own national narrative, this project showed how important it is to be in the situation in which you can understand and experience the clash of 'other's' version of history with the history you are bound by. This account explains how one changes attitudes when confronted with another perspective:

I had this issue with my colleague, that he had an open mind but the historiography he has read and had access to apparently have a certain bias. It was clear, as he presented this artefact that he did not do it as a provocation... He clearly believed that he was just expressing a national history. He did not realize that the other countries had a very, very different image on these subjects! So he was very willing to negotiate that when he realized... [...] When you really believe that your story is the only story and you go outside and say these things [...] it can easily create a fight. The intention here was not that. If I would have been more nationalistic I would have been offended. I was not since I realized that he did not do it because he wanted to provoke me but because he had learned that way...

(Anonymous interviewee)⁹⁶

This account is important as it shows the value of creating a discursive space in which it becomes visible that sedimented narratives within one's national context suddenly become confronted and challenged by new narratives, in this case regional frames of reference. When it comes to the impact the exhibition had on institutional practices of each museum, the impact is for now marginal and can be seen as an exception to the rule. Some of the participants who would like to have been able to incorporate some of the

⁹⁶ Interview conducted in Athens, 27 May 2015.

methods learned through the project within their own institutions and move away from traditional national discourse, have involved colleagues in the production and discussion on the exhibition. Even though it had not changed any of the museum practices and displays so far, it was an important communicative event which visualized how it could have been done differently.

I very deliberately tried to involve my colleagues in seeing the exhibition and discussing it. Because we are a conservative institution, and even though most curators are younger, we have a very conservative and old governing committee but they are not reactionary. So they like very much this exhibition, but they belong to a generation that never thought possible to think in this way. So it's a kind of trying to educate the museum also in alternative approaches. The reaction of colleagues was positive and this is what makes me optimistic. For the museum it was a very big step forward. I hope that it has helped in the sense that they feel freer to deal with alternative issues in alternative ways.

(Anonymous interviewee)⁹⁷

Particularly because of the tensions involved, participants interviewed underline that the main message both professional and general audiences would get from this exhibition is that 'we can cooperate and work together', which is a message of dialogue and co-existence. In the accounts by interviewees, this message is not only reserved for the general audience and professionals but becomes an important message to the rest of the world – 'we have showed to the world that we can cooperate' – implying both the internal and external assumption that 'we as a region' cannot find a common ground. In the case of Stećaks this message is directed towards showing 'our' heritage and mutual cooperation within the World Heritage List, in the case of the exhibition the message played a role to prove that it is possible to cooperate.

In terms of meaning and messages formed within the exhibition, it intruded and changed the structuring and the focus of historical narratives present in the usual displays of the participating museums. It moved away

⁹⁷ Skype interview, 14 July 2015.

from political history of wars, heroes and fights over territories throughout the 19th century – events that are the focal points around which the usual national narratives of each country are structured. It instead put social, economic and political histories at the fore, that testify about general social evolution and emancipation aspects of nation-building. The reading of selected phenomena was done in a way that made visible common space and phenomena – that societies and national elites around the Balkans thought in similar terms, used same mechanisms and strategies, and fought the same politics. This story is something that does not get taught at schools or thought about by citizens and therefore it is important to present it. If the displays of each participating national history museum frame national identity through heritage, this exhibition acted towards framing identity of the whole region, the ‘unfortunate Balkans’.

Yes, the message for the public was the representation of that unfortunate term Balkans... We were choosing material that shows these common points... to show to peoples that we are not an island.

(Anonymous interviewee)⁹⁸

I think that it is, in some end result or starting point, some kind of framing of this region. In that direction of cultural-identity markers... to cover in some way this region which still is some sort of the periphery, and it is evident that it will stay on the periphery for a long time...

(Anonymous interviewee)⁹⁹

As with other, more technical instruments for framing SEE through international cooperation and in the context of EU enlargement process, this cultural framing was equally politically driven, constructed and selective. In terms of meaning and treatment of identities and contested topics, the exhibition could be criticized for creating another narrative par excellence, using very selective memory and leaving all surpluses of meanings under

⁹⁸ Interview conducted in Zagreb, 27 May 2015.

⁹⁹ Interview conducted in Belgrade, 6 May 2015.

the carpet. Even though curators had to be aware of the multiplicity of meanings of certain events or people, they have chosen to offer a presentation instead of discussion or multiple views. They tried to avoid everything that was dissonant through the very selection of the objects, but even more so by negotiating dissonance behind the scene instead of displaying it to visitors.

As well as avoiding relating these emancipation and modernization processes to the wars and conflicts in which these similar exclusive politics were clashing, the narrative left behind the phenomena of colonization and rule over the societies in the Balkans for few centuries by two very different empires, Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman. The two different cultural and social models within the two empires have created differences that cannot so easily be reconciled within a joyful reunion of SEE. Furthermore, within this framework of cooperation it was impossible to address some of the deeply rooted myths of fights and heroes in the context of freedom and liberation movements. Today's desirable framing of SEE, which includes Turkey but excludes Austria, determines funding and cooperation. This requires the crafting of a new selective collective memory in order to accommodate current politics and this is exactly how a story about shared history and common processes has been crafted through *Imagining the Balkans*.

Another flip side of the project is that it did not foresee or discuss whether and how the evaluation would be carried out. UNESCO's role as coordinator and funder ended at the creation of the exhibition and did not ensure an evaluation of audiences, public programmes and the ways in which reactions to the exhibition would be collected and evaluated. Evaluation was left to each museum to manage in their own way. This was a missed opportunity to systematically evaluate the effects of such an exhibition among the citizens of the region. This implies that the political goal was to have an exhibition presented and the effort was put into having key national museums on board, instead of putting time into the wider outreach.

Another weakness of the exhibition was available only to those people visiting specific museums in which the exhibition took place and did not make any use of new technologies to present it online to a much wider range of visitors. This is a particular lack, bearing in mind that the exhibition offers an alternative vision of the region, not only for local citizens, but also for

people outside the region. The diplomatic and public relations potential of this exhibition for building a more positive image of the region has not been used effectively.

This is also evident in the lack of planning and support for the exhibition to be shown outside the region. Some possible destinations include the UNESCO headquarters in Paris, the Council of Europe headquarters in Strasbourg, and the Museum of Mediterranean Civilizations in Marseille, but none of them have been pushed forward or planned in terms of funding, organization, loans and dates. Importantly, individual participants did not feel authorized or free to discuss these kinds of travel arrangements, as the core project was run by the UNESCO Office in Venice. Some expressed feeling certain disappointment in terms of not being able to build on the exhibition or create more opportunities for it to be seen.

What also has not been built upon is the incorporation of know-how from this project within a wider UNESCO structure, so similar tools could be used in other UNESCO offices around the world. The size of the organization, large number of projects, internal communication which relies on sharing information via websites, newsletters or long annual reports, the lack of formal procedures and mechanisms to share know-how, doubts and advice on innovative projects influence the lack of systemic learning. Knowledge from practices within the organization and multiplying effects are explained in the following statement:

Ah, you mean that we promote our own practices? Hahaha... No... there's no rule on that. It depends on other colleagues and whether they are ready and understand what we are doing and want to use this further. It is a question of sharing information first. We are putting things on the website and sending newsletters, but you never know whether these are actually read. We are quite a big organization and not everybody reads the reports. Of course, everything we do in culture somehow as we are hierarchical and pyramidal organization, they should converge in the top of the pyramid at the executive office for culture in Paris, and then go from there... But somehow it is a little bit random. Sometimes if you have the opportunity to meet a colleague and

share what you are doing, and they think it's interesting for them. It depends on opportunities and many different elements. But there is no formal procedure on how to share practice.

(UNESCO Venice Office representative)¹⁰⁰

With innovative and contested projects such as *Imagining the Balkans* this lack of provision for future learning beyond the scope of the project and project partners is a pity. As a rare involvement of UNESCO in museum cooperation, this project should be interpreted as a positive opening of the discursive space around exclusive narratives of national histories in the Balkans and should try to create a transnational memory (Kisić 2016). The project design as a tool in itself had some outstanding components which need to be praised. First, it moved beyond the usual capacity building and conferences towards an actual, tangible multilateral cooperation.

Second, it used the reputation and neutrality of UNESCO to gather 12 national museums from 12 different countries which have very conflicting histories. Third, it experimented with developing an exhibition, even though UNESCO's programmes and expertise related to museums are not that common. In doing this, it engaged a number of other relevant international organizations – the ICOM International Committee for Exhibitions and Exchange (ICEE), the Council of Europe, the International Association of Museums of History, the Eunamus/European National Museums Network, EUROCLIO – to feed in their expertise and knowledge into the project, but also to give professional backing to the project.

Conceptually, the project combined policy ideals of reconciliation and intercultural dialogue with cutting-edge academic and museological knowledge, tested in very few museums around the world up until now. In fostering discussions around these cutting-edge issues, the project combined in a genuine way conferences and study visits organized at the German History Museum and Museum of Italian Risorgimento including capacity building for participants of the project. Furthermore, it created a significant academic backing for the project by inviting academics such as Maria

¹⁰⁰ Skype interview, 15 July 2015.

Todorova, Christina Koulouri and Peter Aronsson, all of whom deal with history, identities, museums and education from a critical reflective perspective. All these stakeholders created a sort of critical mass that held the project together, something that UNESCO might not have been able to do alone if political pressures from some of the countries threatened the cooperation.

Finally, the coordination of the project by Krause, characterized by personal interest and extensive academic knowledge of the topic exceeded a usual technical role. His role and authority, as UNESCO coordinator, has been critical for keeping the project going, as underlined by every interviewed participant.

UNESCO, as I said is a very heavy and political organization. So I must say that this exhibition would never have taken place without Anthony. He is a historian and actually he was much more involved in the scientific part of the exhibition than he wanted to admit. He refused his name to be put as one of the main contributors... His name is a coordinator, but actually he was also a part of the scientific coordinating committee but, he refused his name to be put there, because actually he did not have the authority from UNESCO for that. So actually it was his private interest in seeing the project going somewhere which made it possible.

(Anonymous interviewee)¹⁰¹

Krause was actually the only one that could have managed that kind of assembly of people with both the cautiousness, diplomacy and drive to make it happen. I was really impressed by his power, courtesy, intellectual capacity... That is why I am interested to hear what happened with him, was he moving on upwards? Because to my understanding he was a real star! Or was this kind of endeavour so dangerous you could become politically impossible just because you made something that was relevant.

(External scientific project advisor)¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ Skype interview, 14 July 2015.

¹⁰² Skype interview, 3 August 2015.

The role of Krause was paradigmatic for the tensions involved in this project: tensions between formality and content; administration and active involvement; bureaucracy and expertise; and most of all political impossibility and relevance. For a project like this there were no clear UNESCO guidelines that one could strictly follow in order to make it happen, in contrast to the case of Stecci and nominations for the World Heritage List. From the beginning it was not a joint exhibition project with an easy history but covered issues that are at least latently dissonant, so it involved tensions and negotiations unusual for more technical programmes of cooperation, such as training and excellence centres. Finally, it involved core national museum elites in a tangible test of intercultural dialogue, usually reserved for short term conferences, speeches or high school children camps.

This project required a more active engagement and stepping out of the comfort zone of clear UNESCO guidelines and an immense shift from the comfort zone for museum directors and curators who participated. In order to appreciate the complexity of this exhibition, one should first see the permanent exhibitions of the participating museums, displaying solely political and military historical narratives about their own nation including male heroes and weaponry. And, before we start thinking that the complexities and tensions were particular for this part of Europe, it is important to note that there has actually never been a single multilateral project involving 12 national museums from countries of Western Europe in trying to deconstruct and dialogue around their national narratives.

The project went to the core ideological public institutions that keep the holy grail of national narratives – institutions that are directly financed by governments; that have directors elected by governments; that consist of curators trained to manage collections in objective apolitical ways often blind to the biases of their own national historiography; and visited by audiences educated on exclusive national narratives who enjoy national pride, belonging and identity projected in national museums.¹⁰³

¹⁰³ Research by EUNAMUS showed that 97% of the visitors at the Greek National History Museum come because they want to find the truth about their nation and the roots of their identity (Bounia et al. 2012).

From the very first letter from UNESCO to the National UNESCO Commissions and Ministries of Culture nominated to participate, the project did not engage participants as individuals, but as representatives of their respective institutions and nation-states. This was both a representative strength of the project and its weakness in terms of freedom of participants to work through their professionalism instead of their national identity and interests. How does one make 'just an exhibition' when he/she is put in the position of being directly responsible for presenting the national interest of his or her own state, much of which are in direct confrontation with each other?

Ultimately, it is clear that there are limits to a project logic working within institutional systems and that the impact is quite short term. It brings people together, but does not secure continuation, because people change as political parties change or there is no more money to support the project. These projects could have an impact if they had a longer-term perspective and become an ongoing effort, but one exhibition cannot move much. Even though many interviewees would like to further cooperate with other colleagues on bi- and multi-lateral exhibitions, no cooperation projects have been initiated so far, mainly due to a lack of funding for traditional joint exhibitions. National funding has remained mainly focused on national projects, while EU funding frameworks require different kinds of focus. This makes the funding and coordination of this project from UNESCO even more important.

What was emerging throughout the research is that, as much as participants were bound by their responsibilities towards their own nation-states, politicians and public opinion, so was UNESCO, which remains a political organization informed by the regional and ideological imperatives of states which are its stakeholders (Singh 2011). For this reason, representatives of UNESCO, after all the political sensitivities, reflect they would like to have had even more official and even clearer endorsements of individuals from the national authorities:

Perhaps we should have a clearer expression from each country in terms of official letters of endorsement of those experts. And... some

clarity was missing on the fact that these experts had a decision-making authority on behalf of their countries. So that when you take a decision you know that these persons are entitled and legitimized to take decisions on behalf of their powered institutions. This was clear in our understanding, but it appeared not to be clear to some governments after some changes in the composition of the governments they used this sort of grey area to complain about how some parts of the exhibitions, very minor things but politically very sensitive, have been presented in the exhibition.

(UNESCO Venice Office representative)¹⁰⁴

This statement captures well the paradox of the project in terms of forward looking goals on one side, and reliance on traditional hierarchical and top down decision-making requirements under which UNESCO and governments function on the other. Furthermore, this framework of cooperation was much more fragile than the nomination of Stećaks to the WHL, because it came from UNESCO in a form that did not have clear guidelines and was not transparently communicated from the beginning. It did not have a Memorandum of Understanding among the states, and it did not have a long-term incentive and structural technical guideline such as the one available for the WHL. For all these reasons, the risks for participating countries could have been understood as higher than the benefits of cooperation.

This lack of a clearly set project framework to sign-up for could be interpreted both as a space for participants to design the actual project once they start communication, and as a way for UNESCO to slowly and indirectly create the atmosphere which would allow tapping onto contested histories. The lack of transparency communicating UNESCO's ambition made it easier for participants to complain and for UNESCO to decrease the benchmark for its ambitions. Finally, it allowed UNESCO to negate any ambition of working with contested heritage and national historical narratives. From the conversations with the UNESCO Venice Office representatives, it was clear that there is an effort to dissociate from a

¹⁰⁴ Skype interview, 15 July 2015.

critical approach, underlining that they as an organization are not dealing with contested issues or dissonant heritage (implying the selection of this UNESCO initiative as a case study is strange) and painting the conversation with the universalist 'shared heritage' concept:

We normally approach heritage, of course, as a shared value and shared asset. As many element of the heritage in this region are as a matter of fact shared historically, but also physically and when it comes to intangible cultural heritage is of course, an entirely different story because this kind of heritage is not necessarily related to one kind of place or shared by the local communities. Communities moved around historically, they migrated and shared their customs and knowledge with other communities in the region. So intangible heritage is even more shared, as it is more movable. We don't approach this issue from the point of view of contested or dissonant heritage.

(UNESCO Venice Office representative)¹⁰⁵

These claims are indicative of UNESCO's cautiousness to justify its involvement and mandate in dealing with contested heritage in SEE, particularly having in mind that *Imagining the Balkans* was not the only 'problematic' project of this kind coordinated by UNESCO Office in Venice.¹⁰⁶ This tension between idealism, good cause, philosophical ideas

¹⁰⁵ Skype interview, 15 July 2015.

¹⁰⁶ Apart from the already discussed involvement of UNESCO in the joint nomination of Stećaks, a similar project to *Imagining the Balkans* began before the inauguration of the *Imagining the Balkans* exhibition in Ljubljana, replicating the same method – UNESCO coordinating, appointing experts in each country, and trying to build a common framework for discussion and implementation. It is a project that brings together six countries from ex-Yugoslavia in an effort to make a common pavilion in Auschwitz, and to reopen the common pavilion of Yugoslavia which is now closed. This project will directly deal with the histories of WWII which are very different in each of the six countries of former Yugoslavia, being sensitive: 'to showcase everybody's different histories, because all the six countries different history of the war, but to

on the one hand and power relations within concrete programmes on the other, makes UNESCO bound and limited by the nation-state membership and structure.

For all these reasons, this project should not be evaluated only from the perspective of its initial goals, but also from acknowledging the context from which it grew: the evident memory wars in SEE; the traditional and non-reflexive museological practices by the majority of participating museums and curators; the strong direct and indirect influence of politicians on cultural institutions; the power-relations within UNESCO that protect national interests; and the tension between freedom to discuss contested issues openly and the privilege to be politically backed and supported. If evaluated as a project that originally aimed to create new perspectives and understandings of history by working with heritage dissonance, the end results can be seen as dissatisfying. Yet, considering the context from which it started, it can be evaluated as a successful and important deviation from dominant practices of cooperation and history interpretation in the SEE region.

find a common space to put all the six histories in perspective, but in a common space”
(Anthony Krause, in Skype interview conducted on 4 May 2015).

7. Musealizing Yugoslavia: Towards a Critical Participative Museum

This exhibition is a big challenge for us and we see it as a presentation of our ongoing research which we want to share with you – our visitors. The research is not completed; this is just one among numerous stories about Yugoslavia and, for us, one more station on the road to our future permanent display about the history of Yugoslavia. What do you think? We want to hear your opinion.¹⁰⁷

This introductory text to the exhibition *Yugoslavia: From the Beginning to the End* sets a particular tone, using a voice very different from the usual authoritative communication of a museum. The voice is direct, friendly and communicative, and invites reaction or interaction from the visitor. It sets the ground for honesty and openness by admitting that what you will see is a challenge, distorting the usual museum-audience relation in which the museum is the one who knows. The challenge is shared – implying they

¹⁰⁷ Text of the introductory panel to the exhibition *Yugoslavia: From the Beginning to the End*, Museum of Yugoslav History, Belgrade.

need your help, thoughts and consent. It is something that is 'a station on the road', 'presentation of an ongoing research', 'not completed' that has to be checked with you in order to become permanent. This is 'just one among numerous stories about Yugoslavia' – implies that there is neither ambition nor the possibility to create one story about Yugoslavia.

Yugoslavia: From the Beginning to the End was imagined as a pilot version of the permanent display for the Museum of Yugoslav History (MIJ) and a step towards *musealization* of 'all reincarnations' of Yugoslavia within a four-year project called *New Old Museum* (2009-2013). The exhibition itself lasted for only three months and was followed by extensive communication and evaluation with different stakeholders – guided tours, round tables, movie screenings with discussions, focus groups, media and press analyses, questionnaires, analyses of the impression book, etc. – all conducted by the museum in order to hear opinions about the exhibition. The inclusive discourse of the introductory text to the exhibition clearly relates to tensions embedded in the institution which carry responsibility to *musealize* a history that is contested and that still has witnesses (citizens that lived through what the museum is trying to present).

As opposed to the *Imagining the Balkans* exhibition in which national history museums were participants in the process, coordinated by the UNESCO Venice Office, or Stećaks in which UNESCO was and still is a mediator and arbiter with a framed procedure, the case of *New Old Museum* is different. This is a story of a museum that self-initiatively decided to cross some of the borders among states, professionals, sectors and generations in musealizing a country which no longer exists. This is a museum that has given itself a mandate to emphasize the role of culture in pioneering social, post-conflict integration and reconciliation processes among professionals and citizens of ex-Yugoslav republics by working on the interpretation of contested Yugoslav history. The exhibition itself was a work in progress within a bigger project and should be evaluated not only in itself, but through shedding light on the context, dynamics and turning points of the process leading to it and the one that followed it.

7.1 Museum of Yugoslav History: from mirror reflection of politics to active creator

The Museum of Yugoslav History is a very special place; a one-of-a-kind institution that officially inherits Yugoslav ideas and history, because of which it has both one-of-a-kind potential and one-of-a-kind burden of responsibility. It is arguably the most vivid museum in Belgrade and the most visited museum in Serbia: a 'not-to-miss' spot for tourists; a 'Mecca' for *yugonostalgics* and *titonostalgics* from ex-Yugoslav republics; a 'hip place' for young people who want to learn more about Yugoslavia; and a 'significant resource' for researchers, artists and NGOs who want to critically deal with issues of collective memory. It is an institution which embeds dissonance in all of its aspects: the names, purposes as well as collection of the museum are not only multilayered, but often conflicting and contradictory in the relations they create.

The museum building is located in an important centre of political power of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) and encompasses the Museum of the Revolution of Peoples and Nationalities of Yugoslavia founded in 1959 as the only federal museum in SFRY for the promotion of anti-fascist values and for founding the myth of the people's revolution and the Museum of 25th May,¹⁰⁸ a collection and exhibition of presents offered to President Tito from both citizens and foreign political leaders. After Tito's death, in the early 1980s, the Museum of 25th May

¹⁰⁸ The Museum of 25th May is a museum built and established in 1962 by the City of Belgrade as a present for Tito's 70th birthday. The mission of the Museum of 25th May was to collect, keep, study and exhibit all presents dedicated and connected with the personality of Marshal Tito and his political and other activities. It placed an accent on his contacts with citizens, representatives of political, industrial and other workers' associations and related to socialist development; the fight against colonialism; policies for peaceful coexistence; and the fight for world peace (City Assembly 1962). Its collections include traditional presents offered to the President by both citizens from around Yugoslavia, as well as formal presents from diplomats and public personalities from around the world – reflecting "by time, space and content, fragments of Tito's representation in the mirror of the peoples" (Radić 2012, 126).

together with the House of Flowers (the place of Tito's grave) was transformed into the Memorial Complex 'Josip Broz Tito', a central place of pilgrimage to the former President, while the Museum of Revolution remained a separate federal institution.

The dissolution of Yugoslavia at the beginning of the 1990s, parallel to the broader end to the Cold War and the fall of the Communist Eastern Block in Europe, brought a radical ideological change and consequently a change of a desirable collective memory.¹⁰⁹ In the emerging ethno-nationalist discourses of each country from the former Yugoslav Republic, there was no more space for celebrating Yugoslavia, the People's Revolution or President Tito. The ideological centre of the anti-fascist movement, multinational socialism, brotherhood and unity of Yugoslavia was no longer needed within the new ideological framework and the Museum of 25th May fell from Federal to the City of Belgrade's responsibility. In 1996, as part of the policy of collective memory transformation, the Memorial Complex 'Josip Broz Tito' was merged with the Museum of the Revolution of Peoples and Nationalities of Yugoslavia into a single institution – the Museum of Yugoslav History (MIJ). The merging of the two very different institutions and collections under a new name resulted in a new ideological purpose; one that implied that Yugoslavia is no more a country, but a history that can be *musealized*.

Since 1996, the museum has been focused on its survival and the protection of its buildings and collections from further political manipulations, and it has not started to act as a new institution. This symbolically potent place has been politically, organizationally and financially neglected by the authorities,¹¹⁰ having an unclear programme policy, internally divided former employees of two founding institutions, no executive board and no vision for development.

¹⁰⁹ Following the end of the dissolution of Yugoslavia, many streets, public squares, institutions and towns changed their names to fit the new desirable discourse.

¹¹⁰ The budget for running the complex of three buildings was almost non-existent and it was only in 2007 that the museum was officially categorized as a museum with a statute referring to its purpose and scope.

Until 2008, the building of the former Museum of the Revolution was mainly used as an exhibit space for representative traditional exhibitions and art shows ranging from Chinese Bronze, Swedish Contemporary Design to diploma exhibitions for the Faculty of Fine Arts – none of which had established an active relationship with Yugoslav history.¹¹¹ The museum was a mirror reflection of the political and ideological changes, demonstrating a lack of idea about what to do with the heritage of Yugoslavia. Also, occasionally, it became a space used as a resource for theatrical symbolic gestures by politicians.¹¹² During this whole period it continued to function as a place of pilgrimage and worship of Tito's grave in the House of Flowers, mixing mausoleum and representational museum, related only to the collection of exclusive presents from the former Memorial Complex.

This was the context in which our story about the project *New Old Museum* begins. It is the story in which MIJ makes steps to transform from a mere mirror of its socio-political context to an active creator within that very context. The turning point in this was a new director, appointed in 2008, a woman with 20 years' experience as a journalist and as a director of an independent activist cultural centre. The appointment of Katarina Živanović came one year after the museum was officially recognized as a museum. She required that a Board be formed to govern the museum and introduced organizational changes: the establishment of a Programme Council; weekly team meetings, regular email checks, official email addresses set up, connections established with European Voluntary Service, curatorial internships for graduates; and the employment of a younger generation of curators. It was her aim that MIJ

¹¹¹ From 2001 to 2008 only 21 exhibitions out of 86 that took place were autonomous projects, displaying the most exclusive artefacts of the former Memorial Complex 'Josip Broz Tito'.

