

Chapter title: Positioning oneself while researching Yugoslavia: the context of self-reflection and introspection

Dr Senija Causevic

Institutional affiliation: SOAS University of London, UK

e-mail: senija.causevic@soas.ac.uk

Abstract

Through the lens of the representation of antifascist cultural heritage in former Yugoslavia, this interdisciplinary research project explores philosophical dilemmas, methodological challenges and the role of researchers' introspection and self-reflection before, during and after doing the fieldwork. This chapter reflects on the changes of the representation of antifascist cultural heritage sites in relation to the rising populism, both in the local and in the global socio-cultural space. To situate the fieldwork, the chapter presents theoretical grounding and Yugoslav research context. Further, it presents the research findings situated through elaborating the concept of the nostalgia for the future (Fisher, 2014), context of othering, and intersection of political activism and consumerism. Finally, the chapter explores the role of the researchers in the representation, articulation, and dissemination of the research findings. Through self-reflection and introspection researchers may be able to thicken the description and add another layer of depth, enabling the understanding of the post-Yugoslav space in a more grounded and holistic way. Thus, the chapter calls for more transparency, reflection and introspection while doing research.

Introduction

Plato's essentialism practice in social science and humanities is a philosophy of science which undertakes the task to discover the essence of the phenomena which makes them 'what they really are' (White, 1987; Bestor 2003). Modern social science which follows these Plato's principles is searching for that essence of the phenomena and this is the main point of the process of generalisation. Whilst Plato's essentialism has reaped so many benefits and vastly contributed to the knowledge and social science production (Kuhn 1962), current trends in both academia and journalism which require fast track publishing, forcing categorisation and generalisation of the phenomena, abused Plato's philosophical tenets. In vast number of cases, this has resulted in factual inaccuracies and unfounded speculations. Indeed, modern scientific scholarship and academic fast pace so called 'publish or perish' corporatisation of research, in many instances has resulted in 'bibliometric pressures as a game with its own rules' Hall (2011:26). Academic scholars are thus forced to pay more attention on how fast they can publish, in which outlets to be published, rather than what can be published, or what is the benefit of scientific research which has been published (Causevic et al. 2017). Methods used are those which can give the results fast, not these which are the most suitable for the research inquiry at stake. Similar context has also been seen in journalism where rumours become real news and end up informing decision makers in politics, society, and business realms. In a nutshell, it results in abusing Plato's philosophical tradition by forcing generalisations, categorisation, essentialisation, thus provoking sensationalism to reap the benefits of publishing fast and quickly without putting much thought to the consequences of these. If the phenomena are forcefully put into the categories, this may result in omitting some of their very important characteristics to force-fit into a given category (Weber 2017). Many social science departments and individuals have become focused on playing the game better, rather than being innovative and curious through reaching new knowledge frontiers and understanding the world more thoroughly. Bourdieu (1988: XIV) reflected on the norms and challenges which academic institutions posit, arguing that *'the construction of the field of production, substituting for polemic where prejudice is disguised as analysis; a polemic where scientific reason challenges itself, that is challenging its own limits, implies a break with naïve and self-indulgent objectivations unaware of their sources. It can only be an unjustifiable abstraction (which could fairly be called reductive) to seek the source of the understanding of cultural productions in these productions themselves.'*

If Bourdieu is about to write the book *Homo Academicus* reflecting on academic context of today and fast pace research mentality where it is more important to have a so called strategy of what to publish than how much that publication brings as a contribution to the knowledge, where it is more important how fast something can be published than how innovative or engaging research inquiry is, where the plea that researchers became aware of their own prejudices and unconscious bias how would Bourdieu's *Homo Academicus* be written now? One of the main challenges in the scientific research is methodology. Although there is quite an extensive inquiry method, very little has been written to addresses the methodological and indeed ethical challenges of ethnographic work when it comes to studying societies, and symbolic violence which proceeds as a transformation of physical violence (Hermann, 2011). Researchers need to be aware of what we bring to the study and how we influence its dynamics. It is the case that we need to deal with our own idiosyncratic selves which determines how we position ourselves in the context of our research, and what we bring into the research inquiry.