¹¹² For example, when Slobodan Milosevic's rule was overthrown by the Democrats in 2001, a communist star taken from the top of the parliament building was symbolically given to the Museum of Yugoslav History by the democratic leader, Zoran Đinđić; or when Milošević died his remains were displayed in the museum despite protests from both the museum and other cultural institutions.

quickly raise its visibility and create new relations with its visitors. In order to achieve this, some structural changes were put into place, including an official souvenir and museum shop, permanent toilets, signage and a new modern visual identity for the museum. The biggest shift, however, was determining a new role and responsibility for the museum as a public institution:

For me, MIJ was a challenge for trying out what I knew as a practice in non-governmental sector - and what I believe should be a modus operandi in culture – for applying these principles in an institution. These are the principles of broad participation and responsibility towards the community of those who create content. And I was trying to achieve this submergence into the community and this ability to still hold on something that we can call an institution – even though I would challenge this term – but that its wall is simply there in order for the chairs not to be on the grass.

(Katarina Živanović, former Director, MIJ)¹¹³

A strategic plan for three years (2009-2011) was the first task carried out by external consultants, based on feedback from visitor questionnaires and interviews with employees. The analyses for the strategic plan outlined the main issues of the museum – the lack of a permanent display and the lack of any direct communication of Yugoslav history throughout the museum. Furthermore, it noted the problematic relationship between the museum's new role (as an institution which deals with the history of Yugoslavia from its conception to dissolution) and the scope and character of existing collections (featuring presents offered to Tito and artefacts of the Museum of the Revolution).

It was quickly decided that the museum needed a permanent display covering the history of Yugoslavia in the building of the former Museum of 25th May, with a display related to Tito at the House of Flowers and critical thematic exhibitions in the building of the former Museum of the Revolution. Importantly, the strategic plan articulated a mission and vision for the

¹¹³ Skype interview, 6 May 2015.

museum as a “significant, contemporary, modern and networked cultural and tourist destination which communicates with the public through its collection and through modern resources, constantly raising questions about Yugoslavia and Josip Broz Tito and link these topics and issues to the present situation in Serbia and the region and with our common future in the European and international context” (Museum of Yugoslav History 2009). This strategic direction indicated the desire of the museum to strive towards the concept of the *museum as a forum* (Belting 2007; Svanberg 2010) or *critical museum* (Piotrowski 2011; Cvetković/Kisić 2013; Kisić 2014a), both in the involvement of self-critique of institutional history and practices and in changing attitude towards the wider public.

7.2 Promises of the *New Old Museum*: a national institution with regional scope and responsibility

The *New Old Museum*, as a key strategic project of MIJ, responded to the need for a new permanent display that could raise questions about Yugoslavia and link them to the present situation by using a participative and networked approach. Unlike the case of the joint nomination of Stećaks or *Imagining the Balkans* exhibition, this project had a clear and transparent project logic, with the problem, goal, objectives, activities, target groups, partners and results defined at the outset, making it easier to compare the promised project with the one that actually emerged.

The project began with four challenges: the museum, as the only institution to deal with the history of Yugoslavia had little content related to this history to present to the visitors; the wars during the 1990s created the atmosphere in which heritage, history and the idea of Yugoslavia had been neglected, undermined, presented only in segments and/or instrumentalized by different political or ideological agendas; and, finally, there were no publicly visible initiatives for reproaching the history of Yugoslavia by historical institutes and other related institution. Added to these challenges, the new generations growing up in segregated nation-states had no overview of the Yugoslav idea, and since the break of Yugoslavia there was no institutional framework for continuous regional cooperation and all the

regional initiatives carried out thus far by NGOs had been short term.

MIJ set the following objectives to organize regional activities that could lead to developing the concept, content and setup of a new permanent exhibition:

- Create a shared platform to allow exchange of ideas and knowledge within the fields of history, arts, cultural management and related social sciences on a regional level – incorporating relevant international experiences.
- Demonstrate in a tangible way, the need for collaborative work within the region.
- Emphasize the role of culture in pioneering social / post-conflict integration / reconciliation processes.
- Provide a ‘Reading’ from the point of view of today and analyse it from the angle of looking to the future of the region in a European and international context.
- Make a first communicative public analysis of the cultural and political idea of Yugoslavia, aiming mostly at the younger generations who did not live through any (or witnessed only a small part) of those historical / cultural processes.

The project recognized that an exhibition challenging the history of Yugoslavia can be discussed and developed only based on “the experience of all ‘sides’ having both positive and painful (war related) histories together.” The sides here are representatives of all the ex-Yugoslav republics (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, FYR Macedonia, Montenegro, Slovenia and Serbia) and a range of stakeholders – NGOs, institutions, professionals, students of diverse disciplines (cultural management, museology, history, anthropology, etc.).

In the project logic, the ambition was set high – “to show potential project-models for the regional work on complex, institution-related projects, especially those related to (contemporary) cultural heritage” and to contribute

to 'adequate', 'non-ideological', 'objective analyses' of Yugoslav heritage,¹¹⁴ an ambition that will be examined later. The project's methodological approach insisted on contemporary museology that meant opening up to contested and painful issues, creating a platform for regional dialogue, creating a network of different stakeholders and letting students and young professionals create the pilot exhibition. The aim was to work transparently and carry out museum 'business as usual' but in a totally different way, with broad participation and focus on process and dialogue.

The project was to be implemented through key steps including: the building of a project team; promotion of the project to students and young professionals throughout the region; organization of a three-day conference in MIJ, with 20 young professionals and students from the region related to the context and the possible content of the *New Old Museum* exhibition; creation of a public platform for further discussion and visibility of the project development both off and online; definition of the exhibition content with lists of exhibits and preliminary setup through hands-on participation of five young team members (three months in Belgrade); and extensive monitoring and evaluation of the project development and reactions of the participants and audiences was also planned.

Apart from the obvious methodology innovations planned for developing a permanent display, what is outstanding about the planned framework was a direct willingness of the museum to relate its work to the current political problems and tensions, and to position itself as an institution with regional scope, regional responsibility and regional mandate for fostering cooperation and reconciliation. Despite being funded by the government of Serbia, the museum decided from within not to feature a Serbian revisionist version of

¹¹⁴ "Ex-YU community as such will get a starting point for non-ideological 'reading' of the history of YU and the opportunity to build other educational, artistic and, even, tourist-related programmes on it. From the point of view of the general regional or, more precise, situation in former Yugoslav countries, a firm ground for the objective analysing of the Yugoslav cultural / sociological / historical / political heritage will be made" (an extract from the text of the project application to Balkan Trust for Democracy, MIJ electronic Archive, March 2009).

Yugoslav history but involve all stakeholders of Yugoslav heritage.¹¹⁵

Maybe that is related to my character, I won't say in ideology, maybe in upbringing. I have been positioned as a director of a state institution, but no one asked me to 'serbianize'. If someone asked, he would see that I cannot do that. [...] So, I did not have that chip which would nurture the museum as Serbian. The team has declaratively seen itself as Yugoslav, in which we fitted together. Now, of course we can discuss what Yugoslav means, which aspects of Yugoslovenism are close to them and which not, but it was a team that has expressed a touch that exceeded the borders of Serbia and saw its background in values of Yugoslavia, which is multiconfessional, based on the values of workers' movements...

(Katarina Živanović, former Director, MIJ)¹¹⁶

Importantly, the project *New Old Museum* as a first donor-funded project, is a turning point in efforts to diversify sources of funding. With this exhibition, the museum sought funds from international and local donors, governmental and city authorities, without altering the main framework of the project. This required finding partners which understood what the museum would like to achieve.

We have been given funds for the New Old Museum by a donor. Therefore, that was a process which had its autonomy because it did not depend on Ministerial funds that held other dynamics. It wasn't the donor

¹¹⁵ The proposals went as far as to propose to the Board the idea of spreading the museum to other ex-Yugoslav republics: in fact the museum could, with partnerships, be spread to the other states of ex-Yugoslavia, i.e., through a special project it could be 'dislocated' or 'ex-territorial' which would be the first such example in the world. This could only be possible with serious political will, and as such maybe remains as a task for some of the next generations (extract from MIJ, electronic dossier of New Old Museum project, 2009) [not publicly available].

¹¹⁶ Skype interview, 6 May 2015.

who called us and said that we have to build bridges. I wanted a donor and found a donor who could understand that idea, and that process and all its risks and which consciously wanted to participate in it. We made a strategic plan, identified the need for a permanent display, and because that display has not been identified as 'Serbian' but as a display of the Museum of Yugoslav History, we searched for a donor who could understand that. Probably if it was said in the end that the history of Yugoslavia would be written by Serbian historians, we would have to search for another donor – maybe our emigration in Chicago...

(Katarina Živanović, former Director, MIJ)¹¹⁷

This statement is evidence of a pro-active approach towards donor politics, in a way that the aims and priorities of an institution and particular project govern the choice of donors, not vice-versa. The exclamation “it is not Serbian, but a display of the Museum of Yugoslav History,” implied the need for philosophical autonomy in running a state institution and the need to not equate a national institution with a narrow interest of exclusive national identity or current politics. The first step of the project, a three-day conference was funded by the Balkan Trust for Democracy, while the pilot exhibition was implemented with annual support of the Ministry of Culture of Serbia. No other sources funded the project, even though the museum sent applications to six funding bodies and lobbied many more, which left the museum with 10 percent of the budget originally planned and this impeded its full implementation.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷ Skype interview, 6 May 2015.

¹¹⁸ The funds were sought from the Balkan Trust for Democracy, the Hartifact Foundation, the City of Belgrade, the Ministry of Youth and Sport of Serbia, the Ministry of Culture and Information of Serbia and the UNESCO Office in Venice. The overall planned project budget was 458,935 USD, while MIJ succeeded in getting 25,000 USD from the Balkan Trust for Democracy, a small grant from Telecom Serbia and regular funding for exhibition projects by the Ministry of Culture and Information of Serbia. Therefore it was not enough to implement all that was planned or in the way it was planned.

7.3 The place for discussion on Yugoslav history: an outstanding event

In December 2009, MIJ organized three days of public consultations and a conference called *New Old Museum* related to a joint rethinking of the future concept of the museum. The conference gathered a critical mass of 90 people interested in Yugoslavia from the whole region, in an extremely enthusiastic atmosphere that showed there was an interest in discussing Yugoslavia.¹¹⁹ It positioned MIJ as the actor in dealing with the topic of Yugoslav history, creating a future network of supporters, partners and collaborators for the museum.

The biggest result was that we succeeded in gathering all these people, to make a kind of community of people which deals with Yugoslavia, to meet them and that they met us. And I think that created an echo in the future – some came for an internship, some called us to be part of their projects, some people who participated we called later to work on the display, to be editors of some books, to participate in exhibitions. And the museum positioned itself saying: ‘Ok, we are someone who will be a central place for all the questions connected to Yugoslavia.’ Positioning and getting to know people were two benefits. I don’t think that this conference produced genuine results in relation to the exhibition, because that form will never give operational result in the end and recipes on what and how to do things. But it did broaden horizons and ideas.

(Ivan Manojlović, Curator and former Programme Manager, MIJ)¹²⁰

Through the conference, MIJ opened the possibility to discuss what it and what its purpose should be. The programme was a mixture of lectures,

¹¹⁹ MIJ received more than 130 applications from students and young professionals from the region and selected 25 participants. The conference was, however, attended by more than 90 students and professionals, who arrived thinking that the consultations were opened.

¹²⁰ Interview conducted in Belgrade, 21 August 2015.

panels with prominent experts, discussions, workshops and site visits to the museum complex and depots, structured around two main topics: 'Which/Whose Yugoslavia?' and 'History of Yugoslavia in Museum: How?'. The first topic was conceptual and dealt with the issue of which history or which Yugoslavia should be the object of a permanent display, bearing in mind that the Yugoslav idea was born in the mid-19th century and that 'Socialist Yugoslavia' was the third incarnation of the idea and 'South Slavic' unification (preceded by the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians and Kingdom of Yugoslavia) and that after its dissolution in the 1990s Serbia and Montenegro officially continued to be bearers of the name Yugoslavia until 2003. In relation to that, should MIJ focus only on Tito's Yugoslavia or encompass all Yugoslav ideological and political forms? The other topic was more methodological and discussed contemporary *museographic* approaches and ways of creating the exhibition and relationship with audiences.

The conference contributed to conceptualizing the relationship of MIJ's name and collections, suggesting that MIJ should keep its mandate to deal with Yugoslav heritage and should not focus solely on Tito, as a theme that could be backed by collections. It also concluded that MIJ should not focus only on the period of Socialist Yugoslavia, but should talk about the Yugoslav concept since the end of the 19th century and all its political forms since 1918 and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians. In doing this, MIJ could compensate the weaknesses of its collection by meta-data (documents, documentaries, movies), by borrowing from people and private collections and by cooperating with a range of other public memory institutions which cover in a more systematic way a period before Socialist Yugoslavia.

These conclusions were important because they encouraged MIJ to embrace more courageously its mandate on Yugoslavia and understand heritage in a broader sense, instead of letting it be bound by its collection connected to Tito and the People's Revolution. Although numerous suggestions were brainstormed for the future exhibition during the conference, it remained unclear how the ideas from the conference would be further incorporated in the permanent display and who would be involved in this process.



The first room of the exhibition *Yugoslavia from Beginning to the End*, presented key facts about Yugoslavia, its 'ID'. The design of the exhibition suggests something unfinished, fragmented, ruptured referring both to Yugoslavia as a country whose history is hard to capture, and to the exhibition as a pilot, temporary experiment. Credit: Courtesy of the Museum of Yugoslav History, 2013

7.4 Reading the exhibition: a problematic country that was destined to fail

In December 2012, two years after the conference *New Old Museum*, MIJ opened a pilot exhibition, in an occasion crowded with people and journalists. Both the introductory text and design for the exhibition clearly suggested that what you see is a work in progress.¹²¹ The design invoked a topic that is unstable, fragmented and that could not be easily caught. The concept of the exhibition was not chronological and did not aim to cover Yugoslav history, but dealt diachronically with 10 selected themes with the aim to “introduce

¹²¹ The main features of design were wooden frames of diverse triangular shapes and sizes, slab-sided with a scrap paper on which the texts and meta-data of the exhibition were printed. The visible wooden construction of these panels and scrap paper communicated that this is a non-finished and unpolished product – an experiment.

the visitors to one of the most interesting and most controversial state-building experiments in the 20th century, in a modern, attractive and objective way.”¹²² The 10 exhibition themes included six that dealt with key general themes important for Yugoslavia, while the other four stories zoomed into a special case of rupture or divergence connected to six main themes.¹²³

The exhibition started with the theme ‘Yugoslavia – ID’, that dealt with the idea of Yugoslavism, Yugoslav unification, administrative divisions and legal acts that shaped and re-shaped the administrative and political framework. Its corresponding thematic niche entitled ‘Assassinations’ featured the politically inspired liquidations of Croatian parliament leaders and of King Aleksandar I of Yugoslavia, shedding light on the tensions among constitutive nations of the Yugoslav Kingdom. The next theme, ‘The Peoples of Yugoslavia’, addressed the diversity and multiculturalism of a country as well as the attempt to impose a Yugoslav collective identity and citizenship. ‘The Seamy Side of the Regime’ dealt with state repression in monarchist and socialist Yugoslavia, with a central focus on the *Goli Otok* working camp, while its thematic niche zooms into the ‘Croatian Spring and Serbian Liberals’ upraising of pro-liberal groups against the socialist regime.

‘Yugoslavia in the World – the World in Yugoslavia’ explored relations in and between Yugoslavia and the rest of the world through foreign policy, sport, tourism, culture, movies and it zooms into the topic ‘Neue Slowenische Kunst’

¹²² Introductory text to the exhibition *Yugoslavia: From the Beginning to the End*, MIJ, 2013.

See: mij.rs/en/exhibitions/69/yugoslavia-from-the-beginning-to-the-end.html.

¹²³ The concept was from the start inspired by the building of the old museum (former Museum 25th of May), a longitudinal building allocated for the future permanent display, divided into six large rooms and four smaller spaces positioned between each of the larger rooms. These 10 rooms motivated the concept based on 10 themes through which one could understand the most important processes and phenomena that shaped and influenced Yugoslavia. The 10 themes were imagined in the way that six key general themes would go into bigger rooms, while four stories were placed in the smaller rooms. The exhibition was, however, not placed at the building for which the concept was made, but in another space of the former Museum of the Revolution, in which it was impossible to position the sequences of six main themes and four thematic niches as imagined.

– an avant-garde anti-communist artistic group and its ways of provoking the regime. The topic ‘Economy and Society’ examined processes of industrialization, urbanization and modernization, emigrations of work forces to the West, changes in economic policy and improvements in living standards and zoomed into a thematic niche ‘Bad Debt’ which explains the economic affair of the company *Agrokomerc*. The final section, ‘The End of Yugoslavia’, was housed in a separate room with black instead of scrap paper, evoking the dissolution of Yugoslavia. It did not go into detail on the 1990s wars but featured short documentaries of speeches from nationalist political leaders in Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Slovenia which gave a flavour of the emerging nationalist discourse that fuelled the wars.

The long scientific texts and significant amount of meta-data (photographs, archival documents) printed on scrap paper gave a feeling of entering and opened the book on Yugoslav history. They offered a lot of information on a topic that was never treated in such an encompassing way and one could learn numerous things about Yugoslavia, especially those related to its socio-economic and political aspects. The exhibition required time and careful reading, in which artefacts served as a mere 3D illustration of this open book. The objects presented in the space had very short captions and were not interpreted in a way that directly related or dialogued with the texts. Except for introductory panels to the themes, the texts were not unified in the amount, voice and tone they used.

The exhibition offered a perspective which clearly tried to avoid creating new tensions. It opened up many themes, without having a sharp, clear message and featuring a ‘neutral’ voice, a voice that could not be identified with any of the existing revisionist or Yugonostalgic discourses. As opposed to a clear conclusion, *Yugoslavia: From the Beginning to the End* ended with a powerful room about the 1990s, a room in which the visitor was presented with speeches of the nationalist leaders and facts about the numbers of war victims. The visitor was left with an implicit message ‘we cannot interpret or make sense of this’. This was an excellent way to acknowledge that the wars happened but that there is no consensus from which to draw conclusions, leaving visitors to wonder themselves and recall their memories.

The last room and the dissolution of Yugoslavia influenced the perspective

from which other themes have been dealt with, because each of the themes shed light on problematic aspects of Yugoslavia, ongoing unsolved and problematic relations between Serbs and Croats (and consequently other ethnicities); questionable economic prosperity and welfare; and repressions from opponents of the regime. What therefore appeared as the only red thread within all themes is the message that this country had many problems even before the 1990s and it is no surprise that it no longer exists.

In doing this, the voice of the main exhibition content was a classical authorized curatorial voice, a voice different from both the introductory text and design which suggested the work in progress needs opinions. There were no questions directed towards the visitor throughout the exhibition, no dialogical points, no doubts or empty spaces within the exhibition themes that asked for opinion or contribution, no places where something was visibly unfinished or left unspoken (except the final theme of the dissolution of Yugoslavia) or where something was discussed from different perspectives. Even though it was intended as work in progress, it was a locked piece of work and text – inviting visitor to comment on it, but not to work with it or within it.

As a form, the exhibition did not offer points of interaction and dialogue. In the main, however, the place from where one starts and ends the exhibition, there was a stage for participation, where one could bring his/her object related to Yugoslavia and offer it to the museum. This point of interaction was still parallel instead of integrated within the exhibition and it was more an important add-on than the content-based participation. Therefore, it seemed as if the curator from the MIJ put an extra effort into igniting participation that was not conceived in that way.

7.5 Crafting a story of Yugoslavia: dissonance within ambition for objectivism

From today's perspective, for those who have not seen the full project proposal for the *New Old Museum*, the conference and future pilot exhibition seemed like two separate projects. For the selected few who worked on it, there has been follow-up and a number of steps that connected the conference with the future exhibition. Lack of funds impeded the initial idea of selecting five

‘most active and capable’ young professionals from all ex-Yugoslav countries to work together on furthering the exhibition through a three-month residency at the museum. Furthermore, the idea to run an online platform for continuous discussion on the process of creating this exhibition was never completed. What took place after the conference has been a ‘behind the closed doors’ process, instead of participative as first imagined. The reason for this was limited funds and unease of the director, board and exhibition team to open the process in that way, without any previously secured safe ground.

The plan was that the meetings of the authorship team will be opened, that they would take place at the hall and that they would be announced. I think we did not have capacities for that. Also, we planned that the final preparations of the exhibition would be public, that we would leave the offices and that all the effort would be public. I had already left at that point. That exceeded our capacities.

(Katarina Živanović, former Director, MIJ)¹²⁴

After the conference there was one group meeting that was supposed to create an exhibition concept based on suggestions during the conference by Hrvoje Klasić, a lecturer of history from the University of Zagreb.¹²⁵ The

¹²⁴ Skype interview, 6 May 2015.

¹²⁵ Already during the conference one historian of the younger generation from Croatia, Hrvoje Klasić and his concept stood out and were seen (by the director) as something that could be the basis for the future exhibition. The group who further considered the concept included: Hrvoje Klasić, Assistant Professor at the Department of History, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb; Saša Madacki, Director of the Human Rights Centre of the University of Sarajevo; Predrag J. Marković, research advisor at the Institute of Contemporary History in Belgrade; Marko Popović, Director and co-founder of the Centre for Visual History at the Faculty of Media and Communications in Belgrade; Robert Rückel, Director and founder of the DDR Museum in Berlin; and Katarina Živanović, the then Director of the Museum of Yugoslav History in Belgrade. Selection criteria for this group were neither clear nor communicated to the museum staff and it seemed as if it was a mix of people close to the Director and those who actively offered help.

concept for the future exhibition based on 10 themes has then been given to another group – the exhibition team – who was supposed to be in charge of defining exact themes, writing exhibition texts and selecting artefacts. The members of this exhibition team were suggested by the board of the MIJ and involved Ana Panić, as the only curator from the MIJ, together with four younger historians and one sociologist – all of them researchers and professors with PhDs and all of them from Belgrade, except Klasić.¹²⁶

Not having authors from all around ex-Yugoslavia was bridged by choosing four reviewers, academic historians from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovenia and Serbia to give comments and review the exhibition texts.¹²⁷ No one from Macedonia and Montenegro was involved, with the explanation that the MIJ could not (and still cannot) find experts who are dealing with Yugoslav heritage “in the right way, or in the way that we are dealing with it.”¹²⁸

In contrast to the joint nomination of Stećaks or the *Imagining the Balkans* exhibition, this project was not initiated within the official international context. The team members and reviewers were not selected through official governmental channels as representatives of their own countries, but as independent researchers and professionals. Neither the

¹²⁶ Jovo Bakić, Professor at the Department of Sociology, University of Belgrade; Srdjan Cvetković, research fellow at the Institute of Contemporary History in Belgrade; Ivana Dobrivojević, research fellow at the Institute of Contemporary History in Belgrade, Hrvoje Klasić, Assistant Professor at the Department of History, Faculty of Humanities and Social Scientists, University of Zagreb; Vladimir Petrović, research fellow at the Institute of Contemporary History in Belgrade; and Ana Panić, curator at the Museum of Yugoslav History in Belgrade.

¹²⁷ As reviewers were chosen: Tvrtko Jakovina, Professor at the Department of History, Faculty of Humanities and Social Scientists, University of Zagreb; Husnija Kamberovi, Director of the Institute of History of the University of Sarajevo; Oto Luthar, Director of the Science and Research Institute of the Slovenian Academy of Arts and Science (ZRC SAZU); and Predrag Marković, research advisor at the Institute of Contemporary History in Belgrade.

¹²⁸ This reference to the ‘right way’ could be understood as a way that is theoretically grounded and which does not play with either nostalgia or revisionism.

team members, nor the reviewers were part of the national revisionist stream of historians, which was commented as important for the process by few interviewees. This created a special atmosphere and commitment for the process, since the team felt hand-picked and recommended based on their expertise and this was a chance to participate in a pioneering project, well captured by the following statement:

Everyone was very willing to work on this! All of them understood that this is something...that this is the first time to work in that way, that it is new and that enthusiasm was huge! As even today for the conference New Old Museum, wherever I go, even some people who were students back then ask 'Oh, what happened with that... that was excellent!' Somehow that energy fitted together well, that all people knew this as a new way of working and they were willing to experiment.
(Ana Panić, Curator, MIJ)¹²⁹

Furthermore, as opposed to the *Imagining the Balkans* where museums eliminated endless possibilities by going from the objects to the themes, here the concept, themes and texts had primacy over the possible choice of artefacts, as none of the academic historians and the sociologist who were authors of the exhibition had ever worked in a museum context.¹³⁰ In conceptualizing the exhibition, both the MIJ and the team positioned themselves as opposing two stereotypical discourses of Yugoslav history – a romanticized nostalgic one and an overtly negative anti-Yugoslav nationalistic discourse; they wanted to go beyond these ‘two rowlocks’.

The consensus in the group was quite left-liberal, in a sense that we

¹²⁹ Interview conducted in Belgrade, 9 July 2015.

¹³⁰ All the texts were first written and only then the only curator from the museum and other authors searched for artefacts that corresponded to the text – selecting objects both from collections of the museum and from Yugoslav archive and movie archive, from the National Museum and from private collections – which explains why the exhibition looked like an open book and why artefacts served as mere illustration of the text.

agreed that even though Yugoslav narrative from the 1980s (brotherhood, unity, youth, emancipation, non-alignment) was not great and was broken with the dissolution of Yugoslavia, we all agreed that what came after was 300 times worse than that. And, the whole problem within this discussion is that either you are Yugo-nostalgic or you are aligned with these Croatian, Serbian national narratives. And, it seemed to us that it is time to overcome this because it has its own limitations. But we were conscious that there is a risk to get into these rowlocks. So, we thought what could be a sustainable story that is not going to be Yugo-nostalgic and will not be hypercritical, but which will take into account as many possible mature points, but will not risk to be broken by total polycentrism, not to be like 'what a Slovenian thinks, what a Macedonian thinks...' Because all of us historians are very sensitive to this multiperspectivism. We're like: 'Congrats! It's good for subverting this violent, repressive view of things, but, hey, bro, don't trick me that each point of view is legitimate!'

(Vladimir Petrović, co-author of the exhibition, Researcher, Institute for Contemporary History, Belgrade)¹³¹

This account captures the position and intentions of the team, and sheds light on the binary relationship made between objectivism on one hand and multiperspectivism on the other. The team tried not to enter the rowlock of either celebrating the Yugoslav master narrative or relying on ethno-nationalist narratives, but in doing this thought that the objective account of what actually happened could be found in between or even beyond the two. This kind of more 'reasonable' historic accounts was perceived as a product of maturity in overcoming two unwanted directions and in offering a 'sustainable story' – a story suitable for a museum display that can *musealize* the history of Yugoslavia.

Furthermore, the team thought in terms of binary relationships between anti-Yugoslovenism and pro-Yugoslovenism, without taking into account that apart from these contradicting collective memories, there is a diversity of

¹³¹ Skype interview, 30 September 2015.

competing personal memories that many citizens hold, who experienced first-hand this country. The position of (neo)positivism in dealing with the history of Yugoslavia created tensions even in interviewees who felt they had to defend or explain their idea of a safe acceptable ground based on facts:

We were all neo-positivist – some neo, and some even not neo, but just positivist oriented. The artefact has to be authentic, not objective but authentic - what we say it is. Hahahha... Objectivity in a sense that... We had a problem in that the same event is interpreted in different ways in Serbia, Bosnia and Croatia... Now, this objectivity would mean finding something which is acceptable to everyone and which is not a product of compromise. Something that at least we as authors can defend: where we got this from is based in facts. That was an attempt... To go out of a swamp of multiperspectivism, but neither to go into 'now I will tell you how it was.' But we did not go into philosophy, and questions of epistemology.

(Vladimir Petrović, co-author of the exhibition, Researcher, Institute for Contemporary History, Belgrade)¹³²

The ambition to achieve an objective overview on Yugoslavia was obviously challenged by diverging interpretations of the same facts, but for the team it was important to carry out an exercise grounded in historic method and base their narrative on undisputed facts. This was explained in interviews as 'not taking sides', 'moving within proven things', 'relying on grounded research methods' or 'taking a middle ground'. This idea influenced deeply the approach and dynamics of the exhibition team, since everyone needed to agree with what was selected and written – a dynamic different from what any of the individual academics were used to when writing their own texts.

The story of creating a reliable version of Yugoslav history started with the unanimous exclusion of the idea of a detailed discussion on topics that are highly contested. The conceptual choice to focus on some phenomena and some themes allowed the team to simply skip or neutralize WWII or details of

¹³² Skype interview, 30 September 2015.

the dissolution and wars in Yugoslavia and unanimously treat them as ‘discontinuities’ of Yugoslavia within some of the broader themes. When it comes to these topics, they knew that by going into detail on either WWII or the wars of the 1990s they would risk causing new tensions:

Who would tell you that you overemphasized Vidovdan Constitution?¹³³ No one would tell you that! But if you overemphasized the role of Milošević in the dissolution of Yugoslavia, each hornless cow, and international and local reviewer would tell you something! And then you have to fight 100 battles, for whose health? Or just that... just an issue of genocide and war, the question of genocide during the 1990s would totally ban a project – it wouldn’t see the light of day. Because we had a reviewer from Bosnia and for him that is a genocide, but for a reviewer from Serbia that might not be a genocide. And what? Bye, bye, nineties!

(Vladimir Petrović, co-author of the exhibition, Researcher, Institute for Contemporary History, Belgrade)¹³⁴

As this account reflects, the treatment of the older historical events which are more or less agreed upon within historiography carried much lower weight and risk than an attempt to give meaning and label to a recent event which even though it is a part of history, is still perceived as an open political issue. After deciding not to create tensions with the 1990s and agreeing on the themes after five or six meetings, each author was assigned to write on a topic or phenomenon that he/she had the most expertise in. Then the text would be sent to everyone to read and then the team would sit together in meetings, make changes and discuss details until they reached a consensus – “sitting altogether in room 31, in a room for meeting, sometimes for the whole day... and sitting above one sentence for two hours.” These final texts would be sent to reviewers for comments and then again redone in order to encompass reviewers’ suggestions.

¹³³ The Vidovdan Constitution was the first constitution of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, approved by the Constitutional Assembly on 28 June 1921.

¹³⁴ Skype interview, 30 September 2015.

Even though not selected officially as representatives of different countries, the author from Croatia and the reviewers took the role of state ambassadors in the sense that they would look for formulations that were not correct or events that were missing, in an eagerness to cooperate, change their texts, or add. This exercise of reviewing using the perspective of professionals from other ex-Yugoslav republics shed a light on how a selection of events with which to exemplify one's idea and their interpretation was influenced by the researchers' school of historiography.

We tried to find some modus, consensus, because what is-is, there is still some disagreements about certain topics. We tried on these meetings to reach an agreement in some way, to make our points of view closer.

(Hrvoje Klasić, co-author of the exhibition Assistant Professor, University of Zagreb)¹³⁵

We wanted to present something over which in historiography there is a consensus even internationally, around information that for us are almost boring and banal. But then it turned out that this is not the case.

(Vladimir Petrović, co-author of the exhibition, Researcher, Institute for Contemporary History, Belgrade)¹³⁶

The attempt to present some topics to which historiographers agree at an international level, went hand in hand with the attempt to present selected points in history of Yugoslavia without sending any clear message about it, without valorising or explaining.

Vladimir Petrović (VP): *We restrained from sending any message about Yugoslavia, except to remind that it existed. Because we did not want to go into this rosy Yugonostalgic narrative and proclamations. If someone would ask us to summarize the message in one sentence I'm not sure we would be able to do*

¹³⁵ Interview conducted in Zagreb, 20 October 2014.

¹³⁶ Skype interview, 30 September 2015.

that... Except that there was a country called Yugoslavia which had its many faces and forms...

Author: But, the accent on each text was on problems... for example 'the problem of the people of Yugoslavia was multiculturalism'...and I see from the interviews that there was no conscious idea to do this, but there is an interpretation of a country from today's perspective – a perspective in which that country exists no longer and the exhibition indirectly answers the question why that country no longer exists...

VP: Ah... you know what... So many things could be attributed to the historical method as a problem from which that exhibition was based. Historical method try so much to explain why something happened that it ignores all the alternatives. So Yugoslavia falls apart and now you focus so much on explaining why that had to happened – not because you don't love that country, but because it is in the nature of your job to search for explanation why it fell apart – and then you see these different levels, structural problems, economy, people, ethnic problems...¹³⁷

In this short conversation, as well as throughout other interviews, it became obvious that, even though unintended, it was impossible not to observe and read the past from the perspective of the present. What appeared to the authors to be an objective, neutral presentation of Yugoslavia in reality was effected by the search for facts which asked for a narrative that would make sense of them, a narrative that always sheds light on the past from the present's perspective. Another problem of the historic method was that not only existing historiographies, collective and individual memories had different interpretations of the events and figures within Yugoslav history, but authors themselves were faced with the issue of contested opinions among the group. This was not only connected to actively sensitive and controversial topics within Yugoslav history, but some of the very general topics were the object of different value perspectives and different professional approaches.

¹³⁷ Skype interview, 30 September 2015.

I think that idea was to try to find a middle ground. This dissonant heritage was visible also from within, not only on an inter-national level. We had much different opinions about certain events from the past which have nothing to do with Serbo-Croat or Serbo-Albanian relations, but with which things are particularly interesting and specific or we are exaggerating them. For example, one colleague was in the team who searched the grave of Draža Mihailović and he was dealing with repression. For him repression was already taking place during the war, at the end of the war, and according to him Chetnics or 'Yugoslav army in homeland' were an anti-fascist movement. Something the others, the majority of them, disagreed with. Or some modernization tendencies of socialist Yugoslavia – for some it was a success that should be respected and valorised, while some others took this with relativism, in a sense of freedom of expression, speech, political unions... Differences were visible.

(Hrvoje Klasić, co-author of the exhibition, Assistant Professor, University of Zagreb)¹³⁸

What this account shows is that dissonance came not solely from the matter of interpretation, but was closely related to selection and valorisation acts as interwoven with the creation of meaning and writing of history. The authors interviewed all mentioned the effort towards objectivity, even though at the same time when asked to discuss objectivity a bit deeper, there was an awareness about the selectivity and interpretation as the acts embedded in historical academic research:

You have to give your best that what you say is based on something, and then you have a list of what it can be based on, which gets you back to historical sources and how you position the information and how you find a good context, a reasonable context, that was important for us. Because all historians know, context is vague, everyone can find some context, but how to find acceptable, reasonable context for many people?

(Vladimir Petrović, co-author of the exhibition, Researcher, Institute for Contemporary History, Belgrade)¹³⁹

¹³⁸ Interview conducted in Zagreb, 20 October 2014.

¹³⁹ Skype interview, 30 September 2015.

First of all, there is a selection of documents. Actually, let's start from the fact that not all the documents are accurate, but let's say that out of 100 documents, 90 prove your theory and 10 don't – you ignore these 10. As Hegel would say, 'if the facts don't support the thesis, the worse for the facts'! Therefore, this can be very true with historians. But events from '45, and from '90, the past was supposed to explain the present and that is why the textbooks from the 1990s in both Serbia and Croatia put effort to show the conflicts between Serbs and Croats throughout the past, in order to transmit the message that what is going on today is not a coincidence. And in order to prove that, you ignore all forms of cooperation, because these would create confusion. People then say that that is statistically correct, but it is statistically – if you take as a ground zero this and not that year, if you take these and not those parameters, you will always get different results. That's the same with history. Have Chetniks cooperated with Germans because they were fascists or because they loved Germans or because they hated Partisans, or because they knew that Germans would kill 100 Serbs for one German soldier and then did not want to fight against them – this is the issue of interpretation.

(Hrvoje Klasić, co-author of the exhibition, Assistant Professor, University of Zagreb)¹⁴⁰

It appeared that despite awareness of the problems of selection and interpretation, it was not an option to make the difference between facts and interpretation visible to the audiences. Even for the themes on which they could not reach agreement, they felt that the more appropriate solution was to leave the issue out or find some middle solution, rather than to make visible that one author thinks this way, and another author that way. It was as if within a museum context, one had the responsibility to give one consensual story, a framework, as a ground zero for further discussion:

I'm not sure how much confusion that would bring to a museum environment. So, I'm not a curator, a museologist, and I'm not sure if the

¹⁴⁰ Interview conducted in Zagreb, 20 October 2014.

museum is a good place for a discussion about different narratives. I think it would be great to make such an exhibition – different historical narratives – but on the exhibition 'Yugoslavia: From Beginning to the End', I think that within it, if we made a permanent display, that would enable a series of smaller exhibitions in which a certain period could be contextualized.

(Hrvoje Klasić, co-author of the exhibition, Assistant Professor, University of Zagreb)¹⁴¹

What is emerging here is a more traditional idea of the museum as an institution which sets value standards, 'authorizes' a specific view on history, without exposing the process of arriving at these values. The team agreed that the museum should offer a framework, some sort of firm ground. No one had the idea that this exhibition would be the full stop and would lock the discourse in a way that does not ignite further comments and dialogue. But neither did they talk about displaying *multi-vocality* or imagined that this could be done only after the framework has been created.¹⁴²

¹³⁸ Interview conducted in Zagreb, 20 October 2014.

¹⁴² One suggestion was to feature diverse stereotyped actors and voices which exist within Yugoslav discourse, through an audio-guide: "What was needed is that people understand the topic in all its complexity, but in one way which is clearer, and which opens the possibility for different readings – so it does not offer the truth, but opens possibilities. And so we spoke with Robert [Robert Rückel, Director of the DDR Museum] and came up with the idea which I adore even today – an audio-guide which has different channels. It makes possible to interpret material from a million perspectives. And then when we started to interpret the material from diverse perspectives we came to 30. So, it is how a Serbian nationalist interprets it, how Croatian patriot, how Slovenian Eurosceptic, how Macedonian liberalist, etc... The point was to provide insight to the fact that a document is one thing, memory other, something third, this is what we wanted to undress! I think that audio-guide was a solution because it would allow displaying the material; showing what has taken place factually; and then show what the processes was behind these facts" (Katarina Živanović, former Director of MIJ; Skype interview, 6 May 2015). This embraces all the aspects of what inclusive heritage discourse could look like when translated into the museum context – undressing the creation of meaning and exposing a difference between facts and

The idea of *multi-vocality* embedded within the exhibition was the place of the biggest scepticism and risk from the point of view of the authors. The whole process was set in a way that academics external to the museum were authors of the texts, while the only curator from the museum in the whole group was a mere coordinator and someone in charge of searching for artefacts that could illustrate the texts already written. Not only the group of authors was against postmodern *multi-vocality* in which everyone has a right to his/her opinion, but through the interviews it was clear that they did not have a reference point on how a multi-vocal approach could and would look like within the museum environment, underlining that they are not curators or *museologists*.

They all positioned themselves as consumers of museum content and this was the first time that they participated in the process ‘from the other side’, so they were clearly bound by their own traditional experience as passive museum visitors. From that perspective, the concern of ‘creating confusion in a museum environment’ can be understood as risking a change in the rule of the game and expectations of museum and audiences. Furthermore, there was a fear that the exposure of different interpretations as equal, without previous filter, would run the risk of legitimizing some of the revisionist valorisations of historical facts. This returns to the issue of artificial participation, staged in the exhibition space – where the MIJ tried to add participative elements without incorporating and engaging them in the content itself – an attempt by the museum to compensate for the locked historic narrative offered by the exhibition.

I'm not sure that I'm for this kind of democracy there... For instance, the fact that some people in Croatia think that Ustaša movement was a movement for Croatia and that it wasn't that much a genocide, etc. I'm not sure that the museum should describe this and give space to historical

interpretations in a way that provokes thinking and discussion. This idea, however, was no longer the focus after the exhibition team was formed – the selected members of the team did not even hear about it and there were no serious discussion on how to implement it or how to make an exhibition that would present material in a way that opens the possibilities for having audio-guides.

revisionism. Some will say that this is not revisionism but, will we show that without any filter to a viewer who for instance does not know a thing about it? Will we let him have two alternatives?

(Hrvoje Klasić, co-author of the exhibition, Assistant Professor, University of Zagreb)¹⁴³

This doubt stands at the core of acting in relation to heritage dissonance and captures the ideological potency of museums as machines for making meaning out of the past and generating values in society. Should this potency be used by the selected few communicating the emancipatory messages and keeping up the ‘civilizing ritual’ that goes on within this space? Who guarantees that these selected few are communicating the messages that are for the good of many? Or should radical democracy within the museum be allowed to include the space for revisionist groups whom we think will poison the audiences with fascist or other ‘unwanted’ ideas? And, what is the role of the audience in this? Are they attributed with the capability to think and make their own choices? Or is it better to keep control of the discourse in a way that will offer them a stable image of the world around them?

The strength of the exhibition *Yugoslavia: From Beginning to the End* is that some of the possible answers to these questions were voiced by the audience and different stakeholders, who used their five minutes on the stage to speak.

7.6 On the convict’s chair: ‘What have you done to my country?’

A truly outstanding aspect of the exhibition was that the authors and the MIJ staff wanted to hear opinions on the pilot exhibition in order to deepen further the work. The exhibition was put on the convict’s chair, in an attempt to seek feedback through extensive evaluation, discussions, comments and suggestions from different groups – a practice that was not tested by the MIJ

¹⁴³ Interview conducted in Zagreb, 20 October 2014.

before.¹⁴⁴ During three months of the exhibition, there was an unprecedented interest, with more than 12,500 visitors across generations attending. Despite running from December to March, during bad winter weather and holidays, the guided tours on Saturdays were crowded with people, sometimes up to 300 people for one tour.

The feedback from both the audience and experts was active and diverse. Once the exhibition was completed and put under the extensive scrutiny of thousands of people, it was easier to comment on. In this sea of comments, the issues of objectivity and neutrality as perceived by the audience in representing ex-Yugoslav republics and the issue of epistemological privilege of personal memory and history are most interesting.

Despite all the challenges of striving towards an objective account on Yugoslav history and despite the fact that one can find this concept ontologically problematic, it was exactly objectiveness, which received highest score in the exhibition questionnaires:¹⁴⁵ more than 85% of foreigners

¹⁴⁴ The MIJ prepared questionnaires and kept an impressions book with comments from general visitors; and it conducted five focus groups with journalists, tourist guides, school teachers, postgraduates of museology and museum staff; and analysed press clippings. Furthermore, it created spaces for encounters and live interaction: each Saturday there was a tour given by one of the authors which usually ended in discussions; each Thursday there were movie screenings with discussions with authors; and on Fridays debates on the themes and approaches related to interpretation, Yugoslav history and memory.

¹⁴⁵ The questionnaire had eight questions which were conceived after the exhibition was made and were less related to the indicators important to the MIJ and more to do with equal representation of different nationalities, proper representation of specific themes (economy, society, sport, culture) and most important historical events, informative character of the exhibition and objectiveness. The questions were: Have you learned something new that you did not know before? Are themes well-conceived and do they represent well the most important aspects of Yugoslav history? Are most important historical events presented? Are all the ethnic communities equally represented? Is social and economic life presented in a proper way? Are culture and arts presented in a proper way? Are sports and entertainment presented in a proper way? And; Do you think that exhibition is objective to the highest possible extent?

and 80% of people from ex-Yugoslavia agreed that the exhibition was highly objective; only 3.3% said that it was not objective. This implies that there is something which people identify and recognize as objective and that this exhibition succeeded in being recognized as such. In the visitors' comments the terms often used were 'realistic', 'objective', 'focused on facts and events', 'neutral', signifying that the team has created a historic narrative which most people found appropriate.¹⁴⁶

In this sense, the evaluation showed that the MIJ reached the goal of offering a more neutral, sound and grounded historical interpretation of Yugoslav history in the eyes of most visitors. We could challenge this and attribute it to established relations, expectations and reputation of museums in general as a place of objective account on history, but that would require another research. Furthermore, all the reactions from audiences show that in this particular case people who came to visit the exhibition have been subverting and challenging exactly this reputation and authority of the MIJ as the only truth.

As opposed to high scores for objectivity, the lowest score was given to equal representation of all ex-Yugoslav nationalities. Both the audience and reviewers noticed an almost exclusive focus on relations between Serbs and Croats in terms of narrative and selection of events, with evident lack of perspectives from Macedonians, Bosniaks, Montenegrins and Slovenians, as well as Albanians. This narrative created a feeling that Yugoslavia was all about good or bad relations among the two most numerous nationalities – Serbs and Croats – which, even if unintended was the end result of the fact that the authors came from Serbia and Croatia solely. These comments showed that representation of authors from all ex-Yugoslav republics is the only way to create a story which gives space to “all sides,” as it was first

¹⁴⁶ In all focus groups and many comments in questionnaires it was argued that the exhibition is hard to comprehend and visit in one session, pointing out the lack of summarized messages that would be easier to follow. Students of museology critiqued the exhibition for opening too many topics and for ignoring artefacts within a story, as well as the underuse of personal memory testimonies giving a fact that there are groups and people who actively lived Yugoslav history.

imagined in the project outline.

Therefore, the failure to include all ex-republics in the creation of the exhibition, due to organizational and financial restraints, was the biggest failure in relation to the goals which the project *New Old Museum* set at the beginning. On the other hand, it might be that an exhibition team conceived of professionals representing their own country, would be much less open to tackle some of the issues related to Yugoslav history and would leave even more things unspoken, as was the case with the *Imagining the Balkans* exhibition.

The unspoken contested issues attracted the attention of both visitors and experts, who complained about the selection or exclusion of certain events, phenomena and personalities, or the space and depth dedicated to themes such as WWII. The consensual approach of the authors was under the critique of experts (local and regional historians, culturologists, sociologists, museologists); a harsh critique on the approach taken by authors came from a focus group of journalists who noticed that “authors tried to skip all contested issues with consensus, skipping a large number of political events which have not been represented, underlining that even though one cannot reach a consensus around these issues, different views could have been offered and signed by each author.”¹⁴⁷

Moreover, the lack of authors’ voices and transparency of positions was critiqued not only in relation to problematic topics but in relation to Yugoslavia in general, making an interesting relation between the identity of the author as a historian and as a former citizen of Yugoslavia:

It did not have any message... I will now use the word that might not be the most appropriate. To me it was messy. Not the way it looks, but because I had a feeling that each of these authors has given their thinking about Yugoslavia. And they did not know so well whether they felt great in that Yugoslavia, and they had a great childhood, and ‘it would be great to show that childhood’, or ‘it’s not cool that I now say

¹⁴⁷ Extract from the report from the focus groups done by curator Tatomir Toroman for the purpose of exhibition evaluation, March-April 2013.

that this country was a good country... that I am somehow nostalgic.'
And this ambiguity of theirs left this messy impression.

(Veselinka Kastratović Ristić, Head of the Department for Collections and Museum Advisor, MIJ)¹⁴⁸

It is fascinating that even the older generation of historian-curators criticized the lack of personal voices of each author and the lack of personal relations and value position towards the country in which they lived. As if Yugoslavia cannot escape being a question of personal experience rather than the object of detached historical method, and as if the expectation of finding out more about Yugoslavia cannot be separated from the expectation of finding out how a particular author felt about living in Yugoslavia. This detachment, focus on rationalization and the problems of Yugoslavia, is often heard in the critiques of both experts and audience: the exhibition 'took away the soul from their country' in that it did not talk about nice practices of everyday life, it did not evoke emotions and it undermined the role of culture, sports and arts in Yugoslavia. As if the attempt to appear neutral, objective and realistic was achieved at the cost of rationalizing all good things people remember about Yugoslavia.

The issue of personal memory as opposed to more scientific ways of knowing was the most obvious issue which appeared during the exhibition. Many of those who came on guided tours had something to add and pointed out what was excluded, or gave their objections to the ways in which certain themes were interpreted. Without even expecting it, the authors who were giving a tour found themselves in a position where they had to argue about certain events with the visitors, enter into a discussion or had to justify and explain certain points. Especially older visitors had their own understanding about how Yugoslavia was, almost taking the role of a teacher in relation to the authors – 'No, it wasn't that way! I will tell you how it was!' – exclaimed a teacher whose personal memory was the point from which authority was claimed. The authors, many of whom teach at universities, suddenly did not have the same authority as in the classroom, because the authority here had

¹⁴⁸ Feedback from a focus group with curators from MIJ, Belgrade, 21 August 2015.

a blurry relationship between the authority of personal memory and the authority of scientific facts.

And I didn't expect confrontations of that kind... I had a situation when I talked about VolksDeutchers and a woman attacked me: 'Do you know what Germans did to us?' and I'm saying, 'Ok Madam, but why are you yelling at me? I didn't kill them, I'm just noticing that this is what happened, when, where and I can tell a bit of why.' In museum there is dispersed authority, in the sense that I cannot say 'Get out of my classroom! Or go and read something!' I cannot say to her: 'I'm sorry Madam, we'll have to stop this conversation until you read this and that book and then we can talk again.

(Vladimir Petrović, co-author of the exhibition, Researcher, Institute for Contemporary History, Belgrade)¹⁴⁹

What emerged here is the issue of epistemological privilege: the privilege of owning possible ways of knowing the past, that is often exclusively attributed to historic disciplines and consequently to museums. Suddenly, in the context of *musealization* phenomena that still have first-hand witnesses, the privilege of knowing was not reserved to historians or the museum but, was self-attributed to those witnesses who act as inheritors of certain past and heritage. When put in the context of personal memories, the area of in-between, anti- and pro-Yugoslav discourse has endless versions of discourses about Yugoslavia which mutually compete. Selective memories not only highlight and forget different segments of heritage, but attribute different symbolic positions and meaning to the same people, events and places within their respective national, intra-national and personal *imaginaria*, a problem well articulated in this extract from the project report written by MIJ:

We understood that the number of histories of Yugoslavia equalled the number of people who lived in the country and that the personal

¹⁴⁹ Skype interview, 30 September 2015.

memories of these millions of witnesses would never and could never be identical, either to one another, or to what would be shown in the museum (whatever is displayed, there will always be something missing, there will be too much of something else, or that which is exhibited will not correspond to someone's personal memories, because history and memories are not synonymous). The dissonance of memories is evident, which is why polyvocality is the only right direction, along with establishing a dialogue and presenting different interpretations of the past. It is clear that personal memories, only when incorporated into a defined historical framework, based on relevant scientific research, can jointly paint a picture of Yugoslavia.