The traditional scholarly positioning of the researcher within the research context has in many cases been marked with uneven power dynamics where the researchers due to their own fears of self-indulgence (Lynch, 2000) and academic scrutiny, either fear to acknowledge the dissonance and consonance between themselves and the research context (Finley 2001), or is simply not aware of the 'baggage' the researcher brings to the research context. This chapter reflects on Finley's (2001) argument that dissonance while doing social research may not only be personal, yet an indication of a greater moral, social, economic, and political contradictions. Rather than covering that dissonance for fear of seeming self-indulgent, Finley (2001) suggests that research should rather analyse broader social, political, and moral contradictions that created dissonance or consonance between the researcher and research context, and reflect on it during research process. Hermann (2001) further argues that by opening the door to manifested subjectivity, relativism is legitimated, and this in its turn, blurs the line between scientific studies and other forms of reality construction.

This chapter through the long-term ethnographic research, explores how the researcher positions themselves while doing ethnographic research in former Yugoslavia, particularly the context of self-positioning of a local researcher while studying post-Yugoslav context. The chapter illustrates this through adopted a retrospective approach that used ethnographic intent, i.e. conformity to ethnographic principles (Wolcott, 1985), and auto-ethnography manifested through self-reflection and introspection upon the interpretation of the fieldwork, enabling unique knowledge production and insights to be reflected upon as an irreplaceable analytical resource (Bourdieu 2003). The ethnographic fieldwork started in 2008, during the multisided PhD research in Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H) and continued through various research project until present day. The main focus of this chapter is the fieldwork which took place in the period (2015-2020) at sites located in the former Yugoslav socialist republics, now sovereign states, namely Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H), Croatia and Serbia. The fieldwork also featured guided tours through Sarajevo (B&H), Belgrade (Serbia), and Rijeka – European Capital of Culture 2020 (Croatia), where the opening ceremony featured the city's legacy of working class community, antifascism, social justice and inclusion (See figure 1 for the map). Research context will be further discussed in the chapter. This research is embedded in the context of current socio-political and economic settings, both globally and in the former Yugoslavia and how they influence one another in the context of interpretation of antifascist cultural heritage sites in former Yugoslavia. The chapter illustrates this through the lens of commodification, positioning and interpretation of the post-Yugoslav heritage sites which commemorate the legacy of antifascism, the characteristic which used to be the core in understanding Yugoslav identity (Duda 2011; Causevic 2019). Although the topic of research may not be deemed as very important, as indeed it is about heritage sites, not about high politics and geopolitical contexts. However, the management of the legacy of heritage sites is an indicator when we talk about identity and belonging as heritage sites and museums mediate between the past and present (Noy, 2018). It provides us with a bottom-up approach. There have certainly been numerous studies on cultural heritage interpretation, particularly in the context of so-called contested heritage (for instance Goulding and Domic 2008; Noy 2016) related to the role of the discourse of identity, belonging and nationalism. The theoretical grounding of this chapter explored how the contemporary events and contexts, both globally and in a regional post-Yugoslav space inspired interpretation, commodification, and cultural appropriation of World War II antifascist heritage in post-Yugoslav space.

Askegaard and Linnet (2011) argue that the research in social science is loaded by the complexity of its methodological and theoretical doctrines which very often restrain the research conduct and innovativeness in cultural analysis. Indeed, sociocultural conditions must be brought to the research settings and included in the development of new theories. Thus, before discussing methodological and research context, the chapter briefly discusses theoretical grounding related to the issue of symbolic violence and heritage commodification. It proceeds with the research context so that the methodological context of this research is thoroughly grounded in the theoretical and contextual settings. It aims to reflect on these contexts to understand their influence on the promotion and interpretation of the heritage sites that carry with them the legacy of a Yugoslavian antifascist heritage and celebrate building connections across divides, creating a sense of what Jacques Derrida (2000) refers to as shared humanity. The research reflects on both regional and global contexts. Although the collapse of former Yugoslavia has been widely debated, there has been very little focus on methodological discourse when it comes to the research. Particularly there has been very little said about how the scholar positions oneself in relation to the research. Thus, an important part of this research was to reflect on methodological approach of native ethnographic researcher and positionality related to the subtleness of identity and belonging.