(Final project report by MIJ to the Balkan Trust for Democracy, 2013, MIJ archive)

This reflection outlines the impossibility of displaying a singular *sedimented* discourse about Yugoslavia, even if this discourse would be perceived as one that is based on facts and 'objective' scientific method. This was an exhibition on history that is so recent that many citizens do not perceive it as history, but as their life known from a first-hand experience. Due to this, even if unintended, visitors subverted the traditional museum relation as the one that knows and of the audience as a passive consumer. They subverted it by taking an active role in adding, commenting, yelling, complaining and longing: showing on the spot that one cannot escape polyvocality when treating this topic.

The evaluation report also underlined that it would be impossible to capture Yugoslavia solely through memories, without having a defined historical framework as a base for discussion. The relation of authority between the two, however, remains unclear and makes it hard to establish a stable relation between museum, audience, knowledge and object of *musealization*. It definitely asks for a change in the traditional master-pupil relationship, but leaves open the role of the museum in this – torn between the responsibility to educate and the impossibility of offering the truth. Plus, the restraint from letting some revisionist fascist perspectives find their place within the museum.

If we did an exhibition about a medieval state everyone would come and admire 'Ah, what a nice fresco, what a nice state!' But when it comes to Yugoslavia, it is different because there are so many views... and now, what is the point of the museum there? We questioned that for the first time... What is your role towards audience? On one hand you have to meet their needs, but on the other you have to educate them a little bit, on the third you should not force them with one view, and on the forth you cannot allow that everyone thinks whatever one wants and talks in legitimate way...

(Vladimir Petrović, co-author of the exhibition, Researcher, Institute for Contemporary History, Belgrade)¹⁵⁰

These questions are significant because they appeared as a result of working on this particular display, and they are crucial for the way each author perceived the MIJ and how the museum perceived itself.

7.7 Museum as Scheherazade: between a rock and a hard place

Despite numerous critiques in terms of what could have been done differently, in the context of both the politics and museum practices in Serbia and the wider region, the *New Old Museum* was an outstanding effort: an effort that tried to position the museum as an active force in society and as a courageous place for encounters of those interested in the history which still haunts the former Yugoslav space. What took place within the project was obviously less transparent, less international and less participative than promised. However, those who never saw the project concept would have perceived both the conference *New Old Museum* and the openness of MIJ to feedback on the exhibition as outstandingly open, forward-looking and engaging. With all its ups and downs, good sides and flaws, this is an unusually courageous project which shows that despite the avant-garde idea,

¹⁵⁰ Skype interview, 30 September 2015.

what happened from the project conception until the final report is influenced by so many aspects. It was a paradigmatic attempt to transform a traditional museum and this raises numerous paradigmatic questions related to its role, responsibilities and boundaries.

The question with which the MIJ was left after the whole process is: are these efforts suitable for a national institution?

It is possible that this society does not have democratic and professional capacity and that this exhibition is possible only outside an institution and that this example showed that MIJ was supposed to build its capacities over 20 years. But to me it seemed that it wouldn't be bad to try. Because objectively, one could not achieve more than this. Because there are interpersonal relations, discontinuity when directors change, and this is all sad.

(Katarina Živanović, former Director, MIJ)¹⁵¹

As opposed to the *Imagining the Balkans* exhibition, the *New Old Museum*, even if it was an experiment, had a more lasting effect. Because the project came from new museum leadership and not from the outside, it was a paradigmatic example of a wider four-year long attempt to challenge the boundaries and role of a torn, neglected and traditional institution. The *New Old Museum* conference and temporary exhibitions, as well as the cooperative programmes positioned the MIJ as a welcoming and open institution ready to cooperate, initiate discussions and create new spaces for encounters with both the general and expert public.¹⁵² The effort of working on a permanent

¹⁵¹ Skype interview, 6 May 2015.

¹⁵² Some of the collaborations that were a spin-off from the *New Old Museum* project include: a collaboration with the Faculty of History and Journalism from Zagreb – regular visits to the museum as a part of the curricula; Subversive Film Festival, Zagreb; Art project 88 roses for Tito (Bosnia); Disobedience as a solid mass – (collective of artists and curators OuUnPo Macedonia, The Netherlands, Russia); initiative for the network for protection of the cultural heritage of Socialism (Slovenia); Spaceship Yugoslavia; NGBK artists' association, Germany; PK Fiskulturnik (UK, Slovenia, Croatia); common exhibition with Museum of Arts

display, even though neglected today, should be analysed as a maximum given the circumstances, a maximum which was not just a temporary excess but an important evolutionary phase of the museum. These processes changed the culture within the MIJ and the *New Old Museum* was an important evolution process within the museum, a process after which it will be impossible to return the institution back to prior 2008 period with just representational exhibitions and ignorance of Yugoslavia as a subject.

In evaluating the project, one has to bear in mind that experiment and assignment which the authors were given somehow carried a lot more weight than any other exhibition showed before or after in MIJ. This weight came from aspirations to create a historical exhibition based on historic method with a clear and pompous historic title, at the moment when there was no single exhibition before this that dealt with Yugoslav history as a whole. Even more importantly, the very fact that the exhibition was created as a step towards a permanent display carried a lot more weight than a temporary exhibition, while the fact that it was prepared within an institution and not an NGO added some official character.

In this whole context, the idea to pilot this exhibition as ‘just a first step’ was excellent, allowing the museum to use this as an explanation, excuse or to distance itself from criticism related to the exhibition both in 2012 and during interviews. But, as a consequence, questions remained in the air. What is the point and role of the museum in all of this? Can Yugoslavia be musealized through a permanent display? Will a permanent display mean the end of the museum’s existence?

Three years after the pilot exhibition and extensive evaluation, there are still echoes of *Yugoslavia: From the Beginning to the End*. The catalogue of the exhibition has faced its 3rd edition in less than three years, in a museum in which the 1st editions of all other catalogues are usually never sold out. Comments about the MIJ on TripAdvisor were mostly positive during this

and Crafts Zagreb; presentation *Museum of Yugoslavia: how to archive non-existing state* on 34th Meeting of the European Coordination Committee on Human Rights Documentation, organization of public panel discussion with Documenta – Centre for Dealing with the Past from Zagreb.

exhibition. The MIJ received the Mihailo Valtrović Award, a national award for the best exhibition project in 2013, while Panić as curator, has been called numerous times to give presentations and lectures. Finally, employees who worked directly with the audience consider this to be the best exhibition shown in the museum because it answered many questions which visitors have about Yugoslavia and/or expect to learn:

We had a meeting with employees who sell tickets and souvenirs and when we asked them what was the best exhibition they all said 'Yugoslavia: From the Beginning to the End', because they did not have to give additional information to the visitors. And when we asked which information, they came up with a list of difficult questions, starting with the fact that few times per day they get a question 'Why did Yugoslavia fall apart?' People expect these answers from the salesmen...¹⁵³

Despite the obvious need for visitors to learn more about Yugoslavia's history, the perception of the *New Old Museum* exhibition project three years later could be placed somewhere between ambivalence, lack of courage and institutional amnesia which all find their place within what I will explain later in this chapter as 'the strategy of Scheherazade'. Instead of extending the pilot exhibition to a permanent display, a focus group with employees of the MIJ conducted for the purpose of this research indicated that it was the first time that *Yugoslavia: From the Beginning to the End* was openly discussed after spring 2013, making its effects the exact opposite from what was imagined:

That exhibition was supposed to have potential which was to be capitalized through persistence on that path, not through the conclusion that it is good or bad, but through persistence and discussions after it and through creation of the process which allows that the former process gets capitalized, instead of buried.

(Katarina Živanović, former Director, MIJ)¹⁵⁴

¹⁵³ Feedback from a focus group with curators from MIJ, Belgrade, 21 August 2015.

¹⁵⁴ Skype interview, 6 May 2015.

What buried the process is a mix of circumstances: the lack of ownership felt by other curators and the appointment of a new director, mixed with harsh criticism heard during the evaluation of the exhibition and the doubt about whether the MIJ should have a permanent display at all and what that display should look like. The interviews and focus group showed that the most problematic point of the *New Old Museum* exhibition, according to employees, was the way that the concept of broad participation, openness and dialogue with diverse external stakeholders was used further. The reason given for this was that the same was not integrated and communicated internally, and was not connected with the participation and involvement of other curators. Furthermore, the participants of the conference were never informed about the future steps and decisions related to the project, while employees could not see how the exhibition related to the conference. This working process caused a lack of ownership of the exhibition among museum staff and caused hostilities towards both the exhibition and Panić as the only curator involved.

Živanović explains what happened as a ‘the clash of worlds’, a clash of NGO sector thinking from which she came and a passive institution that the museum was. In the context of a divided collective, lack of funds and not many visitors, the museum needed a sort of crisis manager to establish some sort of system and to position the museum as a relevant actor. In this, she faced resistance from many older curators so, instead of dedicating extensive effort and time to involve them, she worked in an almost partisan way, only working with those she could rely on. She then employed younger curators and substituted capacities with external partnerships, cooperation and outsourcing. As a consequence, the developments which were visible externally were not embraced deeply in the internal structure and attitude of all employees, leaving a lot of space for complaints.

The appointment of a new director, Neda Knežević, after the election of a new government and Minister of Culture, and just before the opening of the exhibition in 2012, brought further revision. With no clear transition from one director to another, there was an underestimation of some processes started in 2008. The new director, overwhelmed by the diversity of tasks within the museum, did not treat the continuation of the work on *Yugoslavia: From the Beginning to the End* as a priority. Even more so, the obvious lack of

involvement and dissatisfaction of other curators, some of the criticism from the audience and her own judgement that this exhibition was not 'proper' for an institutional context, was good enough reason to put a question mark on the whole process of the *New Old Museum* project. After the exhibition was packed it was never discussed openly again.

In order to compensate for the previous lack of involvement of the whole collective, the new director started working in a way that included all employees, with a managerial style that seemed much more caring towards the whole team and much more dedicated towards building their capacities. However, she had a less clear role and value perspective for the museum towards audiences. The revised strategy, initiated by the new director with the participation of all employees, has been based on similar paraphrased principles of the previous strategy – participation, critical approach, inclusion and regional cooperation.

The processes started in 2008 brought extensive partnerships to be built upon and the MIJ is positioned as the most desirable partner for 20th-century history, and as such, the most visited and most open museum in Serbia. Since 2012, the museum has additionally invested in improving its programmes: guided tours became a must, thematic debates are taking place during each temporary exhibition, and educational programmes for children and teenagers started taking place. Furthermore, as a response to people asking for more information about everyday life in Yugoslavia, Panić has curated an exhibition called *They Never had it Better*, which was a success. A high quality monthly programme *Conversations about Yugoslavia* has also been started and moderated by museum curators, inviting diverse actors on thematic conversations about phenomena related to Yugoslavia.

What happened, however, with the attempt to create a permanent display could be interpreted as the start of a brand new process, rather than the continuation and learning from the *New Old Museum*. Parallel to the revision of the strategy, new ideas for a permanent display were sought from each of the curators, but with no success in terms of results. Three years after the pilot exhibition, since March 2015 there have been regular weekly meetings of curators organized to discuss the issue of the new permanent display scheduled for 2017. These meetings created space for the staff to discuss and

brainstorm regularly. During this process no one ever went back to the content or the extensive evaluation of the pilot exhibition and no one ever invited the authors for consultations, reflections or learning from their experience, but the models of working with a wide range of different stakeholders have had a long-lasting impact on the mind-set of the museum staff:

It is an issue of political will of whether the museum wants to accept the results of that project or not. But that exhibition had such an echo. Now when we are talking about this permanent display which is being done from a scratch again, we are again starting with the same kind of thinking – and we recognize that there has to be some conference, that we will invite people to talk about it, that we will open collections to artists and experts... so the modus operandi has been accepted, even if the results have been negated.

(Curator, MIJ)¹⁵⁵

When we were writing the mission and vision of the museum last year and wrote the term ‘open museum’ I had in mind exactly that moment in the New Old Museum conference. For me that was the symbol of an open museum, that kind of energy that everyone is welcome, that everyone has the right to express her attitude, and that everyone is eager to dialogue! And now when we talk about future conferences, we agree that this was an excellent conference, but... but that we are not ready anymore to make it so opened, so big, so broadly framed...

(Programme Manager, MIJ)¹⁵⁶

There is still no agreement about the future concept, since ideas on how a permanent display could be done have changed numerous times, without a final conclusion. The MIJ is torn between the desire of the general audience for a ‘relaxed’ history of Yugoslavia and everyday life interpretation of the country, and the responsibility to take a more critical approach to discussing

¹⁵⁵ Feedback from a focus group with curators from MIJ, Belgrade, 21 August 2015.

¹⁵⁶ Feedback from a focus group with curators from MIJ, Belgrade, 21 August 2015.

Yugoslav history. Added to this dilemma is the imagined perception of what the Ministry of Culture and Information of Serbia would want and find suitable as a permanent display. Some of the new ideas base the exhibition only on museum collections, some aim at calling artists to interpret collections, but what seems to be in the air is a less ambitious role:

Now it is much more oriented towards our collections, what we have... And we can often here in the meetings 'We should make it a bit more relaxing, we're just a museum after all.' So the role of museum is diminished. We were more ambitious back then, because Katarina [Živanović] believed that we should be the ones initiating this first. We will not be the one who will write it but we will initiate the writing about Yugoslavia for people who want to talk about it.

(Curator, MIJ)¹⁵⁷

Apart from doubt of how to create a permanent display, some curators and the director question whether a serious permanent display is either needed or possible and whether the MIJ is ready for a permanent display. Others, however, think that a permanent display will help them to have time for discussions and questions around it, as they will not be under a constant pressure to create new programmes and new temporary exhibitions. Overall there is no consensus within the museum on the possibility, need, role and methods for a permanent display, but neither on its active regional and social role.

This whole discussion seems to be packed with the impossibility of the MIJ to position itself within a clear value perspective towards its environment because the desire for a critical approach has been mixed with the fear of responsibility, caution and subtle self-censorship in relation to the imagined policies of the Ministry of Culture and Information of Serbia. Some curators therefore think that while spending another three years discussing a new permanent display, it might have been better that the museum left *Yugoslavia: From the Beginning to the End* displayed to the audience and simply claim

¹⁵⁷ Interview conducted in Belgrade, 9 July 2015.

that this exhibition is the maximum that can be achieved at this stage – a maximum in terms of consensus and regional cooperation:

If I were a director, I would put that exhibition tomorrow as a permanent display. First of all because I think that this exhibition will be our maximum for a long time. I think that at that moment, it was a set of political and social circumstances in relation to the Ministry of Culture, other institutions and institutions from the outside which led to the situation in which consensus was possible. As a consensus it does not have that sharpness, that kind of attitude, as it would have when someone would do it on his or her own. It did reach maximum, a peak, and it will be hard to repeat those circumstances. We see this already now. Now is already a problem to cooperate with Croatian institutions. Even the planned projects on banal topics such as graphic design have been stopped... That is how the situation is now.

(Curator, MIJ)¹⁵⁸

During the work on *Yugoslavia: From the Beginning to the End*, there were pressures related to regional cooperation,¹⁵⁹ which showed that the initial idea of having young experts from each ex-Yugoslav republic sitting and creating a common exhibition, might have been too ambitious even if the museum had secured independent funding. During all this the Ministry of Culture remained silent and the museum used this silence for insisting on having a historian from Croatia and including three other non-Serbian reviewers. With a new political situation, a new director and a new Minister of Culture and Information, the curators are often reminded that the MIJ is

¹⁵⁸ Feedback from a focus group with curators from MIJ, Belgrade, 21 August 2015.

¹⁵⁹ Pressures existed during *New Old Museum*, even though the work of the team was going on behind closed doors. When it was realized that a Croat was on the team and working on the permanent display, there were voices from some historians, accusing the museum, noting that 'Croats never invite us to tell stories'. At the same time in Croatia, there were voices in academia and media accusing Klasić for participating in a project within a Serbian institution, marking him as 'the enemy of Croat people' and 'pro-Yugoslav'.

an institution of national importance financed by the Government of Serbia, even though there is internal consensus that the museum should intensively cooperate with the region and should be 'a place for reconciliation'. In this new situation, instead of understanding silence from the Ministry of Culture and Information as a space for action, the museum bases some of its decisions on what it imagines would be desirable by the Ministry of Culture and in the interests of Serbia,¹⁶⁰ making it impossible to claim the critical and reconciliatory role which it would like to have:

As I am concerned, the priority is this society here, our community. We should not compare with Croats and what they are doing, or Bosnians – if they are doing for the good of their community or not, that is their business. This is why conversations about Yugoslavia are needed now more than ever! But I do not think that exhibitions are a medium for that. And this is where our problem starts, the problem of an institution. This is a fair question after all. Is the museum the right place for that? Do we as an institution financed by the government, have an opportunity to be an institution which will be critical towards this government?

(Curator, MIJ)¹⁶¹

In some way I think we will not have that possibility for a long time, until... This museum has been founded by the Republic of Serbia, they are our founders and main source of funding, and at the end, the citizens of Serbia are funding this museum. And as long as it is that way, there will not be much space. I think it takes enormous effort for you to overcome that fact and to have the possibility to say: 'Ok, it is what it is, BUT, I will be critical, self-aware to the ultimate professional ethics and boundaries. Yes, I want to

¹⁶⁰ One of these decisions was to reject to host exhibitions planned to come from Zagreb, as a response to the ban of hosting exhibitions from the MIJ by Croatian institutions, thereby putting reciprocity of exchanges as more important criteria than the regional orientation of museum.

¹⁶¹ Feedback from a focus group with curators from MIJ, Belgrade, 21 August 2015.

be that place of reconciliation.' In this moment, that seems unreachable to me.

(Curator, MIJ)¹⁶²

What is special about the MIJ is that all these questions are being asked by its curators, showing an enormous capacity for reflection, openness and a need to play a more active social role, despite internal misunderstandings, diversity of positions and diversity in generational backgrounds. During the focus group these reflections showed that opening or closing spaces for innovations and cooperation are not a consequence of the Ministry of Culture's clear cultural policy. The Ministry of Culture's clear push or restraint on museum practices, on the contrary, give active expansion or active limitation of transformative boundaries within the space of what one imagines being appropriate both in relation to national cultural policies, in relation to audiences and in relation to AHD. It is sometimes even unawareness of self-censorship which makes one stay within the well-known and established conduct in order to mitigate risks.

In this context, for the MIJ, that wants to achieve more than what it perceives to be its formal mandate, the only solution is to create a place for conversations about Yugoslavia and to embrace a low responsibility and low risk method of work – temporary exhibitions, debates, educational programmes, hosting challenging exhibitions by artists, etc. In this context, it became important to restrain from fixing institutional value perspective for the long term, since that might expose the museum to criticism, without the space for quick change.

There is a question of whether this museum is needed in this society? This is a real question, which is being raised since the foundation of the museum. Why would you need a Museum of Yugoslav History? Shouldn't that be a part of the Historical Museum of Serbia? Of course, all of this is possible and legitimate. And they concluded that this part of history is so specific that it should exist. But as time passes, it is really possible that one day, when we encircle somehow the story through our programmes, research and processes, someone can raise that question again. And it is legitimate to

¹⁶² Feedback from a focus group with curators from MIJ, Belgrade, 21 August 2015.

say “We shook everything we have in relation to Yugoslavia, we learned everything we could from there, and ok, this is not needed anymore.’ I’m not saying this will all disappear, but it will be called differently, or...

(Curator, MIJ)¹⁶³

As a conclusion, I would like to frame this situation of unease with traditional museum methods, the lack of internal consensus about the permanent display and the impossibility to produce a permanent display for eight years, through the idea of what I call the strategy of *the museum as a Scheherazade*. This strategy is a consequence of the transformation of the Museum of Yugoslav History through the *New Old Museum* project and things that happened parallel and after it. The strategy that emerges from a situation in which the museum cannot rely on or go back to the AHD and lock the discourse of Yugoslavia, because that discourse has shown to be challenged both inside and outside the museum. But it is also a situation in which the museum detached from AHD still has not fully embraced inclusive heritage discourse as its value perspective, because the consequences of embracing this perspective within traditional museum *modus operandi* are too risky and too subversive. In this situation the museum has still not found suitable new methods for working within inclusive heritage discourse and is constantly being trapped or reminded of traditional museum methods that it should follow if it wants to be a museum – the most important of this being a permanent display.

It is from this situation of in-between two discourses, that the *strategy of Scheherazade* emerges, a strategy in which the museum continuously tells new fragments of stories about Yugoslavia without being able or willing to craft and stand behind a finished and framed story. A finished story could ultimately lead to a death penalty. In Scheherazade’s role, all the methods are acceptable except a traditional permanent display on Yugoslav history. Temporary exhibitions, talks, discussions, programmes, educational workshops, digitalization and crowd collecting, challenging theatre plays, guest exhibitions on critical and painful topics, plans about permanent

¹⁶³ Feedback from a focus group with curators from MIJ, Belgrade, 21 August 2015.

display and pilots of permanent display – everything goes as long as it is temporary, making it possible for the museum to reveal a new fragment of the story and not take the responsibility over anything which can be caught and criticized in the longer term.

Going back to the introductory text to *Yugoslavia: From the Beginning to the End*: ‘research is still ongoing’, ‘it is a big challenge’, and the museum will always need comments from the visitors, but it is now even more aware that it does not have to give a framed Yugoslav history... In September 2015, the museum requested to change its name once again, this time at the director’s initiative. The new name would be Museum of Yugoslavia, a name which would take away the burden of presenting the history of Yugoslavia.

8. Documenta:

Dealing with Heritage of War and Repression

Dealing with the Past means learning how to live and survive in the present, with our individual and social lives marked by repressive events which we did not choose, want or initiate, but which were initiated by other people, most often intentionally.
(Bacić 2001, 1)

In our case, different values, which were at the core of different versions of the past, have clashed in the wars of 1990s in a fight-like, instead of in an academic way. If armed conflict was not followed by the civil war on memory, the conflict would certainly be less acute. Paying back the 'old justice' gave a particular depth and length to the civil war, while the continuation of conflicting pasts even after the Dayton agreement still creates a series of conflicts in the Western Balkans (from those among historians to those among sport fans).
(Kuljuć 2010, 239)

On 12 February 2013, Maja Dubljević was one of the panellists at a debate on *Memories of Life in Yugoslavia from 1919 until 1990: Collecting Personal Memories*, that took place at the Museum of Yugoslav History. The

debate was organized as part of a parallel programme to the pilot exhibition *Yugoslavia: From the Beginning to the End*. Dubljević, an editor of the archive of *Croatian Memories*, talked about the method that was largely missing at the museum's pilot exhibition, about oral histories and collecting of individual memories. The oral histories she was referring to were the oral histories related to WWII and the 1990s wars in Yugoslavia, a period was particularly challenging for the museum and exhibition team.

Dubljević works at Documenta – Center for Dealing with the Past, a Croatian NGO that merges in a unique way issues of law, transitional justice, human rights, archival work, history and cultural memory. The organization was founded by four Croatian organizations active in the field of civil rights and peace protection – the Centre for Peace, Nonviolence and Human Rights in Osijek, the Centre for Peace Studies in Zagreb, the Civic Council for Human Rights and the Croatian Helsinki Committee. The goal was to initiate and develop social and individual processes of dealing with the past, in order to build sustainable peace in Croatia and the wider region. The past which is dealt with by Documenta is a past of two massive wars and war-related incidents between 1941-2000, which took place in the territory of Yugoslavia and post-Yugoslav countries.

The aim of Documenta is to tackle manipulations, suppression and falsification of facts related to war crimes by “establishing a factual truth about the war and contributing to shifting discussions from the level of disputes over facts (number of fatalities and similar) toward a dialogue on interpretations.” Documenta focuses on Croatia, but incorporates also wider post-Yugoslav areas through different projects and through a Regional Coalition (RECOM).¹⁶⁴ RECOM is a coalition for regional post-conflict truth-

¹⁶⁴ In cooperation with the Humanitarian Law Center from Belgrade, and the Research and Documentation Center from Sarajevo, Documenta has initiated the RECOM Coalition which now gathers more than 1,800 NGO's, associations and individuals who represent and promote the establishment of a Regional Commission tasked to establish facts about all victims of war crimes and other serious human rights violations committed in the territory of former Yugoslavia in the period from 1991-2001. See: <http://www.documenta.hr/en/koalicija-za-regionalnu-komisiju.html> (accessed 31st October 2015).

seeking and truth-telling processes. Documenta primarily sees itself as a complement to what institutions are not doing and as a critical partner for governmental and public institutions, in tackling topics that are uncomfortable, particularly the heritage of recent wars and violence.

We saw clearly, this was something that we expected to be done years ago, and which we loudly asked for from the Government and scientific institutions, such as the Institute for Ethnology or Croatian Historical Museum. They should document and research the violations of human rights and war crimes, and document the fate of missing persons, prosecute the aggressors and war criminals systematically, and record personal memories – but, nothing had been done. So we actually decided that we would work on it systematically, as if we were that institution.