Figure 1. Site visit locations



Research context: heritage commodification, nostalgia, and Yugonostalgia

The representation of past is inspired by contemporary events and burdened by contemporary values and ideologies (for instance Chronis 2005). Heritage commodification is thus a result of the negotiation between visitors, narrative and place in the contemporary context and its interpretation is co-created through the constant engagement among the visitors, tour guides and official interpretations. This is in line with Walter Benjamin's dialectical historicism – the approach of understanding the relationship between the past and the present – where fragments and images (Large and Bradshaw 2016) tell more about the past than grand history itself, where heritage sites and museums are positioned as 'mediational laboratories' (Noy 2016) through which history becomes tangible and accessible. Nostalgia is weaved in that process. Jafari and Taheri (2014) note the importance of visitors' engagement in creating nostalgic sentiments while visiting museums, arguing that certain historical representations and narratives are presented purposefully to provoke nostalgic sentiments. Petrović (2006) argues that myths about a golden age are a universal mechanism that can be found in every society. Yugonostalgia is a psychological and cultural phenomenon occurring among citizens from the former Socialist Yugoslavia who still share experiences and memories of their common past (Lindstorm 2005) in a form of either personal or nostalgia learned through oral history. It is important to emphasise here that the concept of Yugo-nostalgia is not pointed at high-level political ideologies, in this context, socialism or communism, but rather it is linked to the pleasures of everyday life such as consumerism and consumer culture. Patterson (2011) shows the case of the Museum of Contemporary History in Ljubljana (Slovenia) where there is an exhibition dedicated to socialist Yugoslavia, and instead of being presented with a standard historical interpretation grounded in international relations, political elite and high politics, visitors are presented with the story of what it meant to live 'a good life' in the former Yugoslavia, showing rather domestic, everyday images of supermarkets, TV advertisements and holidays. Essentially, this exhibition focused on consumerism as a symbol of the good life, treating high politics as secondary (Patterson, 2010; 2011). Šegota and Jančič (2013) argue that Yugo-nostalgia acts as a very effective motivation to visit Croatia by Slovenian tourists. Yugonostalgia has both positive and negative overtones, depending on the context under which it is mentioned. While in subversive political settings, the term Yugo-nostalgia is viewed in a more positive light, in the settings of right-wing political inclinations and sectarianism, it is an alternative expression for the betrayal of nationalist interests of the new states funded after the break-up of Yugoslavia (Mikula 2003). Externally, Yugonostalgia is perceived as 'irrational' longing for the communist past, and this 'irrationality' infantilises those who were perceived as that they are longing for the past, putting them outside of European norms of modernity. Indeed, in recent years both the so-called refugee crisis and the EU enlargement on the predominantly post-socialist countries amplified nationally coded anxieties that often make use of the category of 'Europe'. Such 'Europe' has different meanings depending on the geographical and cultural positioning of those applying it in to produce an anti-tolerant discourse against ostensibly 'leftist' elites who impose an 'irrational' discourse of tolerance and multiculturalism. Such dynamics depict how racism continues to be the fuel of 'Europe', both in 'the East' and in 'the West' (Weber 2016; Böröcz and Sarkar 2017; Melegh 2006), and can be observed in the depiction of Yugo-nostalgia both in the external and regional contexts. In many western media outlets, Yugonostalgia has indeed been a constant source of infantilising. Buchowski (2006) notes different shades of Europeaness understood in a hierarchical sense, encourages a perception of the 'otherness' of former socialist countries. Yugonostalgia, for example, is used to justify the perception of people from former Yugoslavia as infantile due to their supposed longing for the communist past. This 'infantility' places them outside the norms of European modernity, enabling subversion, othering, and exotification.

The post-Yugoslav countries' economies experience lack of growth due to borrowing large International Monetary Fund (IMF) loans, and challenges caused by 'crony' capitalism (Franičević and Bićanić 2007) leading up to the socio-cultural, economic and environmental injustices (Grdešić 2015) causing Yugo-nostalgia. The result of a Yugo-nostalgia poll shows that 68.8% of those surveyed in Serbia think that life was better 20 years ago, compared to 59.1% in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 43.6% in Croatia and 38.6% in Slovenia (Galup Survey 2014). Ethnic minorities are most likely to see harm in the break-up of Yugoslavia, regardless of where in post-Yugoslav space they reside (Kolstø 2014).

Illustrating it with the example of Berlin Wall, Derrida (1994) preambles that the idea of communism carries on as a spectre, i.e. a visible corporeal spirit which is transcendent and, in its transcendence, it fills the time and space (Causevic, 2019). The fear of its transcendence is haunting capitalist societies. That fear has manifested itself recently as austerity, social immobility, and populist rhetoric (Lazaridis and Veikou 2016) which characterise post-2008 neoliberal capitalist societies (Fisher 2014). Volcic (2017) also reflects on post-2008 capitalist ideology, i.e. neoliberalism, and explains that it is manifested through consumerism which commodifies the welfare state of 1960s and 1970s to be able to sell it as a bitter-sweet nostalgia. Fisher (2014) notes that by locating nostalgia in the past through the simplification of nostalgic sentiments through the act of consumerism, the attention is taken away from the deeper meanings of nostalgia, i.e. nostalgia for the future. Indeed, the hope for a better future was a significant part of popular culture until the 1980s, but that hope has been officially abandoned because of turbo-capitalist relations embodied in contemporary society. Fisher specifically uses Derrida's (1994) concept of hauntology to describe a sense in which contemporary culture is preoccupied by the lost hopes of modernity cancelled out by neoliberalism and post-modernity. Popular culture is haunted not by the past, but by a hope for better future which was promised, but never came materialised. It remained as a spectre (Derrida 1994), visible incorporeal spirit which failed to materialise, but still haunts neoliberal capitalism. Popular culture is haunted not by the past, but by a hope for better future which was promised, but never came to the fore. It remained as a spectre (Derrida 1994), visible incorporeal spirit which failed to materialise, but still haunts neoliberal capitalism. Yugonostalgia is thus often referred to as longing for the things which have gone by, such as Yugoslav socialism, thus overwhelmingly simplifying the phenomenon to achieve a marketable version of the past (Volcic 2007). In the context of this research, Yugonostalgia is seen as longing for the future.

The meaning of symbolic violence

Within the context of symbolic violence which proceeds after the conflict resolution, individuals are exposed to the violence determined by the 'location' of the individuals within the power structure which defines their entire being (Grosfogues 2011). Their 'location' within the power structure is established by various denominators of symbolic capital, such as gender, race, colonial legacy, sexual orientation, country of birth, name, family, class, nationality, ethnicity and similar. In former Yugoslavia, these denominators are concerned within the context of nationality, ethnicity, name or family where people of an ethnicity which is a minority, may feel threatened, subjugated or othered (for instance Serb in Croatia, Bosniak in Republic Srpska, and similar instances). Normalising violence based on symbolic capital creates symbolic violence (Bourdieu 2001).