(Vesna Teršelić, Director, Documenta)¹⁶⁵

From the short overview provided by the organization's portfolio, it is obvious that Documenta is not an organization which declaratively focuses on heritage and it is definitely not an organization which works to protect heritage for its own sake. In contrast to the three previous case studies, in which heritage organizations claim to work on peace and reconciliation as a side effect of classical heritage related projects, Documenta is an example of an organization which explicitly works with histories, memories and heritage related to 20th-century wars, conflicts, political repression and propaganda in order to contribute to human rights protection and peace. Its work does not start from the mission to protect traditional heritage and, because its employees and collaborators are not heritage experts in a traditional sense, Documenta is not bound by the responsibility to use or to position itself within authorized heritage discourse. On the contrary, its approach and methods are in line with inclusive heritage discourse, as they recognize the role of individual memories and diversity of interpretations; even working to make these visible and ignite discussions around them.

¹⁶⁵ Interview conducted in Zagreb, 20 October 2014.

The approach of Documenta related to heritage, history and memory is inseparable from human rights and justice and is based on the idea that “memories of marginalized groups and memories of repressions from the peripheries, usually come with double intention: the imposing of 'truthful' versions of history based on their memories and the requirement for justice” (Jelin 2003, 29). The battle around the meaning of the past is therefore understood as inseparable with the requirement for justice in the present time, and therefore memory, truth and justice must complement each other.

In systematically dealing with the past violence, Documenta works across three main areas which mutually complement: Improvement of Court Practices and Standards, Documenting, and Public Dialogue and Public Policies. The first area concerns issues of transitional justice such as Monitoring of War Crimes Trials,¹⁶⁶ Monitoring Compensation and Repatriation Procedures¹⁶⁷ and Supporting Victims of Torture¹⁶⁸ – in which Documenta focuses both on the advancement of judicial praxis and legal standards in Croatia but also on direct work and medical and judicial support to victims. The second area of activity, Documenting, relates to collecting documentation on war events: the project *Documenting Human Losses in Croatia during the War 1991-1995* aims to establish the factual truth about human losses such as numbers and names; the project *Unveiling Personal Memories on War and Detention* (also known as *Croatian Memories*) aims to record personal memories and establish a searchable database related to oral histories of wars; while the third activity aims to document the work of human rights organizations in Croatia with a goal to promote the history of resistance, solidarity and non-violent engagement.

Finally, the area of Public Dialogue and Public Policies aims to encourage public policies that deal with the troublesome past in areas such as education, cultural memory and commemoration practices, as a way towards

¹⁶⁶ <http://www.documenta.hr/en/pr%C4%87enje-su%C4%91enja-za-ratne-zlo%C4%8Dine.html> (last accessed: 10 October 2015).

¹⁶⁷ <http://www.documenta.hr/en/pr%C4%87enje-postupaka-za-naknadu-%C5%A1tete.html> (last accessed: 10 October 2015).

¹⁶⁸ <http://www.documenta.hr/en/victim-support.html> (last accessed: 10 October 2015).

wider dialogue and trust within society. Programmes in this area include *History Education*,¹⁶⁹ which works on teaching about wars and conflicts in schools through critical analysis of historical sources and multiperspectivity, while the programme *Culture of Memory*¹⁷⁰ aims to educate and discuss politics of remembrance, practices of marking sites of violence and commemorative culture in Croatia and the wider region, by organizing study visits, producing virtual maps and making documentary movies.

The interwoven linkage between memory and justice in the function of sustainable peace is visible in the composition of Documenta's team that consists of sociologists, lawyers, political scientists, historians, journalists, archivists, mathematicians and IT technicians. Its wide network of partners includes associations of families of missing people, governmental institutions, academic institutions and media. Regional and global network membership includes the Global Coalition for Conflict Transformation, the Human Rights House, the Regional Coalition RECOM, the Anna Lindh Foundation Network of Networks, the EUROCLIO Association and the International Council of Archives.

8.1 Croatia's post-war context: heroization and victimization as a driver of national identity

In order to understand the context in which Documenta works, it is important to be reminded that even though the wars in Yugoslavia ended, wars of memories are still haunting post-Yugoslav countries. In these wars of memory each country has created its new official memory discourse, in which the same events and people have conflicting positions and *valorisations*. Following the changes of the socialist regime, new nationalist regimes had both political power and a power to dominate the processes of remembering and forgetting (Jović 2004, 98). In these new discourses all contested issues and histories of inter-ethnic violence, in particular those

¹⁶⁹ <http://www.documenta.hr/en/nastava-povijesti.html> (last accessed: 10 October 2015).

¹⁷⁰ <http://www.documenta.hr/en/kultura-sje%C4%87anja.html> (last accessed: 10 October 2015).

from WWII, which were swept under the carpet to ensure Yugoslav 'brotherhood and unity', were suddenly re-appropriated to claim positions of victim by each community.¹⁷¹

The context of post-war independent Croatia has its particularities, since Croatian public memory narrative in relation to conflicts in the 1990s is the most stable and least contested one – referring to the Homeland War of 1991-1995 as the national liberation and independence from former Yugoslavia.¹⁷² The new narrative of national identity has been framed through anti-communism, a nationalistic explanation of WWII and the liberation characterized by the Homeland War (Banjevlav 2012). Official collective memory and commemoration practices related to the Homeland War have their particular significance, as they served both for constructing a legitimate narrative about the war and constructing a myth around the foundation of independent Croatia (Banjevlav 2015). The Homeland War is therefore one of the central elements for this nation's identity building, around which political elites have formed a unified narrative about conflict, a narrative which (in this case) asserts Croatian national identity through the role of nation, as a victim and ultimate hero.

However, the Homeland War was also an armed conflict which had elements of civil war, since atrocities over Serb and Bosniak populations have been committed by the Croatian Army, while at the same time Croatia was active in a war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in the armed conflicts among all three sides and biggest ethnic communities – Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats

¹⁷¹ In Croatia, the suppression of the memory of a fascist Independent State of Croatia (NDH) and Ustashe crimes committed during the existence of NDH against (mostly) Serbs was kept under the carpet in the interests of multi-ethnic Yugoslavia (Denich 1994, 367), but was rehabilitated when NDH and Ustasha were connected with attempts to liberate Croatia during WWII.

¹⁷² The situation in Serbia is much more complex as the country equally deals with notions of being a victim, a loser and an aggressor making it impossible to find a stable place for the events of the 1990s within public memory discourse. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the existence and mutual rule of all three ethnic communities (Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats) makes it impossible for one community to impose its desired version of public memory.

(Kadrov/Lalić/Teršelić 2010). These aspects have been negated by official public memory discourse in Croatia and atrocities against civilians committed by the Croats have implicitly been legitimized through statements such as “it was impossible for war crimes to be committed in a defensive war” (Ivanišević 1995), negating the voices of victims and impeding public dialogue about the past.

In this national narrative, memory and commemoration practices have played a significant role, resulting in changes of street names and public spaces, the erection of monuments to the victims and heroes of the Homeland War, the creation of new national holidays, and the rehabilitation of the fascist movement Ustashe from the WWII (Pavlaković 2008b).¹⁷³ All the aforementioned aim to present a desirable view of the past. Probably the most problematic for inter-ethnic relations is the commemoration of Operation Storm, a military operation which took place on 5 August 1995 and which is at the same time a heroic victory of the Croatian Army and an operation resulting in killings and the exodus of the Serbian community (Pavlaković 2009). The event has become the marker for one of the most important national celebrations, glorified and commemorated annually by the highest national officials, in a way that downplays or completely ignores the fate of civilian victims killed during the operation.

¹⁷³ The strategy of annihilation has been used for cleansing communist and multicultural traces of history and while strategy of appropriation re-contextualized and changed the meaning of Yugoslav anti-fascist monuments. The model of culturalization used the strategy of extensive monument building within new identity politics, in which each town in Croatia was given its own monument dedicated to the heroes and victims of the Homeland War. As Milena Dragičević Šešić (2012, 76) notices: “Appropriation strategy can be seen in the disappearance of red stars from monuments (repainted in yellow as in the case of the Slovenian Route of Friendship, or covered with Catholic crosses in Croatia), the covering of anti-fascist slogans with slogans in homage to Croatian people (this often preceded the visit of recently elected Tuđman to a certain city). Through all these activities of re-contextualization of monuments their original meaning was lost and, instead of memorializing an antifascist battle, for example, they became monuments to the glorious Croatian past.”

The official memory of this event is one-sided, referring primarily to the victory of the Croatian Army and its success in bringing back the occupied territories under Croatian rule, while memories of Serb civilians who were evicted from their homes and whose family members were killed by members of the Croatian forces at the end of the war are missing from the official ceremonies and official narratives of these events.

(Banjeglav 2012)

Because official state history, memorialization and commemoration practices have been one of the most prominent mechanisms for nation-building in Croatia, these practices could not serve as a mechanism of transitional justice and inter-ethnic dialogue. On the contrary, this one-sided narrative of collective memory has impacted the rights for symbolic and judicial reparations of non-Croat victims. For this reason, dealing with past violence as advocated by Documenta connects the right to remember alternative histories with the legal right of all victims, whatever their background.

8.2 Memory, heritage and human rights: putting individuals in focus

The discourse used by Documenta is placed against and in addition to official institutionalized memories in Croatia and has a very clear message, principle and position in relation to history, memory and heritage – a position of counter-culture. In this discourse, one-sided selective memory, mono-cultural teaching of history and hegemonic ways of using and commemorating the past in Croatia (and the wider ex-Yugoslav area) are the ‘evil’ that cannot result in sustainable peace and understanding. Within this discourse, official institutionalized collective memory is recognized as a selective manipulation created by political elites in order to affirm desirable identity and legitimize a certain view of history, a view which disempowers and ignores memories of all those who experienced it or whose stories do not fit into the official narrative.

The central focus of Documenta's research, court monitoring, documenting and communication are exactly aimed at those who have not been given a voice within official authorized historic narrative – marginalized groups and war victims. Documenta can be seen as an organization which gives voice, acknowledges and constantly generates alternative views and multiple perspectives of individuals of diverse ethnic, social and generational backgrounds, in order to disrupt the mono-sided public discourse. With its discourse and all the actions that rupture official public memory of Croatia, Documenta is an exemplary *model of dissent* (Dragičević Šešić 2012) or *counter-culture* (Slapšak 2009) which uses a strategy of opposing within one's own culture in order to provoke dialogue and empathy.

When it comes to understanding the past, Documenta promotes a transition from traditional understandings of history in which only relevant actors are those 'strongest', 'protectors' of the nation and other collective interests – such as political leaders, soldiers, heroes – towards the history of ordinary people and in particular victims which have been on the very margins of event interpretations from the past. The two ways of understanding history lead to two different attitudes towards violence connected to wars and war crimes. The first one creates heroic attitudes towards past conflicts which negate victims from the 'side of the enemy' while the latter recognizes the importance of rights and dignity of each individual.

For Documenta, it is impossible to sustain long-term peace and coexistence among groups if individuals and society do not acknowledge, address and dialogue around different interpretations and memories related to the violent past. Violent past is of particular focus here, because it is a fertile resource for manipulation of history and creation of new identities and social orders post-violent conflicts. Dealing with the past, therefore, in Documenta's discourse relates to the "processes of working through violent past, understood as violence against all victims despite their ethnic, political or any other affiliation" (Kadrov/Lalić/Teršelić 2010), and it is important for two reasons: first, so to deal with violent past because this past is still a present (and a future) for all those who had directly experienced violence and suffered from trauma; the second reason is that in all of the seven wars which

took place in the Balkans over the 20th century, suppressed contested memories of past conflict, served to fuel the future one (Kadrov/Lalić/Teršelić 2010). Working through the violent past as framed by Documenta, aims to put on stage the dissonance of war experiences and dialogue around them, with the ideal of building awareness of 'never again'.

When I say collective memory I am talking about a state narrative, in which Croatia is mostly locked and very hermeneutic, so it is hard to rupture that narrative. What Documenta tries to do is to break it, to show that this official narrative is not the only one, that there are millions of different narratives, and that all personal narratives are equally important. In regards to personal memories, experience from ex-Yugoslavia is very important, because there was not a lot of space for personal narratives and they were officially repressed. Of course they existed, but there was no space for them in the public sphere! That's why I think that it is crucial to create this space today, in order not to allow that some traumas come to the surface one day and explode. In order for that not to happen it's important that this time official narrative and culture of memory stop being official and become open to everyone, which they currently are not.

(Tamara Banjeglav, former Project Manager of Culture of Memory programme, Documenta)¹⁷⁴

Personal memories always exist in the order of discourse about the lived past, but they have not been given a voice within the order of discourse that is public, official and which has a hegemony over a particular desired narrative. For this reason, concepts such as 'creating a public space' for different voices and 'giving voice' are important for Documenta, because they are the way to unlock and rupture sedimented official meaning and create a more inclusive cultural memory. In Documenta's discourse, history is recognized as consisting of facts such as the number and names of victims, dates of events, names of perpetrators, and of interpretations which give

¹⁷⁴ Interview conducted in Zagreb, 21 October 2014.

meaning and sense to these facts. Factual truth can and must be achieved, while when it comes to interpretations of factual truth the only way towards understanding the past is multiperspectivity and polyvocality around which one can relate and discuss. This is the epistemological principle which runs through all Documenta's activities and projects both within Croatia and regionally. Therefore, unlike in some of the previous case studies, the value perspectives, organization practices and employees are transparent, coherent and clear.

8.3 Croatian Memories Archive: creating pluralist heritage of wars

As for personal memories, this is an idea which precedes Documenta. The name Documenta and the idea for establishing Documenta, as well as its methodology were already thought up in 2002. We realized it would be really significant to create a collection in which people who survived the 20th century talked about what happened to them, how they felt and, how they feel today. Some people would place it in the field of culture, to us it is more to do with research, but some would look at it as something that might be displayed in a museum.

(Vesna Teršelić, Director, Documenta)¹⁷⁵

The project to record personal memories of wars is one of those projects that intersects with each aspect of Documenta's work – war trials, support to the victims, education and culture of memory – in creating heritage of wars. It is an exemplary case of creating a public space for voicing individual memories of war in order to challenge the singular official memory. Besides, it is an excellent case study on how documenting and creation of war heritage can have potential effects outside the sphere of heritage protection, and how these possibilities can be addressed only by interdisciplinarity in which each sphere takes input and gives output to the other ones.

¹⁷⁵ Interview conducted in Zagreb, 20 October 2014.

Documenta started working on the audio-recording of memories using an oral history method in the period from 2006-2008, in the region of Western Slavonia, with the aim to gather memories related to the 1990s wars. At that time, few people had filed charges against war crimes and Documenta was explaining to donors that the recording of war memories can be one of the strategies to encourage war victims to speak up and file charges. Once recorded, these memories were used in media and for public debates in Pakrac and Lika (Western Slavonian towns) in which parts of the interviews would be shown. From the beginning, the intention of Documenta was to record memories outside the dominant narrative and after Pakrac and Lika, the team realized that memories should be recorded on a wider scale as well as made into something concrete. From this beginning it was important that the focus stay on individuals and in particular those individuals who are outside the public eye.

We wanted to hear stories of people and their perspective on these historical events, which you cannot hear. These are ordinary people, who did not make any decisions. We did not want to record politicians, but people who did not have influence, who were not asked. To give them some dignity.

(Maja Dubljević, Fundraising Coordinator, Documenta)¹⁷⁶

The idea of avoiding negative consequences by giving space to ‘ordinary people’ and by not ‘brushing things under the carpet’ has been one of the leitmotifs that emerged in all conversations with Documenta’s team. The first pilot of recorded memories showed this argument to be relevant. After collecting 50 interviews it became evident that most often both Serbs and Croats when talking about the 1990s would connect these atrocities to ‘who did what to whom’ during WWII. This demonstrated that it was almost impossible to talk about wars in the 1990s without having insight into the inter-ethnic conflicts of WWII. Documenta therefore decided to address memories on both wars in the next, much bigger, project.

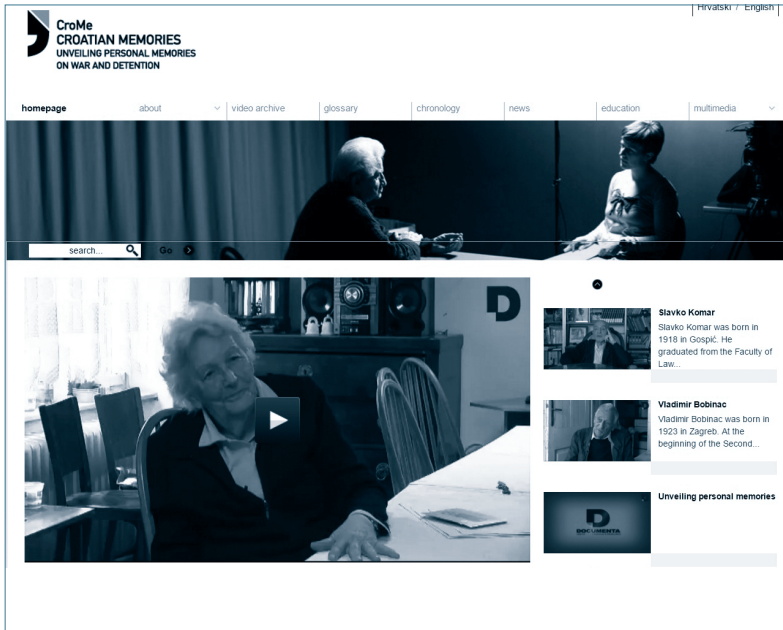
¹⁷⁶ Interview conducted in Zagreb, 21 October 2014.

The next stage was a bigger project entitled *Unveiling Personal Memories on War and Detention: an initiative to create a collection of video-recorded testimonies on a wide range of war experiences in Croatia* (also known as *Croatian Memories*), implemented from January 2010 until December 2012, with a continuation in 2013. The project was mainly financed through the *Social Transformation Programme for Central and Eastern Europe* (Matra) of the Dutch Government and was implemented in close cooperation with two partnering institutions from the Netherlands and two donor partners.¹⁷⁷

Both the key problem and overall objective mirrored Documenta's *raison d'être*, insisting that as long as society in Croatia and the region do not face and openly acknowledge atrocities from the past, there will be no fertile grounds for stable, peaceful societies and integration towards the EU. The project set the goal to record 500 interviews of personal experiences related to wars and political violence in the period between 1941 and 1995 in Croatia.¹⁷⁸ Following this the aim was to publish and archive them on a newly created open internet platform called *Croatian Memories* with direct access

¹⁷⁷ The Matra Social Transformation Programme is a Dutch government programme run since 1994 in order to promote security, cooperation and democracy in Central and Eastern Europe and selected countries neighbouring the EU. The Matra programme's general aim is to support the transformation to a plural, democratic society governed by rule of law. The most important instrument of Matra Projects Programme (MPP) is 'twinning': direct cooperation between local NGOs and Dutch NGOs, as was the case with the project of recording personal memories of war. Documenta's project addressed two Matra themes: the theme 'Human rights/minorities', with a focus on social and individual empowerment and integration of minority communities among inhabitants of Croatia, and the theme 'Information/media', which puts particular emphasis on the creation of a public information service that can help the various communities to deal with the burdened of the past and thereby reinforce the basis for sustainable democratic structures in Croatia and integration into Europe. The total project budget was 1,013,352€ out of which Matra's contribution was 665,572€, while the rest has been financed in kind by donor partners.

¹⁷⁸ Special focus was on towns more severely targeted during the war in the period 1991-1995 such as Pakrac, Sisak, Osijek and Zagreb including immediate surrounding settlements and villages, with some activities in Pula, Rijeka, Knin, Split and Zadar.



Online archive of Croatian Memories project features video recordings of around 500 personal memories on WWII and wars in 1990s by citizens of diverse backgrounds from Croatia.
Credit: Courtesy of Documenta, 2014

and outreach activities such as events, conferences and publications. It also has plans for future dissemination and use of these resources after the project completion, in relevant specific realms such as education and science (historical research, the investigation of psycho-medical issues, etc.).

Interestingly, from dissemination plans and target groups defined in the project one could understand that Documenta was primarily looking at this archive from a human rights point of view. It mainly targeted witnesses and protagonists of war events in the period 1941-1995, governmental institutions devoted to human rights, minority rights protection and civil society, human rights practitioners, institutions and organizations who work in Croatia and other post-Yugoslav countries as well as a wide range of media and broadcast companies.

Again, when it comes to international groups, those targeted were

international organizations for monitoring human rights and minority rights protection, as well as scientific communities and institutions using oral history as a resource or using personal history in their psycho-medical research. There was neither the mention of individuals, institutions and organizations dealing with culture of memory and heritage, nor of the artistic community who could disseminate or work with the findings. This targeting which is limited to human rights and minority rights in particular is important to bear in mind, as Documenta moved significantly towards addressing more diverse target groups as time went by and as its other projects developed.

The project relied fully on the oral history method using *multiperspectivism* and individual memories of past traumatic events, while focusing on ways in which wars and violence affected individual lives. The project not only interviewed the victims, but also bystanders and perpetrators, in order to better understand the circumstances that can lead to war and the collapse of civil society. Unlike the thinking behind the exhibition *Yugoslavia: From the Beginning to the End*, Documenta thought it both relevant and necessary to hear and understand different perspective from those whose values do not align, such as fascist groups, Ustasha, as well as Serbian and Croatian soldiers, in order to be able to address the complexities of past events. An important decision was to include ordinary people who have not been active creators of historical events, did not have active political and decision-making power and who are usually not given space to talk in public.

These notions can of course be criticized in the sense that, even though they focus on individuals, they detach individuals of possibilities, decisions and choices within their own microcosm and responsibilities related to these choices, by assuming that the power lies in the lap of politicians. Furthermore, insisting on the identity of someone as a victim, perpetrator or bystander can easily lead towards understanding these positions as inherently separated and divided, without the possibility that one can be all three and many more positions depending on the particular situation. But all together, the oral histories method, despite these presumptions and selections, can reflect the nuances within diverse identities.

As opposed to the pilot interviews undertaken by Documenta is Western

Slavonia, which were only audio-recordings and not accessible in an open database, the grant from Matra and partnership with institutions from the Netherlands, created the opportunity for a much higher quality archive. The first partner to join was the Erasmus University Rotterdam, with its two units – the Erasmus Studio¹⁷⁹ which coordinated the overall project and the Centre for Historical Culture at the Faculty of History and Arts.¹⁸⁰ Representatives from the Centre were then involved in monitoring the quality of the interviews and of the metadata. The second partner was the Human Media Interaction Group (HMI)¹⁸¹ from the University of Twente, which was involved in the technical design of the database and the development of videos with aligned multilingual transcripts and metadata. The first donor partner was DANS (Data Archiving and Networked Services), which is an institute belonging to the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences and finally, the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) provided a mirror hosting service. This latter contribution ensured back-up and long-term archive space for the interview collection to be maintained in Croatia and assured that the data collected would meet the internationally recognized Data-Seal-Of-Approval Standards. The second donor partner, Noterik BV, an online video technology software company from Amsterdam with a developed platform and implementation tool kit for storing and handling multimedia content, granted free use of their platform.

Documenta was in charge of the majority of content-related work, such as training the interviewers, mapping the interviewees, doing the field work recording and editing some 500 interviews, as well as for outreach events. During the project, Documenta contacted more than 1,000 people in order to find willing citizens to tell their memories and take care to represent different

¹⁷⁹ The Erasmus Studio runs a research programme with as a focal theme on new scholarly practices and novel sorts of knowledge acquisition facilitated by new media and information technology. See: www.eur.nl/erasmusstudio (last accessed: 10 October 2015).

¹⁸⁰ www.fhk.eur.nl/chc (last accessed: 10 October 2015).

¹⁸¹ HMI was partnering as one of the leading research teams in the field of the use of Speech and Language Technology and Information Retrieval in Oral History. See: www.hmi.ewi.utwente.nl (last accessed: 10 October 2015).

age, sex, ethnicity, origin and place of living. A detailed methodology with supporting documents for interviewers was prepared to take care of every step from pre-visit, to how to conduct the interview and post-visit contact. Interviewees could choose the level of privacy they preferred for the recorded material.¹⁸²

Even though the methodology used for the project was based on an oral history method, it had to be adapted to deal with violent pasts, taking into consideration Documenta's role as a human rights organization. For this reason, in addition to receiving training to conduct interviews and manage volunteers, the interviewees attended lectures on processes of dealing with the past in order for interviewers to be able to place their role within the wider understanding of the purpose and meaning of what Documenta does. This was particularly important as people who are asked to be interviewed often are resisting to talk and recreate suppressed traumas. As Dubljević underlines, "dealing with the past and encouraging people to give up their self-protecting mechanisms, requires the full responsibility of an interviewer," which is why people working for Documenta insist on their role as activists.

I remember, when I came to Documenta for a job interview, a member of the Board asked me if I am afraid to work in such an organization. It was clear that there will be all kinds of issues there, because we open uncomfortable, sometimes disturbing themes. The same is with this project. We express a deep respect for our interviewees because memories on wars and other political violence are tough... people do remember nice things as well, but in principle they are asked about some uncomfortable things and they accept to remember that while telling us.

(Maja Dubljević, Editor of Croatian Memories Archive and Fundraising Coordinator, Documenta)¹⁸³

¹⁸² The detailed explanation of the methodology used is available online, with all the supporting documentation in the Croatian language at <http://www.osobnasjecanja.hr/metodologija/> (last accessed: 10 October 2015).

¹⁸³ Interview conducted in Zagreb, 21 October 2015.

Because of its diverse teams and areas of work with victims of wars, Documenta has been able to interlink the interview process with other areas, in a way that no researcher, archival or museum institution could do. In finding people Documenta at first relied on contacts with individuals and organizations with whom it had already cooperated. For many new potential interviewees, Documenta's track record and reputation for addressing the rights of war victims was a sign that they could trust Documenta. Furthermore, the process of recording personal memories has been connected with the project of documenting human losses, because when on field work to collect facts about human losses the team would use the opportunity to make contact with future interviewees.

There are different reactions, different stories, but often it happened that people would accept interviews because they knew we were working with civil victims, and they thought they could realize their rights. Then they would ask us what we think, when could they solve their problem of getting the status of civil victim, because today in Croatia civil victims don't have status and rights, so they hoped that Documenta might help. But we have these different teams, so we would give reports to our legal team which would call them and give them some advice on what to do and whom to call. We'd always try to help in some way. But there were people who were simply grateful because we asked them about what had happened, how they survived and how they live today.

(Tamara Banjeglav, former Project Coordinator, Documenta)¹⁸⁴

It was extremely important as a way of building trust that Documenta had mechanisms to offer other kinds of support to interviewees, such as legal advice or psycho-medical support, thereby taking care of interviewees in the post-interview process.

¹⁸⁴ Interview conducted in Zagreb, 21 October 2015.

8.4 Voicing in from the margins: between a traitor and unavoidable partner?

Documenta's efforts resulted in some 500 video interviews, transcribed, translated and most have been made available in an online platform, while some are available only upon request for research purposes. Previous to this, there had been no wide research projects dealing with war and personal memories in Croatia, apart from some interviews by individual researchers, conducted for their own purposes. In these cases the interviews were never made publicly available. Even though the team of Documenta did not see themselves as creating heritage of 20th-century wars, their efforts have exactly this character. Apart from recordings being what one could call 'intangible heritage' representing oral histories, Documenta also archived tangible objects from the past which interviewees used to visualize their stories. Heritage of wars and violence collected by Documenta is based on different principles than those usually collected, displayed and interpreted in Military Museums and than those chosen to be remembered within official culture of memory. It is based on the principle that individual voice and individual memory matters as a human process that gives an account of oneself, one's life and conditions (Couldry 2010), and that this plurality of individual voices deserves to be communicated and heard within the public space, where it can have political value. As a whole, the right to one's voice and the right to one's memory results in pluralism, polyvocality and dissonance of multitude of personal experiences.

Importantly, in this archive dissonances among individual accounts is acknowledged, made visible and treated as a value instead of a threat. It is acknowledged that dissonance is the condition of a multitude of memories that helps understand other perspectives and the complexities of past event experiences. Instead of creating a singular culture of memory which would homogenize through the past this archive represents pluralist culture of memory, and inclusive heritage discourse.

The value of this archive and oral history as a method is that, unlike Documenta's other projects which deal with factual research, it allows insights into different levels of social relations, atmospheres related to certain

events and historic periods. It provides an understanding of how people related and acted in certain periods, as well as why they chose to react that way. It helps develop an understanding of social factors which created conditions for certain historical events to happen. The archive gives insights into the transgenerational transmission of memory and formation of family memories related to wars, as older interviewees would talk about their direct experiences of WWII and link them to more recent events, while younger members would talk about how much and in which way WWII was talked about in their families and how much that has formed their attitudes.

The online platform provides a virtual space for voicing different personal perspectives, but as many of the interviews last for more than an hour, the archive may discourage people who are not researchers or do not have a particular interest in a specific topic. It is hard to imagine sitting and listening to interviews for hours in order to acknowledge different perspectives. Therefore, the biggest challenge now is to see how voices within this space can be used and recreated in the public sphere through different forms. As with any archive or collection this one also needs constant moments of actualization and use that it will give voice to its content within public spaces.

The main problem now is the lack of existing public spaces for communicating memories outside the mainstream narrative. Can these memories cooperate and supplement the mainstream or will they be seen as an attack on the mainstream? And, who is the public that will be willing to listen to memories that most members in society want to forget? In what ways can this archive be used to create understanding and empathy among different groups that suffered from war? What are the ways for bringing this archive to all those who have not been directly affected by wars? Finally, how will Documenta's reputation and other areas of work be affected by the use of this archive?

Interestingly, even though Documenta insists on pluralism of perspectives and public dialogue, this archive has highly guarded content, requiring that actualizations and discussions take place outside the online space of the archive. The diversity of personal memories are collected through a carefully designed methodology, but any virtual dialogue, reflections, addition or

conversations in the form of user-generated content are not foreseen, designed and therefore not allowed. This lack of possibilities for online discussion and content updating makes it necessary for Documenta to promote and make the content available through other channels and practices.

The first and most obvious way for Documenta to engage publicly with memories within the archive, is related to issues of the rights of war victims and creating places for discussions around this topic. The way of archiving through the oral history method has proven to be a good media for increasing mutual understanding among different victims, because it focuses on intimate personal cases instead of proclamations of any bigger 'imagined' community. This method gave faces and emotions to events, with which Documenta hoped to promote to influence empathy towards members of the conflicting social group and show that many people personally suffered.

The point was to give a chance to people to say what has happened to them, to all of them, from both sides. And not just to have a chance to say, but that others get a chance to see that. It is enormously important to create some space where it can be shown that other people have the right to their personal memory, that others become aware that what has happened to them is horrible, but that they are not alone, that there are victims on both sides. To realize that they are not the only victims, but that the victims in a war are diverse. To understand each other through common destiny, because they might have been the members of different sides, but practically same things have happened to them. A mother who has lost a son in the war, no matter if on the Croatian or Serbian side, she lost her child! So I believe that they could meet on this emotional level.

(Tamara Banjeglav, former Project Coordinator, Documenta)¹⁸⁵

The idea behind having the right to tell your experience and having a place where this could be seen carries a hope that personal and particular war experiences can have universalizing effects as a way towards

¹⁸⁵ Interview conducted in Zagreb, 21 October 2014.

‘recognizing common destiny’, empathy and interpersonal understanding among the victims. Apart from just recording, Documenta organized activities such as panel discussions or meetings of interviewees who would otherwise not have met. After the project officially finished, Documenta organized events on memories of wars in Dubrovnik and Split, in which some of the interviewees participated as panellists. One example was a meeting among the victims that travelled to Kosovo, including six interviewees of different backgrounds from Croatia, as part of Documenta’s partnership with a local organization from Kosovo on archiving personal memories.

It was terrible at the beginning. There was a Croatian woman from Petrinje who was a girl when her parents were killed and prior to this she was at the home prison with them, and a Serbian man from Vukovar, who was a boy when his father was killed just before the war, part of those missing Serbs in Vukovar and surroundings. They fought immediately at the airport, and then when they came back they were almost in a love relationship. When they both heard all this tragedy that happened to them, some kind of catharsis happened.

(Maja Dubljević, Editor of Croatian Memories Archive and Project Coordinator, Documenta)¹⁸⁶

Dubljević also recalls that in the debates and public events where Documenta gathers civil victims who lost members of their close family, none of the people would say that it does not matter that someone else’s son was killed, and in these situations, at least formally, one can hear expressions of respect for other person’s loss. However, these individual examples are more positive exceptions rather than the rule in Documenta’s work, because for most communities that were deeply hurt by the war it is a problem to face the fact that members of their community have also carried out atrocities to others. In these cases, being reminded and requested to deal with the past atrocities can create more tensions in the short term, than serve as a reconciliatory incentive.

¹⁸⁶ Interview conducted in Zagreb, 21 October 2014.

Since I am in Documenta, we are working a lot in Vukovar and that is an environment with difficult heritage of the past in which people are very hurt on both sides. [...] The last thing that we want is to bring turbulences because we often come with something which is not easily acceptable. It is not easy to come to Vukovar and say that Serbs also perished, and to Serbs it is not easy to hear that the city has been torn to the ground and that Yugoslav National Army forces have participated in that. We are working on a specific segment in the context of dealing with the past, and in the process of reconciliation I said that this reconciliation from the view of our context often can lead to turbulence instead of peaceful coexistence.

(Eugen Jakovčić, Media Coordinator, Documenta)¹⁸⁷

Because of these experiences of being perceived as creating tensions, some members of the Documenta team would not even say that they were working on reconciliation, as this word seemed to be a long-term goal. The terms being used instead included 'we are working towards peaceful coexistence' and 'building trust' on small scale individual level, because neighbours from different ethnic groups stopped trusting each other after the wars. Those who are the least optimistic said they would be satisfied if Documenta at this point just established factual truth and collected different individual perspectives for next generations to come. The notion being that the next generation might be willing to deal with this past in a more systemic way. Another issue for Documenta is that it is a civil society organization that is perceived as a traitor of Croatia and Croatian identity, as pro-Serbian, in some communities.

Where we feel hit first is when Croatian society turns towards deviant areas, escalations of hatred etc., because we are usually the scapegoat. Recently, when things were going on around Vukovar, we were in the group of those first ten to be blamed for distorting the image about Homeland War and other 'holly things' which occupy media

¹⁸⁷ Interview conducted in Zagreb, 21 October 2014.

space. But it is enough that one looks at our webpage to see that Documenta reacts in the same way when Croatian and Serbian civilians are in question. I would say that we are in a position of an organization which is relevant and unavoidable, so sometimes we are attacked, and sometimes people perceive us as much more powerful than we actually are.

(Eugen Jakovčić, Media Coordinator, Documenta)¹⁸⁸

It is not perceived that this is an expert institution in one area that has experience and knowledge in certain things, but as an organization of foreign hireling, troublemakers... This is changing in some segments. What Documenta's legal team is doing connected with war criminal trials is recognized as a professional, high quality work done by experts. Even the President of Croatia comes to presentations of Documenta's annual reports and I think that that is already a huge thing!

(Tamara Banjeglav, former Project Coordinator, Documenta)¹⁸⁹

Programme of documenting is for Documenta something capital, foundational, legitimizing, especially the project Human Losses in Croatia from 1991 to 1995. That was an extremely expensive, long, difficult and laboured project, which makes it incomparable with any other partial inventories. The change of perception from the institutions is very interesting. You can't imagine that you will get to the phase in which you will become almost equal interlocutor, due to your results, and due to the fact that you have spent so many months working on something that the Ministry wouldn't succeed doing. So they would try to negotiate with you to use these results, to call you in the working group for victims of sexual violence, in working groups for drafting laws.

(Dea Marić, Project Coordinator, Documenta)¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁸ Interview conducted in Zagreb, 21 October 2014.

¹⁸⁹ Interview conducted in Zagreb, 21 October 2014.

¹⁹⁰ Interview conducted in Zagreb, 21 October 2014.

This double image of being both a traitor and a highly professional organization is significant. It shows that even though parts of the public works to discredit Documenta, there is no alternative for the depth and scope of some of Documenta's results. An interesting thing with Documenta is that interviewees could easily turn to other areas of work as a way to compensate the lack of influence or recognition of one particular area. The strength of the personal memories archive thus makes it unavoidable to need the capacities of a legal team to address the questions of interviewed victims, or from the facts collected on human losses. Through this multi-dimensional approach the archive was able to gain additional credibility. One of examples of this are the case studies of specific war affected areas or topics, in which Documenta is able to integrate more of its methods including facts on human losses, personal stories from the archive and parts of reports from the monitoring of war crimes trials.

The whole team considers the Croatian Memories Archive not only as related to debates and press conferences that are explicitly about wars and war crimes, but as a resource that will be used in educational, artistic and cultural memory projects of Documenta. The biggest challenge in this is that Documenta can easily connect the personal memories archive with the independent scene, activists in culture and the artistic community, but to work with state cultural institutions remains questioned territory. The same can be said for the educational system, as the issue of 'political question no. 1 and reputation of Documenta as anti-Croatian, creates space for action only for those teachers who are already aware of the value of Documenta's work and personally stand for these values.

I think they are investing a lot but they will never be used officially as much as they could. I have played these interviews at my faculty, but this wouldn't pass in any school or high school. I have certain autonomy at the faculty, but most of the teachers won't show this.

(Hrvoje Klasić, associate at Documenta, Assistant Professor, University of Zagreb)¹⁹¹

¹⁹¹ Interview conducted in Zagreb, 20 October 2014.

Even though at this point the systemic use of personal memories archive in education is a long-term dream, Documenta's team started to run educational projects with some schools willing to cooperate. A person which leads the educational history project *My place through time* is using these narratives from personal memories when working with students, because these are good ways for emotional engagement towards suffering and are good introductions to research of history, inclusive culture of memory and *multiperspectivity*. The goal is to encourage students not to take what is served to them as the truth, but to think, read historical sources and analyse them critically.

The recognition of the value of this collection for museums came late in the project, and some initial steps are now being taken to promote the collection among museums. At this point most museum institutions do not recognize Documenta as a legitimate actor in the heritage field or do not have an interest to cooperate. Neither has Documenta for a long time seen itself as an actor within heritage field.

There is no interest in dealing with cultural memory in a multiperspective way from the side of memory institutions and curators. In Croatia three years ago there was an exhibition about the Homeland War at the Croatian Historical Museum and it was really interesting because curators said that it is their view of the war, even though they have used literature and different sources of historians who deal with this period, but they did not consult organizations such as Documenta or any association of the victims. [...] The main thesis of the exhibition was again self-victimizing, where Croatia has been presented as a victim, we all know who is the aggressor, and it was created by using this dichotomy of victim and aggressor, there are no shades of grey, just black and white. The exhibition used that official narrative, stories from the newspapers, but did not use personal memories.

(Tamara Banjeglav, former Project Coordinator, Documenta)¹⁹²

¹⁹² Interview conducted in Zagreb, 21 October 2014.

In these situations, Documenta can act only as a constructive critic, a sort of watchdog that tries to include perspectives which are undermined. For example, Documenta's team wrote an open letter about a Croatian Historical Museum exhibition and invited people from the museum to present the exhibition in a workshop organized in Vukovar, using a discussion afterwards to point to insufficiencies. In this, as in other examples, individuals within Documenta say that, as an NGO, they are in a position from which they can openly reflect on problems, but cannot influence that these problems are addressed in a systemic way. Similarly to interviewees in the *Imagining the Balkans* project or from the Museum of Yugoslav History, here again the question of political influence on museums and self-censorship by curators was addressed:

She [curator from the Croatian History Museum] was quite cooperative, but she is not the only author and decision-maker and the museum is a state institution whose work is mainly related to state politics. In Croatian society questioning or rupturing that official narrative is quite risky, because that narrative is so strong and locked, the roles are assigned and everything is defined, so trying to change that is really risky. Especially for someone who works in a state institution and wants to keep their job.

(Tamara Banjeglav, former Project Coordinator, Documenta)¹⁹³

The question remains, who are those that can influence? The official desired discourse influences by existing and being again and again re-affirmed by all those who are either not aware of its power, those who are ideologically aligned with it, or those who are warned by it in a self-censorship practice that is framed by the discourse itself. It seems that in this context of perpetuation of the official discourse by the majority of those who are framed by it, the alternative ruptures that the discourse created by Documenta makes are highly needed. Even though these ruptures currently have limited audience and limited space of influence, even though they can

¹⁹³ Interview conducted in Zagreb, 21 October 2014.

often be called self-sufficient monologues rather than discussions with ‘real’ unlike-minded parties, and even though they depend on Documenta’s continuous efforts, they offer small windows to the right to speak an alternative.

The facts collected and personal stories archived created a long-term information stock that can wait for another phase in the future when there will be more political and social will to address the past in a more inclusive way. Even though Documenta uses the discourse of transitional justice in lobbying for the acknowledgement of civil victims of wars no matter their background, this archive moves away from decontextualization and reduction which are common in transitional justice politics. Unlike quantitative research on human losses, support for victims and the monitoring of war crime trials, which essentialize individuals as victims and perpetrators, this archive makes it possible to reflect on interviewees as agents, resisters or individuals playing multiple roles. As the archive addresses how different individuals lived at certain periods, it helps to portray a complex and multilayered histories and oppressions, instead of homogenous data based on gross violations.

8.5 From troublesome Western Balkans to the EU know-how provider

The work on reconciliation and transitional justice which Documenta undertakes has been a field highly pushed forward and influenced by international funding during the last twenty years – particularly from foreign embassies in Croatia, foreign governmental and private donors and foundations.¹⁹⁴ Croatian membership in the EU in July 2013 brought a total change in funding scheme priorities. This resulted in Documenta’s area of work belonging nowhere explicitly, as if these problems no longer existed. What has been financed and insisted upon during the last fifteen years suddenly disappeared from focus, despite progress reports showing that

¹⁹⁴ For a list of funding organizations, see: www.documenta.hr/en/32.html (last accessed: 31 August 2016).

dealing with the violent past is still a burning issue.

These war trials are the best example of a complete misunderstanding of the situation in which we are. I think that the EU invests money in other spheres, and to me it's quite indicative that it considers this area completed. And this is surprising as the EU has scanned the situation before our membership and knows perfectly well that these processes are not completed!

(Maja Dubljević, Fundraising Coordinator, Documenta)¹⁹⁵

Events of symbolic violence such as the destruction of Cyrillic signs in Vukovar, one-sided culture of memory, decrease of institutional cross-border cultural cooperation with Serbia and statements of a newly elected president from the right-wing nationalist orientation, are reasons for Documenta's claim that since "we became a member of the EU we are stagnating in the best case, and sometimes we are even depressed, because we are already seeing steps back and exclusion."¹⁹⁶ From this example it is evident that the 'transition' to justice as equalled to the succession to EU membership, is the new main threat not only to Documenta as an organization, but to the processes and ideas started by it. Even though the EU has not had a clear policy on transitional justice, the concept and funding for it has been almost exclusively a part of the foreign policies of the EU.¹⁹⁷ The very day, in which a 'transitioned' country becomes part of the EU, the presumption is that this country no longer

¹⁹⁵ Interview conducted in Zagreb, 21 October 2014.

¹⁹⁶ Interview with Eugen Jakovčić, PR of Documenta, conducted in Zagreb, 21 October 2014.

¹⁹⁷ After decades of being one of the major funders of transitional justice processes around the world, the EU is for the first time now working on a strategy and policy of transitional justice (Davis 2014). The strategy is however not related to EU Member States, but mainly aimed at policies which affect third party countries, such as development policy, the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), International Criminal Court (ICC) and the European External Action Service (EEAS). The only exception is Northern Ireland since both Great Britain and Northern Ireland asked the EU to fund conflict resolution and peace-building initiatives.

faces the issues of dealing with a violent past and that from now on it can export its know-how and help to those who remain outside the EU borders.

On the other hand we can focus on the region. In the plans for the future we did call ourselves Documenta International, as a joke, but we have that in mind through involvement in different segments of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs connected to international help, which Croatia now can give as an EU Member State. Our colleague has now been in Ukraine, helping their activists. Giving know-how can be part of our work and some people can do that.

(Eugen Jakovčić, Media Coordinator, Documenta)¹⁹⁸

This stands out as an example of how “Europe has asserted itself, time and again, as an agent setting the standards of normalcy for its periphery” (Bechev 2006) and of normalcy for other ‘developing’ regions of the world, without necessary mechanisms to turn the mirror back to itself. What this means is that despite the continuing need to work on a more pluralistic memory of violent past within Croatia, these decisions will now be influenced by EU Structural Funds influenced by the priorities set by the government of Croatia, a government which (as other governments in the region) has been doing exactly the opposite by creating and promoting a one-sided memory of wars.

At this point, some of Documenta’s activities are financed through the regional initiative RECOM, as other countries from the Western Balkans are still beneficiaries of international grants for dealing with violent past and transitional justice, while the actions within Croatia remain dependent on fewer and fewer international donors. The EU which until 2013 had the power to foster conditionality mechanisms on Croatia when dealing with issues of wars and human rights and work on them through NGO funding, will now be bounded by its own instruments to continue conversations with the Croatian government if these issues are to be dealt with.

This approach to transitional justice which takes into account only those

¹⁹⁸ Interview conducted in Zagreb, 21 October 2014.

spaces outside EU borders, is mirrored in ideas put forward by the newly articulated heritage policy documents within the EU (*Council Conclusions on Cultural Heritage as a Strategic Resource for a Sustainable Europe*, adopted under the Greek Presidency in May 2014; *Towards an Integrated Approach to Cultural Heritage for Europe*, European Commission Communication, adopted in July 2014; *Council Conclusions on participatory Governance of Cultural Heritage*, adopted under the Italian Presidency in November 2014). In these documents, despite all the migrations, demographic changes and unease of new diversities with the traditionally framed European identity based on distinctive heritage of the past, the idea of heritage dissonance is not underlined in policy discourses. Dissonant heritage as seen by the EU is solely related to the heritage of WWII, the Balkan Wars, the Gulag and communism, but not to the contemporary identity and political issues around Europe. Here again, contemporary issues in the Balkans and other ex-communist bordering regions of Europe, are places in which Europe externalizes its past that is problematic and that it wishes to forget – genocide, ethnic cleansing, intolerance and violence (Todorova 1997, 17-18).

9. Conclusions: Towards Dynamic Pluralist Heritage

Peace cannot be kept by force. It can only be achieved by understanding.

(Albert Einstein)

Exceptions confirm or strengthen the rule for those who are not excepted. Thus exception cannot be the ground on which the rule is changed or challenged, nor can it be a model for the majority who live under the rule.

(Marry Sheriff 1996, 2)

The question of how we govern heritage dissonance is inseparable from the question of how we prevent, mediate and resolve conflicts. The concept of heritage dissonance as a lack of agreement about the way the past has been interpreted and represented by different actors has been implicitly present in recent policy texts (CoE 2003; CoE 2005) that link heritage, conflicts and peace-building. This research defined dissonance as a quality which unlocks and challenges the sedimentation of a single discourse and opens space for negotiating the meaning via diverse actions and agencies. It explored the link between heritage dissonance and cultural policy tools in the context of peace-building and reconciliation in SEE while acknowledging that the concept of heritage dissonance has much wider implications on questions of conflicts, voice, representation and power. This final chapter

reflects on six conclusions which cross-cut the whole research, framing main observations and recommendations for each of them.

The first conclusion highlights the argument that the connection between heritage dissonance, reconciliation and cultural policy tools cannot be solely connected to past violent conflicts but must include much wider social and cultural patterns of understanding and using heritage. The second conclusion stresses the importance of discourse analyses in reproaching heritage dissonance, both when it comes to understanding competing meanings connected to particular heritage, and understanding heritage discourse in which particular actors and practices operate. The third conclusion sums up why AHD, as reflected throughout the four case studies, is inherently problematic in approaching heritage dissonance, conflicts and human rights. The fourth conclusion notes what inclusive heritage discourse offers in reproaching conflicts and in providing a framework for dynamic pluralist understanding of the past. Furthermore, it argues that inclusive heritage discourse requires a change of *museological* practices and heritage related education. The fifth conclusion argues that the studied cases can be observed as social arenas which created new ways of interacting among different actors. It further underlines particular strengths and limitations of different actors as well as the emergence of divisions which are much more related to one's professional and institutional background than to the disputes around meaning of particular heritage.

As a sixth and final conclusion, more cooperation among international, state and civil sector organisations is proposed in order to share practices and responsibilities in interpreting and discussing heritage. This sixth conclusion supports the importance of transparent evaluations that take into account not only the initial aims made by each project but also the historic and social context, and prevailing practices. As a final recommendation, this chapter looks at the broader implications which the concept of heritage dissonance and inclusive heritage has for reproaching social conflicts through heritage in Europe and the wider international arena.

9.1 Reconciliation policies beyond the heritage of wars and conflict

An important aspect connected to heritage and reconciliation that emerged throughout the research process was that even though numerous heritage related practices and actors in the Western Balkans and SEE have been appropriating the phrase ‘reconciliation and peace-building’ in their rhetoric and project documentation, hardly any of these clearly articulated what they mean by this in relation to heritage, neither philosophically nor politically. National heritage practices continued to work on mutually competing ethno-national identities, while international organizations and foreign actors who promote reconciliation have rarely been clear about what exactly they promote within post-conflict international development aid for the heritage sector.

At the same time, none of these actors were willing to truly change their conceptual basis related to heritage. Therefore, there was no clear conceptual, normative or pragmatic description by international organizations, public institutions and civil organizations of what reconciliation, justice, democracy and dialogue through heritage should look like, nor how these would relate to the traditional understanding and uses of heritage. What took place in SEE, stayed mostly at the level of transitional professionalization and regional cooperation in the improvement of technical care for heritage, spiced up with buzz words such as dialogue and reconciliation. The attachment of peace-building phrases to regional initiatives became naturalized and self-explanatory.

In the absence of transparent, explicit and developed reconciliation policies in the heritage domain, this research concentrated on some tools created and used by different actors in the name of reconciliation. These policy tools created particular structures of heritage governance involving extra-state, state and inter-state actors. I was interested to explore those very rare projects which worked around issues of contested meanings of heritage, around heritage dissonance. The four projects analysed in this research are therefore exceptions from mainly consensual regional cooperation in heritage. Importantly, they are not exceptional examples of heritage

dissonance which prove the rule that all other heritage is not dissonant. On the contrary, they show that dissonance is embedded in heritage as phenomena and is related to the very processes of selection, interpretation and communication of heritage. Therefore, they indicate that the very idea of dissonance as a strange, challenging and exceptional feature of certain heritage is inherently problematic.

What makes them exceptions is their current position in relation to regular practices, politics and principles within the field of official cultural memory in SEE. They are exceptional examples of creating new discursive spaces outside actors' everyday context and practice. In these new spaces sedimented heritage myths of one community can become questioned by other competing discourses and heritage myths. As such, they not only make dissonance visible, but highlight the paradoxes of traditional ways of thinking and doing heritage. With the high ambitions they set at the beginning, they are exemplary of the limitations and tensions which arise when one attempts to work with diverse and sometimes contested interpretations of the past. As most which could be achieved in the context from which they grew, they show how small and unstable steps are to reconcile, reinterpret or dialogue around competing interpretations of the past and heritage in the region. They also reflect on the enormous symbolic capacity of heritage in shaping identities and group memories and in raising broader questions of rights to voice and memory as related to heritage dissonance.

Even though reconciliation and sustainable peace are usually considered as related to transitional justice that deals with recent wars and violent conflicts, these examples show that the reconciliation of dissonant memories of wars is just one way of using heritage for inter-personal, inter-community and intercultural understanding and dialogue. As a result of being more remote from people's direct experiences and more 'naturalized' within discourses of ethnicity and nation, heritage sites practices and museums not directly connected to war and atrocity sites, are an invisible basis for cultural violence packed with latent or active dissonance. As such, they are an integral aspect of culture that "make direct and structural violence look, even feel right – or at least not wrong" (Galtung 1990, 291). If reconciliation is

understood as a process in which all sides are willing to step beyond their conflicting divides, enter into active dialogue and cooperate in creating new values and patterns of interaction, then the pertaining historic divides, power relations and conflicts within particular contexts are at least as important as what has taken place during the violent past. The histories of cooperation, coexistence and peaceful interactions also play an important role in re-defining social relations.

All four cases in this research show that dealing with the past cannot be exclusively connected with histories of active violence and their commemorations, but should address exclusions, divisions and symbolic conflicts related to the interpretation and uses of ‘normalized’ aspects of heritage, particularly those related to national, ethnic, gender or class identities. As such, they indicate the need for similar continuing efforts not only within the third sector dealing with human rights such as Documenta, but more importantly, of the need to question and redefine traditional public memory institutions and AHD on a conceptual, normative and pragmatic level. Finally, they show that the concepts of dissonance and reconciliation have much wider implications on heritage management and policy, which go beyond cases of post-violent conflict areas throughout the world.

9.2 Discourse matters

In analysing relations among heritage dissonance, conflicts and reconciliation through all four case studies, discourse was important on two levels: first, the level in which particular heritage was invested with particular content by specific social actors in an attempt to make their understanding of the past the prevailing one. This particular content provides a fixed meaning of a segment of the past, which further creates and influences people’s collective and individual identities. The aim to fix one particular meaning of heritage is not only exercised among professionals, international organizations and politicians in relation to citizens, but as in the case of the Museum of Yugoslav History or the *Croatian Memories* project, it can be expressed by citizens through individual and group memories. All these diverse versions cause dissonance as a quality of heritage.

Importantly, the competition for fixing a particular meaning of the past in the present through heritage is not just about active disputes, around active dissonance. Discourses are contingent, incomplete structures over which there is always room for conflicts in relation to how meaning should be ascribed and ordered, therefore always latently dissonant. In the example of the *Imagining the Balkans* exhibition, most discourses of the past in participating nation-states have for a long time been stabilized through national museums. In the main they are not actively dissonant and officially disputed within their own national borders, historiography and collective identity. Only when put in a new position, a position beyond or outside their own national or community frameworks, it becomes visible that in the 'order of discourse' about a particular past there are also other competing discourses, which are forming alternative meanings. Visibility or actualization of dissonance in this case meant changing the 'normalized' position which had the potential to unlock sedimented, hegemonic meaning. For this reason, continuous international, inter-sectoral and inter-community cooperation in interpreting and managing heritage is one of the ways to go beyond singular 'truths'; to increase understanding of different perspectives, encourage dialogue and develop a more pluralist approach to heritage.

Visibility and acknowledgement of dissonance is also a matter of who is given the right to voice and to articulate alternative meanings, as in the example of citizens' comments on the exhibition *Yugoslavia: From the Beginning to the End*, or in the case of personal memories of war within the Croatian Memories Archive, where individual citizens had their own versions of the past which they have witnessed. The concept of heritage dissonance had a particular 'discord value', as it unlocked the discursive space and entered into a conversation that might de-naturalize sedimented historic 'truths' and lead to new ways of understanding. The importance of these four case studies lies in the creation of new encounters and new spaces which gave opportunities to make dissonance visible, but also to create new articulations, and new meanings. Therefore, cooperation and creation of a space to put forth different interpretations of the past is of outmost importance for building understanding and peaceful coexistence within societies. These new spaces should acknowledge the rights of diverse

groups and individual citizens to participate not only in the consumption but in the creation of heritage (Kisić 2014).

The ways in which actors taking part in these initiatives perceived their options in acting upon active dissonance is important. The choices made, to privilege particular options, was affected by the second level on which discourse is important for this research. This second level is heritage discourse of particular actors and their practices, which serves as the key towards understanding how actors choose to act upon heritage dissonance. Two discourses and their interactions have been important for this study: the first is AHD as defined by Smith (2006) and seen reflected in most heritage policy documents and ways of doing heritage; the second is what I have defined as inclusive heritage discourse, partly articulated through the Faro Convention at a policy level and through academic texts within new museology and critical heritage studies.

9.3 Authorized heritage discourse as inherently problematic

AHD as the most prominent way of structuring the heritage domain understands dissonance as a problem. AHD works to close the interpretation of specific heritage as a consonant structure and neutralize or ignore dissonance of all other possible interpretations. The fear of admitting dissonance was present in most of the interviews throughout the research, with actors from heritage institutions, UNESCO representatives and some academic historians, but also reflected in their choices, practices and ways of thinking. The problematic thing about it is that AHD authorizes a particular cultural memory as a given, objective and 'the truth', creating a stable version of the past and stabilizing identities and power relations. However, it also causes clashes and provocation when people are confronted with 'heritage as the Truth about the past' of another community.

As a consequence, dissonance is always understood by AHD as something that creates or fuels conflict, while achieving consonance of competing interpretations is understood as having the potential to relieve conflicts and decrease tensions. The desire for static integration through the

past (Kuljić 2010) and consonance as a social ideal is interwoven in the universalist concept of AHD. As conceptual, normative and pragmatic cultural policy discourse, AHD is perpetuated through international policy texts and instruments, though national and local legislation as well as through traditional practices of heritage management which work toward achieving consonant meaning.

On a pragmatic level, this consonance of competing interpretations, is achieved through a set of heritage related techniques and practices, all of which can be seen in the case studies of the transnational nomination of Stećaks, the *Imagining the Balkans* exhibition and the exhibition *Yugoslavia: From the Beginning to the End*. In the case of the joint Stećaks nomination, the very exercise of creating a nomination file for the World Heritage List (WHL) was understood as asking for a coherent interpretation of the cultural property. Without explicitly written rules it was understood that the World Heritage Convention would not find relevant and would not appreciate the fact that diverse, mutually exclusive interpretations of Stećaks exist. The power of WHL as a mechanism that seemingly makes irrelevant much broader social and ethnic conflicts, by awarding heritage with a 'higher' status of belonging to humanity, was crucial for transnational cooperation among the four participating states.

Indicatively, in the attempt to negate the interpretative process of heritage making and management, some of the interviewees referred to their work as a 'description' of cultural property, implying an objective and neutral process. This is visible through the management plans of this nomination, which focus on governance structure and protection of the physical integrity of selected sites, but do not plan the issue of future interpretation of the sites and its use for education purposes. The example of the joint Stećaks nomination shows that there is a need for recognizing interpretation as an indispensable aspect of heritage and for planning and monitoring the interpretation, communication and education processes within site management plans nominated for the WHL.

In both exhibition projects, dissonance was first suppressed by the concept formed around 10 themes, which allowed the *selection* of topics, a selection which excluded historic periods, events or artefacts which are

highly contested and dissonant. In the case of *Imagining the Balkans*, participants reflected that they were not only cautious to select those objects which unite and interlink the region, but that some curators, after seeing the choices made by other colleagues, decided to remove and change those artefacts which would provoke a neighbouring country. This clearly indicates that the decision to exclude the display of 'problematic objects' was more appropriate than a dialogue around the issue within the group or its presentation to the visitors.

Even though the process of selection is already highly invested with interpretation, the second layer of suppressing dissonance was the process of interpretation of particular themes and objects. Here, two particular manoeuvres stood out. One was a lack of interpretation and contextualization of particular artefacts in relation to the topic. The fear of interpretation or giving a curatorial voice left visitors with what was perceived as factual data and a neutral description of the artefact. Another manoeuvre was the one of crafting a new discourse, a new interpretation. In all three institutionally implemented projects, the nomination of Stećaks, the exhibition *Imagining the Balkans* and partially in the *New Old Museum* project, when national and group discourses conflicted with each other, the choice was made to craft a common consensual interpretation focused on a supranational level. This new discourse was achieved by framing the region within certain identity markers and commonalities, rather than displaying pluralism of interpretations. The idea of shared or common heritage was utilized as a concept which seemingly 'transcended' dissonances. The big achievement here was creating discourses which created low-tension messages of commonalities, interrelations and co-existence.

However, as with other more technical instruments for framing SEE through international cooperation and the EU enlargement process, this cultural framing was politically driven, constructed and selective. In terms of meaning and treatment of identities and contested topics, this model created another narrative par excellence, using very selective memory and leaving all the surpluses of meanings under the carpet. The fear of displaying dissonance was so strong that it became easier to work with compromises and common denominators voted by unanimous consensus. The problematic

aspect of these common stories is that they are not the result of a consensus and embraced redefinition of meanings of certain historic periods and phenomena, but a consequence of compromises through which conflicting issues were bargained and excluded.

Compromise logic was exercised in two ways: first and most visible in the case of the *Imagining the Balkans* exhibition was that the rule of making decisions about the exhibition concept, content and approach by unanimous agreement of all participants, led to the expedient acceptance of standards that are lower than what was desirable by some participants; second, the way to compromise was a negotiation of meaning through a set of exclusions and through an agreement that was reached by each side making concessions, as in the case of the Stećaks nomination and some aspects of *Yugoslavia: From the Beginning to the End*.

These compromises meant that the bargaining took place for a particular time period and particular space, context and occasion, but that the contested meanings still exist and will not be changed in the long-term. They temporarily excluded contested aspects, without changing ways of understanding and approaching contestations. As such, they eliminated the space for discussing dissonance and missed the opportunity to increase citizen's understanding and critical thinking about the diverse uses of history. Therefore, one cannot claim that they resolved dissonances and conflicts, because they simply did not openly address them. The idea to lock the discourse through common interpretation could be challenged by each visit, guided tour, media or audience reactions. New encounters with what was written in the nomination, displayed in the museum or archived as a personal memory created new spaces for re-addressing dissonance, indicating that the attempts to eliminate dissonance is inherently challenging.

9.4 Inclusive heritage discourse: towards dynamic pluralist heritage

This is where the alternative approach to heritage using inclusive heritage discourse (IHD) might help conceptualize the challenge in another way. IHD formulates heritage in diachronic terms, as resources from the past

which are (re)constructed in the present and for present purposes, having extrinsic value for a myriad of identity-based, political, economic, social and cultural goals. Instead of understanding heritage meaning and value as the embedded truth waiting to be recognized and deciphered, it treats heritage as a contingent, culturally and politically conditioned interpretative process.

IHD recognizes the assemblage of diverse organizations and groups in governing heritage. It does not relate heritage only to authorized (listed) cultural properties, but to understandings and memories as practised by diverse social groups, recognizing their active agency, choices and responsibility in making and using heritage. It thus recognizes the plurality of meanings and valorisations which depend on the context and unlocks hegemonic meanings within the order of heritage discourse. In including and accepting plural interpretations of the past, the discursive space established through heritage dissonance should be thought-provoking, de-naturalizing and non-dogmatic, decreasing the symbolic competition over a singular truth for certain heritage. Therefore, instead of understanding dissonance as a problematic and exceptional element of heritage, it acknowledges dissonance as a quality embedded in heritage and appraises plurality of meanings. The position of IHD is that of a radical democracy and pluralist paradigm which opens the space for accepting, understanding, dialoguing and negotiating heritage dissonance. Instead of being regarded as destructive to identity, dissonance can function as a form of resistance to hegemonic discourses and become a condition for the construction of pluralist, multicultural societies based on inclusiveness, understanding and acceptance (Graham 2002, 1005).

Interestingly, only one of the four cases, the Croatian Memories Archive, based its value perspective, rhetoric and practice in premises of IHD. It is however indicative that the organizing body, Documenta, is the only non-institutional actor, and the only one that does not primarily perceive itself as an actor in the heritage field. Indications of IHD within Documenta's work have their roots in the postulates of human rights and peace-building activism. It is therefore even more indicative that the use of heritage methods and practices by a human rights organization has resulted in practices and a project which are in line with IHD, showing that this discourse is more

appropriate for linking heritage with equality and justice. The case of Documenta's Croatian Memories Archive shows a strategy in which pluralism and dissonance were purposefully made visible in order to counteract selective and static culture of memory. The leading idea of this strategy was that only on the basis of pluralist culture of memory one can build trust among conflicting communities. Even though these dissonant experiences can cause new tensions when voiced within the public spaces, they serve as a starting point for addressing and understanding different experiences.

In the case of other, more classical heritage-related actors and initiatives, this research has shown that rhetoric use of IHD is far from reality and that most of the institutional actors in the heritage field still practice AHD. However, it also showed that experiences of active dissonances in these projects caused problems in the way participants could hold to AHD, and did cause the change of certain practices.

The case of the Museum of Yugoslav History (MIJ) is both the most evident example of how active dissonances led not only to challenging the role of museums in relation to audiences, policy makers, researchers and society, but also to the questioning of the appropriateness of traditional *museographic* methods. What is indicative in this case is that the activist, regional and reconciliatory perspective from within MIJ was a consequence of the appointment of a director from the NGO sector who deliberately tried to test the logic of thinking and value perspective of the independent cultural sector in a national institution. This value perspective, which is more in line with IHD, influenced a change in position of MIJ and other actors as well as a change in traditional museographic approaches and techniques which impose a singular reading of history.

Its effect, however, was limited by the fact that it was not fully supported within the institution and has not been fully continued. As a consequence, in the 'strategy of Scheherazade', MIJ tests methods such as public debates, conversations, guided tours, artistic interventions, youth theatre and temporary exhibitions which allow it to continuously raise new questions related to Yugoslav history without needing to take a stand or to lock one single discourse about Yugoslavia. These new positions and interactions

made MIJ become more conscious and critical of AHD but it has still not fully embraced IHD in a coherent manner.

In the case of *Imagining the Balkans* there were again more dialogical and intangible methods such as guided tours and conferences, which were given by curators who had a need to offer a deeper and 'less-shiny' interpretation of the dissonances silenced within the exhibition. Both in this project and in the nomination of Stećaks, one could see how due to the experiences gained during these projects, it was difficult for the participants to defend the position of heritage, historiographies and their institutions as unproblematic, apolitical and objective. Despite this visible confusion and sometimes contradictory statements, most participants were not familiar with the theoretical apparatus with which they could articulate alternative heritage discourse to describe their experience.

Most interviewees were practitioners in their own disciplines and did not have any interest in critical research of their disciplines nor in research that analyses heritage as a politically, culturally and socially constructed phenomenon. Most actors used just randomly parts and key words of IHD but were quickly putting them back in the discursive space of AHD. Heritage practice, professional education and critical heritage scholarship are quite far from each other in the majority of cases.

The regional and national projects and seminars for continuous professional education in heritage have mainly been focused on museum marketing, audience development, project management and other more technical skills. This research showed that education in theoretical and philosophical concepts of new museology and critical heritage studies is a necessary precondition for critical, less dogmatic and socially responsible heritage profession. This relates to university education of future professionals, to seminars, workshops and conferences for established professionals, as well as to the creation of cooperation frameworks between academia and heritage practices.

9.5 Projects as social arenas: interactions, limitations and the need for inter-sectoral cooperation

An important aspect of all these projects is that they have created various social arenas for meetings, research, selection, collecting, interpretations, consultation, negotiation and arbitration. Besides agreements, discussions and decisions over the meaning of particular heritage, and besides tangible outcomes such as documents, nominations, exhibitions and online archives, these events have created new kinds of social relations and new institutional and organizational interactions. The experience of cooperation made everyone more aware of the ideological role of themselves and their institutions. This awareness did not necessarily come from the open dialogues around a shared table, but could be tracked during coffee breaks, in eye-to-eye conversations, in self-censorships that took place during the selection and interpretation process, as well as in the public and political clashes that resulted due to these projects.

These newly created social arenas provided opportunities for differentiation, co-identification, alliance-building and multiple outcomes that are sometimes in the long-run more consequential than tangible outcomes. In the case of the transnational nomination of Stećaks, besides the nomination based on a common interpretation of this heritage and symbolic value of the cooperation among four states, the meetings, joint work and overcoming of conflicts created a new stock of trust among the participating experts. Even though some parties felt they had to compromise around this project, most of the experts actually found their common ground in the protection of Stećaks and in their ambition to make a successful nomination.

In the case of *Imagining the Balkans*, fault lines among the group members were more evident, particularly the division among those who wanted to approach the project in a more dialogical way and those who wanted to ‘calm things down’ by avoiding difficult issues. These positions can be described as clashes related to the academic and theoretical background of the participants, in which most curators were formed by one-sided national historiography mixed with the idea of heritage as being

apolitical, while a minority followed some of the constructivist theoretical trends in heritage and historical disciplines.

Another critical position for these two projects was the one of UNESCO representatives as facilitators, arbiters and, in the case of *Imagining the Balkans*, engineers of cooperation. Furthermore, the *Imagining the Balkans* project had a number of 'significant outsiders', both individual experts and organizations such as ICOM or the German Historical Museum, who helped with their expertise while simultaneously serving as guarantees for cooperation within the group. These significant 'others' were a sort of additional incentive for participants, as they were the window to an international community and the arbiters of quality. This position of region in transition and region which 'does not quite match the desirable standards' is being recreated by all sides in the game. The idea to 'show off' to the rest of the world that the SEE region can cooperate, that it has a rich heritage and that it has expertise was apparent throughout the interviews, implying the stigma of not quite matching the standard of *Europeanness*.

Another frustration expressed in the interviews was of being in a position where you are facilitated or taught by someone from outside the region, implying this of mediated professionalization and transiting felt as a new *mission civilizatrice*. At the same time, the same people who complained about this subordinated position recognised that only someone from outside can and should put us around the same table from time to time and make us cooperate. In the cases of stopped cooperation and mistrust after violent conflicts, international organizations and professionals from outside the region carry a symbolic capital and prestige that can and should be used in bringing regional actors to the same table. These mediated and somewhat forced cooperations are ways to create new encounters and slowly build trust among representatives of countries and communities that have been through conflict. However, these processes require time and continuity and should not be expected to happen through short term projects.

In the case of MIJ what happened at first was a clash of NGO sector thinking of the former director and a passive museum institution. In this, resistance of many curators and some board members led to a decrease of initial ambitions on one side and a partisan way of work with new selected

younger curators, external partnerships and outsourcing on the other. MIJ also partly changed the traditional master-pupil relationship, since external actors, NGOs, artists and citizens demonstrated significant interest and capacity to communicate on the subject of Yugoslavia. These new relations are now being used by MIJ to disperse responsibility and share risks and tensions with these other actors.

These projects provide an indication of the freedoms and limitations of each particular institutional and individual actor in being able to step outside their usual context and experiment with new cooperation. For those actors who were willing to push the two exhibition projects into more painful topics and show dissonance, the space for change of traditional museum practices seemed extremely narrow and marginal. Throughout the interviews they described their position as a deadlock, because the majority of curators, museum boards, audience and ministries all had traditional expectations of museums and heritage as a source of pride and identity. Additional tensions were evident in the Stećaks nomination process and the *Imagining the Balkans* exhibition due to the fact that participants were not engaged as only professionals, but as representatives of their respective institutions and on top of that, as representatives of their own nation-states. This was both a strength of these projects in terms of political backing and symbolical weight and a weakness in terms of the freedom of participants to work through their professionalism instead of their national identity and interests.

In the case of the Museum of Yugoslav History it was evident that this deadlock was not a consequence of the ministry's cultural policy or explicit pressure at the museum to restrain from regional cooperation and innovative practices. On the contrary, active expansion or active limitation of transformative boundaries went on within the space of what director and curators 'imagined' to be appropriate, both in relation to the national cultural policies, audiences and the AHD. Sometimes it was an unaware self-censorship, which kept actors within well-known and established codes of conduct in order to mitigate risks.

Therefore, even those who would have liked to see museums at the core of critical thinking about the past pointed out that alternative voices should be mainly reserved for universities and non-governmental organizations.

Interestingly, when academic historians from universities or research institutes worked as authors on the permanent display at the Museum of Yugoslav History they acted as if within a museum context one had the responsibility to give one consensual story as the baseline for further discussion. It was as if the very experience of visiting museums was to offer one consensual narrative about history, eliminating alternative options in interpreting and presenting heritage within the museum context. This escape from being political and taking an active ethical stand within museum has highly problematic implications for all those participating in creating a heritage value chain. It causes a lack of reflexivity and responsibility from the side of curators and, a lack of awareness from the side of other stakeholders that they are taking part in a political process of identity making and social structuring, as producer or consumers of heritage. What is needed apart from continuing education of the heritage sector is to actively embrace responsibility for projecting certain values and messages that deeply influence social relations.

For now, these activist positions are embraced by civil society actors such as Documenta that have more freedom to openly oppose and complement official culture of memory and create information capital such as the Croatian Memories Archive. This could not have been done by state funded museums. However, this position of freedom to create pluralist cultural memory is highly dependent on international donor funding. Furthermore, this activist position has another weakness, which is its marginal position in relation to public memory institutions and its image among citizens of being a 'foreign traitor' and not being equally accountable as institutions. For this reason, more cooperation and co-productions among the public institutions and civil sector, as well as with the academic community are needed in order to increase the share of knowledge and information and, to widen the space for diverse voices as well as to share the responsibility for changing traditional heritage practices.

Just as participants were bound by their responsibilities towards their own nation-states, politicians and public opinion, so was UNESCO bound by the ideological imperatives of states which are its stock-holders, by its own bureaucratic practices and reliance on traditional hierarchical decision-

making requirements. All these influenced a paradoxical position in which UNESCO is at the same time embracing its role as a reconciliatory force and distancing from this role when it becomes risky. Therefore, the same way as museums and heritage professionals worked out dissonance backstage and delivered a harmonious product to their audiences, UNESCO worked to hide its ambition in mediating conflicting heritage issues. The lack of clearly set project frameworks and transparency in communicating UNESCO's ambition made it easier for UNESCO to decrease the benchmark. Finally, it allowed UNESCO to negate any ambition of working with contested heritage and paint the conversation within the universalistic 'shared heritage' concept.

In the case of some other transnational nomination among countries with stable relations, it is expected that UNESCO representatives would not be present at working meetings. But in the case of ex-warring states, this presence was essential, in the same way as it was essential that UNESCO's coordinator for the *Imagining the Balkans* exhibition was involved in the content of the exhibition in order to keep the standards high while mediating problematic issues. Both of these roles, however, were not perceived as something usual and appropriate for UNESCO, so had to be dealt with carefully and within a veil of secrecy, showing the limitations in standing for the organization's peace-building ideals. They also influenced the lack of learning and evaluation from these valuable practices. In sensitive projects like these, when it is expected of professionals to step out of their usual context and practices, a change in bureaucratic requirements is needed at the level of UNESCO's involvement. Instead of hiding the change of usual practices, it is important to learn from the tensions and requirements posed by these projects in order to be able to pursue the reconciliatory role in other contexts.

9.6 Beyond the unwillingness to learn

All four projects began by or were dependent on international project funding while national funding has remained focused on national projects and international cooperation outside the region. The limit to project logic and international funding is that the impact is short-term. It provides for a

degree of cooperation and links, but it does not secure continuation partly due to no long-term provision for the funding and partly due to changes of people in important positions of the participating organisations. The positive aspects of all these projects was that they had or will have some sort of longer-term echo.

With the inscription of Stećaks in the World Heritage List, the four states and participating professionals will be bound to cooperate in the protection of Stećaks, in line with the management plan. In the case of *Imagining the Balkans*, the exhibition has travelled in more than half of the participating states, while the Greek National Museum will create an online version of the exhibition. In the case of the *New Old Museum*, even though the pilot permanent exhibition is no longer in use, some of the working methods and many cooperation and contacts have been continued by museum staff. In the case of *Croatian Memories*, the project created a resource which will remain available publicly for future use, research and discussions.

Paradoxically, even though the project logic is supposed to aim at bringing change and creating new learning, the limiting nature of project-based funding is that it often does the opposite when it comes to learning from its own experience. In order to get funded for the next project, actors evaluate for the sake of reporting to the funder, with evaluations that are more repetitions of the project aims and foreseen results, than a real learning from the strengths and weaknesses of the process. This is particularly problematic for risky and politically sensitive projects such as the four cases analysed here, because the aim is likely to be an idealistic ambition, unrealistic when put into practice.

The Stećaks nomination was never expected to be evaluated as a process. The evaluation was put in the hands of UNESCO and solely based on acceptance to the WHL as the most important success indicator. For UNESCO, the indicator of success was the very fact that four countries cooperated with a finalized nomination as a result. The project *Imagining the Balkans* did not have a transparent and planned project framework, nor did it foresee or discuss whether and how the evaluation could be done and what they would evaluate. From the UNESCO side, its role as active coordinator and funder ended on the creation of the exhibition itself and did not enter

into questions about audiences, public programmes and ways in which reactions to the exhibition could be collected and evaluated, nor was an evaluation of the internal process among participants planned.

What also has not been built upon is the incorporation of this project within wider UNESCO's structure, so that similar tools could be used in other UNESCO offices in the world. The size of the organization and large number of projects, internal communication which relies on sharing 'representative' information via websites and newsletters or long annual reports, the lack of formal procedure and mechanisms to share know-how, doubts and advice on innovative projects all influence the lack of systemic learning from practices within the organization and reduces the capacity for multiplying effects.

Since the funding for both the *New Old Museum* project and the *Croatian Memories* project was secured from project-based donation, both projects followed a standard requirement for reporting set by the funders. Matra set the criteria for *Croatian Memories* and the Balkan Trust for Democracy provided the evaluation framework for the Museum of Yugoslav History. In the case of the Museum of Yugoslav History an impressive evaluation process of the exhibition was implemented and this new learning was put into the report. However, once the evaluation of the exhibition was completed, the museum did not use it to openly talk about the whole process. Instead of a continuation of the pilot exhibition towards a new permanent display, employees of MIJ did not talk about the exhibition since its closure. The focus group with employees conducted for this research was the first time that *Yugoslavia: From the Beginning to the End* was openly discussed after spring 2013. Instead of building on what was done, the change of director and interpersonal conflicts among museum staff caused a situation in which the process of working on a permanent display began again from scratch. Furthermore, even though everyone agreed that the evaluation of the exhibition was a strong point, a similar kind of evaluation did not become usual museum practice. Therefore, similar to the case of *Imagining the Balkans* the case of this project was not used for explicit learning by the organization.

This all influenced potential learning from the research process. Except

for the Museum of Yugoslav History all other initiatives and organizations were much more difficult to approach and were hesitant to share their documentation. Therefore, this research process was followed by constant questioning of the line between my responsibility for these organizations and individuals, their reputation and future funding opportunities and the responsibility towards a research process as a space for constructive criticism and learning from these practices.

Evaluating is crucial for these projects exactly because most of them have huge potential on paper but are challenged when being implemented. This is why the achievements of these projects should be analysed beyond a 'best practice' logic and should be looked at both in relation to promises and in relation to initial context from which they grew. The evaluation should avoid positivist bias and allowing learning both from achievements and failures.

Looking at the set ambitions as the highest benchmark, most of these projects could be evaluated as dissatisfying. On the other hand, if one introduces the initial context and practices as a benchmark, they are truly important steps forward. The context and positions from which they emerged characterized by the evident war of histories and memories in SEE, the traditional and non-reflexive museological practices by the majority of participating museums and curators, the strong direct and indirect influence of politicians on cultural institutions, the power-relations within UNESCO that protect national interests, the dependency on international donor funding for civil society practice and regional cooperation are all important aspects for an evaluation.

All the projects need to be continued, worked on further and updated more often, instead of being seen as a one-shot investment in regional peace-building that ticked the boxes and allows everyone to go back to their usual practices. Exactly because all the case studies are project based, evaluation and research becomes extremely important for internal reflection within organizations, policy makers and donors that could make these short-term projects become integrated within longer-term organizational value perspective, policies, strategies and programmes.

9.7 Wider implications of heritage dissonance for heritage policy, practice and research

Two and a half years ago when embarking on this book, I imagined this research would be a sort of wrapping-up of experiences from SEE and moving forward in cooperation, participative dialogue and understanding through heritage. What took place over these years both in the region, in Europe and especially in the Middle East, has shown how conflicts and heritage cannot be just linked to active periods of war and how different values and interpretations attached to the past can result in violent conflict and hatred. Events from the Islamic extremists' attack on Charlie Hebdo's cartoonists, through to the destruction of ancient heritage sites throughout Syria and Iraq by ISIS, the protests against Cyrillic signs in Vukovar, memory wars related to commemoration of the 20th Anniversary of Srebrenica Massacre, to the attacks in Paris on 13 November, confirm that we need much more active involvement in understanding and dialoguing different positions related to identities, beliefs and the past.

The dilemma of harmonizing dissonances for the sake of cohesion and stability, or embracing dissonances as points of understanding and dialogue, carries within itself much deeper political and philosophical issues. The question of prioritizing unity over diversity, of the holism vs. particularism, of shared virtues over individual freedom, of influence vs mediation, and control vs facilitation, are just some of the political dilemmas related to heritage dissonance, identity and conflict. All these influence the way in which societies are integrated through past and heritage. This research highlighted why the attempts of imposed consensual integration through the past are problematic when it comes to building understanding and trust within societies, and why dynamic pluralist integration better suits the dissonances of views and political ideals of pluralist democracy.

This plea for more pluralist, dynamic and critical approaches to heritage as a cultural and social construct was not only present within academic debates, but found its articulation in the Faro Convention (CoE 2005), signalling that AHD is not able to address new understandings of heritage. The paradox of Faro is that pragmatically and normatively it has been

formulated not as a changer but as a supplement to all the previous conventions (Therond 2009, 26-27). Therefore, even though it sets a new conceptual framework for understanding and managing heritage – which form the basis for reconstructing the boundaries of heritage established by AHD – it did not describe normative and pragmatic mechanisms. Therefore, it made it easy to be downplayed by using key words and concepts from the convention without actually changing the power relations, roles and institutionalized heritage practices. As inclusive heritage discourse promoted through Faro and its relation to human rights, conflicts and pluralism have been perceived as having dangerous political implications, the growing emergence of a third position within the order of heritage discourse became even more prominent – the one which imports the discourse of neoliberal capitalism to the heritage field.

In this context, the idea of ‘smart, sustainable and inclusive growth’ in which heritage plays part is becoming a new discursive trend from the EU towards the SEE, replacing the tagline of a ‘peaceful, just and cohesive society’ and the role of heritage for human rights. This one is particularly interesting and dangerous as it plays with and draws from elements of both authorized and inclusive heritage discourse, seemingly bridging them, while actually reassembling both of them through an economic logic. And interestingly, this emerging trend of talking about heritage is much more comfortable than the one of understanding, communicating and reconciling; and is able to put different countries around the same table without causing political scandals.

This discourse can be pinned down in UNESCO’s culture and sustainable economic (and social) development agenda and the interviews conducted for this research with some UNESCO representatives, as well as throughout the recent policy documents provided by EU institutions in 2014 through heritage for ‘smart, sustainable and inclusive growth’ (*Council Conclusions on cultural heritage as a strategic resource for a sustainable Europe*, adopted under the Greek presidency of the EU in May 2014; *Towards an integrated approach to cultural Heritage for Europe*, European Commission Communication, adopted in July 2014; *Council Conclusions on participatory Governance of cultural heritage*, adopted under the Italian Presidency in November 2014).

New EU heritage policy documents lean on the definition of heritage from the Faro Convention, but build on the idea of European heritage through cohesion and integration following a logic similar to 19th-century national agendas. The intrinsic value of European heritage for European identity, its instrumental value for economic development, and its social value for developing a sense of belonging and cohesion form a discourse which captures better politician's attention and which requires much smaller shifts in understanding heritage than the one put forward in the Faro Convention.

In the context of enormous demographic changes, migrations within and to EU Member States, and cities which have been increasingly multicultural for decades now, the idea of insisting on 'European heritage' in a manner ignorant and exclusive of other 'non-European' cultures and experiences is deeply problematic. Through these articulations, the 'Fortress Europe' utilizes the same mechanisms used in the creation of national identities for the vision of European integration, accepting only certain diversities within its idea of unity. This discourse is particularly dangerous as it appropriates key concepts from the Faro Convention, but gives them a neoliberal twist while keeping the authorized discourse alive, undermining the role of heritage as a dynamic, pluralist and human-rights based concept.

Equally problematic is the emerging EU policy for transitional justice and policy mechanisms for heritage and conflict reserved exclusively for external international development cooperation and assistance from the EU. This research pointed out the paradoxical case of organizations such as Documenta, whose funding was coming from the international donations and European funds before Croatia became a part of the EU. With the accession of Croatia to the EU, the majority of the funds to address dealing with the past became unavailable, despite the new ethnic tensions and right wing orientation of the Croatian government. Instead, the role of Documenta is being oriented through funding mechanisms to become a knowledge provider for countries outside the EU, as if the EU does not have issues with heritage and conflict.

The question of heritage dissonance, identities and conflicts should not be seen solely as a problem of less developed countries which went through recent wars and dictatorship. Dealing with the colonial past in some EU

Member States, increasing numbers of immigrants, decisions such as banning the veil in France or the minaret ban in Switzerland, and reactions and disputes caused by the refugee crises and increasing terrorist attacks are just parts of a mosaic which shows urge for more reflexive and internal rethinking of heritage and conflicts.

Furthermore, conflicting rights to ownership and the right to interpret the past, in which ways and for whom, has its role not only in relations between diverse cultures, but also class, gender, generational and other struggles. Conflicts are therefore not the specificity and past condition of so-called post-conflict societies, but are common phenomena in pluralistic societies as they are consequences of diverse interests that exist. Heritage dissonance is an equally common phenomenon that allows us to understand the complexities and changes of reality. Instead of ignoring it and approaching it as an exceptional and static problem, dissonance should be used as a space for mutual recognition, acceptance, dialogue and dynamic relationship with the past, as conceptually proposed through IHD.

In order to be exercised, IHD, as a pluralist and human rights approach to heritage, needs not only the ratification of a framework convention such as Faro, but needs re-definition in legal frameworks, policy instruments, value perspectives, actors' roles and positions, practices and *museographical* approaches in the heritage field. This means that ultimate approach of IHD towards heritage dissonance would be to incorporate dissonance holistically in the very definition of all heritage and change heritage policy, governance and management from the very ethics to individual tools and practices. This for now is just a rhetoric reality and a utopian vision. The second level of thinking about policies for heritage dissonance from the perspective of inclusive discourse would be to consistently insist that all heritage is dissonant and continuously call into question AHD, consensual heritage and its policy principles, instruments and tools. This would increase the awareness of practitioners, researchers, policy-makers and citizens even if it does not fully change conceptual, normative and pragmatic policy levels.

The third option would be to focus on heritage that is actively dissonant and use it as a testing zone for new, alternative methodologies and principles in heritage governance and management which are in line with IHD, such as

diversifying interpretation strategies, implementing collaborative, cooperative and co-management approaches. Furthermore, the use of participative methods of heritage making, management and interpretation such as discussions, evaluations, oral histories, personal collections, crowd-collecting, crowd-curating and artistic interventions might be useful for starting a dialogue around the past, remembrance and identity politics, for encouraging multiperspectivity and critical approaches to heritage. These methods which acknowledge and discuss dissonance should be used more often for intercultural mediation, dialogue and post-conflict reconciliation.

Future research should also focus on mapping and analysing instruments, tools and practices related to heritage dissonance which have been implemented by diverse policy actors and within diverse national, local, supranational and regional contexts, while always being aware of the power of discourse to make things and practices appear as common sense and thus unnoticed. These include not only institutional practices, but artistic projects which deal with memory and diversity of NGO and private initiatives. In the long run, the power of these examples could become the basic understanding of uses and abuses of heritage and for reconfiguring the system of heritage policy so that it is more inclusive, plural and participatory.

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Online resources

Balkan Museum Network: <http://bmuseums.net/>

Compendium Cultural Policies and Trends: <http://www.culturalpolicies.net/web/index.php>

Croatian Memories: <http://www.croatianmemories.org/en/>

Cultural Heritage without Borders: <http://chwb.org/>

Documenta – Center for Dealing with the Past: <http://www.documenta.hr/en/home.html>

EUNAMUS: <http://www.ep.liu.se/eunamus/>

HEREIN System – European Heritage Policies: <http://www.herein-system.eu/>

Museum of Yugoslav History: <http://www.mij.rs/en.html>

South East European Heritage Network: <http://www.seeheritage.net/>

UNESCO Venice Office: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/venice>

UNESCO World Heritage Center: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/>

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/03/10/us-balkans-unesco-idUSKBN0M61T720150310>

Archival documents

Cultural Heritage without Borders (Statute, Annual Reports, Strategies, Project Proposals and Reports, Internal and External Evaluations)

Documenta – Center for Dealing with the Past (with limited access – Statute, Proposals of selected projects)

Imagining the Balkans: Identities and Memory in the Long 19th Century (personal archive of one of the participants – Group reports from all the meetings, Curator's reports as comments on group reports, notes and comments from the meetings, selection and integral texts related to all objects)

Museum of Yugoslav History (Statute, Strategic Plans, Annual Plans, Annual Reports, Project proposal and Reports, Evaluation material from the exhibition *Yugoslavia: From the Beginning to the End*)

Joint nomination of Stećaks (insight into reports and documentation from the meetings, tentative list nomination file, nomination file)

Interviews and focus groups conducted

Cultural Heritage without Borders: one focus group and 8 interviews

Documenta – Center for Dealing with the Past: 7 interviews

Imagining the Balkans: Identities and Memory in the Long 19th Century: 10 interviews

Museum of Yugoslav History: one focus group and 6 interviews

Joint nomination of Stećaks: 9 interviews

List of CPRA 2013 Jury Members

Lluís Bonet, President of the Jury (Spain)
Eleonora Belfiore, Jury Member (United Kingdom)
Jacques Bonniel, Jury Member (France)
Sanjin Dragojević, Jury Member (Croatia)
Mikhail Gnedovsky, Jury member (Russian Federation)
Timo Cantell, Jury Member (Austria)
Therese Kaufman, Jury Member (Austria)

Lluís Bonet, President of the Jury (Spain)

Lluís Bonet is Professor at the University of Barcelona, and former President of the European Network of Cultural Administration Training Centres (ENCATC). Vice-President of the European Association of Cultural Researchers (ECURES), board member of the Association of Cultural Economics International (ACEI) and member of the Board of Trustees of Abacus (the largest Spanish cooperative on education and culture). External advisor in cultural policies, statistics and economics for the Council of Europe, the European Union, the Inter-American Development Bank, UNESCO and the Organization of Ibero-American States for Education, Science and Culture (OEI). Director of a large number of research studies in cultural economics and cultural policies. He lectures and is Director of the Doctoral and the Graduate Programmes on Cultural Management at the University of Barcelona. He is also Professor for undergraduate courses at the same university (Schools of Law, Economics, Documentation and Librarianship) on Political Economy, Cultural Economics, Cultural Industries, Cultural Management and Policy. He

is a Research Fellow and Assistant Professor on Cultural Policy at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (1991-1992) as well as a Guest Professor in different graduate programmes on arts and heritage management, and lecturer in more than 20 countries in Europe, Latin America and the USA.

Eleonora Belfiore, Jury Member (United Kingdom)

Eleonora Belfiore is Professor of Communication and Media Studies at Loughborough University, Leicester, UK as of May 2016. Previously she was Associate Professor in Cultural Policy at the Centre for Cultural Policy Studies at the University of Warwick, UK. Her research interests revolve around the notion of the 'social impacts' of the arts, and the effect that the transformational rhetoric of impact has had on British cultural policy. In particular, Dr Belfiore has been researching the challenges posed by impact evaluation and assessment in the context of a growing trend towards evidence-based policy making in the cultural sector. Part of this work was published by Palgrave in 2008 as a monograph entitled *The Social Impact of the Arts: An Intellectual History*, co-authored with Oliver Bennett. Between 2013-2015 she was a Director of Studies for the Warwick Commission on the Future of Cultural Value and co-author of its influential report *Enriching Britain: Culture, Creativity and Growth* (2015).

Jacques Bonniel, Jury Member (France)

Jacques Bonniel worked as Maître de Conférences in Sociology at the University Lumière Lyon 2 France until his retirement in 2014. He was also Director of a post-graduate (Masters) in cultural project management at the same university and co-organizer of a post-graduate course on 'Cultural management and policies in the Balkans' in partnership with the University of Arts in Belgrade and the University of Grenoble II. He conducts research for different regional and national departments on cultural policies and has published a number of books, articles and research reports in the field of

sociology, cultural policy and management. He participates in various national and regional working groups, in particular in ENCATC. Dr Bonniel has been leading lecturer in sociology at the University of Lyon Lumière 2 since 1990. He was also Dean of Faculty of Anthropology and Sociology (University Lumière Lyon 2, 1995-2005) and he was Vice-President in charge of training of the university from 2008 to 2012.

Sanjin Dragojević, Jury Member (Croatia)

Sanjin Dragojević is Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Political Science, University of Zagreb, Croatia. Dr Dragojević is also permanent guest-lecturer in cultural management organized by the Institute for Cultural Management, Vienna, Austria, and at the post-graduate programme of the Institute for Cultural Research, Krems, Austria. The areas of his interest include philosophy and sociology of culture, cultural development and international cultural cooperation, cultural policy, cultural management and information systems in culture. He has been involved and still participates in domestic and international projects carried out by the Institute of International Relations (IMO) and by the Culturelink Network. Dr Dragojević was one of the experts for the Council of Europe on the evaluation of cultural policy of the Republic of Croatia (1997), and he participated in a number of UNESCO supported research projects. He was cultural consultant for County of Istria (Croatia), The Moving Academy for Performing Arts (Amsterdam), Croatian Humanitarian Network (Zagreb), Stella Film (Zagreb) and many others.

Mikhail Gnedovsky, Jury Member (Russian Federation)

Mikhail Gnedovsky currently works as Chief Analyst in the Moscow Centre for Museum Development and lecturer in cultural policy in the Moscow School for Social and Economic Sciences. In 2003-2015, he was Director at the Cultural Policy Institute, a Moscow-based NGO, where he led or supervised various projects aimed at the promotion of innovative agendas in the cultural

field in Russia. He has been involved in research and capacity-building projects, as well as in the development of strategies focused around issues related to the creative industries, arts and business collaboration, social implications of the arts, and the role of cultural heritage in the regional economy. He has worked internationally as an expert on various cultural projects, including the programmes of the Council of Europe and European Commission. In 2002-2014, he was a member of the Judging Panel of the European Museum of the Year Award (EMYA). In 2009-2011, he was Chair of the Board of Trustees of the European Museum Forum (EMF), and he has remained on the EMF Board since that time. In 1998-2002, he worked as Director for the Arts and Culture Programme at the Open Society Institute (Soros Foundation) in Russia. In 2000-2003, he was also Member of the Arts and Culture Sub-board at the Open Society Institute in Budapest. In 2005, he was awarded the Golden Cross of Merit of Poland.

Timo Cantell, Jury Member (Austria)

Timo Cantell is Director of Urban Research Unit at the City of Helsinki Urban Facts where over 20 researchers are engaged in studying various urban phenomena, including population, housing, economic issues, urban policies, cultural participation, etc. He is responsible for urban research strategy and activities within Urban Facts, and develops urban research activities in liaison with universities and other research institutions located in the Helsinki metropolitan region. Prior to Urban Facts, Dr Cantell was professor in arts management at Sibelius Academy. He has published and lectured extensively on arts audiences, arts and urban growth strategies, urban regeneration and arts management.

Therese Kaufman, Jury Member (Austria)

Therese Kaufmann currently is the head of research management at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna. For many years she was

a Co-Director of the European Institute for Progressive Cultural Policies (eipcp) in Vienna and one of the editors of the multilingual web journal *transversal*. She worked in research projects such as *Creating Worlds* (2009-2012) and *translate - Beyond Culture: The Politics of Translation* (2005-2008). From 2003 until 2006 she was a board member of EFAH (now Culture Action Europe). She lectures in the fields of cultural policy and cultural studies, in her writing she takes a specific interest in postcolonial theory in relation to cultural policies and knowledge production.

Bibliographical note about the author

Višnja Kisić is active as a researcher, lecturer and manager in the field of heritage management, interpretation and policy, with special focus on heritage, community engagement and mediation. She holds a BA in Art History, an MA in Cultural Policy and Management, and a PhD in Museum and Heritage Studies.

Višnja is researching and lecturing at the Centre for Museology and Heritology, University of Belgrade and the UNESCO Chair in Cultural Policy and Management, University of Arts, Belgrade. She works as a trainer and consultant in heritage related projects and professional capacity-building programmes for heritage professionals in the SEE region – including Europa Nostra, ICOM Serbia, European Heritage Association, Cultural Heritage without Borders, SEE Heritage Network, Balkan Museum Network, Regional Council for Cooperation, Cooperation and Development Network SEE and Heritage Site Management Plans training.

In addition, she has a number of years of experience in both the public and civil sector in heritage, acting as Secretary General for Europa Nostra in Serbia and Board Member of the South East European Heritage Network. Previously, she has worked in curatorial and outreach departments at the National Museum in Belgrade, Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice Biennale and the Museum of Art and Archaeology in Columbia, Missouri.

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The logo for the Cultural Policy Research Award (CPRA) 10 Years. It features a dark blue square containing the text 'CULTURAL POLICY RESEARCH AWARD' in white, stacked vertically. Below the square, the text '10 YEARS CPRA' is displayed in a bold, dark blue font.

CULTURAL POLICY RESEARCH AWARD

10 YEARS CPRA

The *Cultural Policy Research Award* (CPRA), from 2004 to 2013, honoured young and talented researchers (up to 35 years old) addressing topics of European relevance in the field of applied and comparative cultural policy. The award consisted of €10,000 for the accomplishment of a research project bringing valuable insights and proposals to inform policy-making and to benefit practitioners active in the field. The awarded researchers were selected by an international jury in line with various criteria.

Launched by the European Cultural Foundation (ECF) and the Riksbankens Jubileumsfond in 2004, and run in partnership with ENCATC from 2008, the programme package has included an award, an annual Young Cultural Policy Researchers Forum, the publication of the award-winning research project and an online Researchers' Lab.

Following the completion of the CPRA's 10th edition, ECF handed the programme over to ENCATC. As of 2014, it is being followed-up as ENCATC *Research Award on Cultural Policy and Management*.

Awarded researchers 2004 - 2013



2004

Nina Obuljen Koržinek

***Why we need European cultural policies:** the impact of EU enlargement on cultural policies in transition countries.*



2005

Jaka Primorac

***The position of cultural workers in creative industries:** the south-eastern European perspective.*



2006

Marcello Mariani

***Live classical organizations in Europe:** An international comparison of funding trends, governance mechanisms and organizational structures.*



2007

Amanda Brandellero

***Crossing cultural borders?** Migrants and ethnic diversity in the cultural industries.*



2008

Sophia Labadi

Evaluating the socio-economic impacts of selected regenerated heritage sites in Europe.



2009
Davide Ponzini

Governing urban diversity? *An exploration of policy tools for cultural diversity in five European capital cities.*



2010
Claire Bullen

European Cultural Capitals and Everyday Cultural Diversity. *A Comparison of Liverpool (UK) and Marseilles (France).*



2011
Aleksandar Brkić

Cultural policy frameworks. (Re)constructing national and supranational identities: *The Balkans and the European Union.*



2012
Christiaan De Beukelaer

Developing Cultural Industries: *Learning from the Palimpsest of Practice.*



2013
Višnja Kisić

Governing Heritage Dissonance: *Promises and Realities of Selected Cultural Policies.*

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EUROPEAN
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In times when conflicts are becoming increasingly culturalized and fuelled by identity politics, this pioneering study is timely in connecting heritage studies and cultural policies with issues of difference, conflicts and reconciliation. Using the case of South East Europe as exploration ground for wider philosophical and practical questions related to heritage, it calls on us to rethink how we approach the past and deal with diversities – among cultures, nations, communities, classes, gender, and generations. Finally, Kisić offers invaluable insights in the benefits and flaws of international development aid and transitional justice actions in post-conflict areas, making a strong case for the crucial role of culture and heritage in overcoming symbolic violence and creating understanding of ‘the other’.

Sneška Quaedvlieg-Mihajlović
Secretary General, Europa Nostra

Governing Heritage Dissonance is a valuable contribution to the continued development of ‘New Heritage’ thinking. Written, refreshingly, from a South East European perspective it gives a cogent rebuttal to the notion that heritage is cosy or comfortable, and instead deals with dissonance and plurality as aspects of all heritage, as intrinsic as they are unavoidable. Through her analysis of four examples of attempts in South East Europe to use heritage to re-forge consensus and unity, Kisić in effect asks why heritage dissonance is feared – must we always try to smooth it away, can its tensions be used constructively?

Graham Fairclough
McCord Centre for Landscape, Newcastle University, UK

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CULTURAL POLICY RESEARCH AWARD 2013

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