Symbolic violence is manifested as an unconscious bias which favours people already privileged by their accumulated social capital whilst at the same time penalising the other (Noon 2018). Bourgois (2004) notes that violence should be observed within the complexity of the political, structural, and

symbolic processes, whereby symbolic violence is the cornerstone which allows unequal power relations to be unchallenged and normalised. Although in most of the cases it is minority experiencing alterity, in South Africa during the apartheid regime, it was a majority of the population experiencing physical, symbolic and structural violence based on racial subjugation inherited from the colonial times, or in Australia, New Zealand and South America where it was the indigenous population who experienced physical violence during the colonial times which is transformed into symbolic violence in the post-colonial era. Although discrimination on the grounds of class, race, nationality, gender identity or sexual orientation is thoroughly addressed through contemporary international human rights law, yet oppression is hidden, indirect and sometimes difficult to prove using legal tools (Hamzic 2016). The realms of international human rights are not able to grasp this vernacular knowledge of the community, but instead seek to impose standardised tenets that may not be applicable to the vernacular settings.

Symbolic violence is also experienced through injustices which remain hidden between the lines of international peace accords (Causevic and Lynch 2011). Galtung (1996) notes that real peace cannot be achieved if the peace process enables continuation of injustice towards certain members of a society. Galtung (1996) associates structural violence with peace processes around the world, such as Good Friday Agreement Northern Ireland, 1998, Dayton Agreement, Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1995; Ohrid Agreement, North Macedonia, 2001, where the EU has focused all its efforts on ethnic stability. This strategy works well on the short-term, but in the long run through ethnic division, it instils social and symbolic violence manifested in cronyism, and political disagreements, thus causing unstable societies and paving the way to another conflict (Benjamin 1927).

Yugoslavian history and break ups

This section gives a very short synopsis of the Yugoslavian history, its foundations and break-up. The first Yugoslavia was founded following the withdrawal of the Ottoman Empire from the Balkans, as agreed on the Berlin Congress 1878, and thereafter the break-up of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in the 1918, where by the support of the US president Thomas Woodrow Wilson, Austro-Hungarian Empire accepted the independence of the nations (ethnicities) of the Monarchy on October 29th 1918. The result of these talks was the first Yugoslavia which was called the Kingdom of Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs. The Kingdom was ruled by Serbian dynasty Karadjordjevic (see Table 1). The relationships between the political parties representing Croatian and Serbian interests in the parliament were particularly challenging. It culminated on 20 June 1928 when a member of the Serbian National Party, its deputy Mr Puniša Račić, shot five members of the opposition party Croatian Peasant Party, including their leader Stjepan Radić.

Using as a pretext the political crisis triggered by the shooting, King Alexander abolished the Constitution, prorogued the Parliament and introduced a personal dictatorship on January 6 1929. Following that, on October 3, 1929, The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes changes its name to Kingdom of Yugoslavia and its internal divisions from 33 'Oblast'¹ to 9 'Banovinas'². Thus, in order to centralise the power and governance and give more authority to the King, the Kingdom manifested it by changing its name from the Kingdom of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia by the decree on October 3rd 1929. The first Yugoslav union was rather challenging, however, the

¹ Autonomous Region

² A province under home rule of an appointed governor

break-up of the union happened when Prince Regent Paul (Pavle) signed a tripartite agreement with the Axis (March 25th, 1941) which followed by the large demonstrations. The Prince Regent was overthrown by a military coup, and Hitler conquered Yugoslavia on April 6th, 1941. Josip Broz Tito leads the resistance (April 6th, 1941- May 9th, 1945), fighting against antifascism, against the axis and their allies based in Yugoslavia. On November 29th, 1943, the Federal Democratic Republic of Yugoslavia, based on the principles of antifascism was instituted. See more about these historic events in Table 1.

Table 1. A brief history of the twentieth century and break-up of Yugoslavia

Time	Event
1918	The WWI is over, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was founded, with the Serbian Karadjordjevic dynasty
Dec 29 th 1920	Communist party is very popular with workers and peasantry. It gained parliamentary seats, however, although it was the third strongest party, it was also revolutionary. The Ministry of the Interior, Mr Milorad Draškovic recommended a Decree which forbids the activities of the communist party. Communist party works illegally.
June 28 th 1921	The Constitution which established a unitary monarchy was passed.
June 28 th 1921- January 6 th 1929	Difficult relationship between Croatian and Serbian political parties in the parliament, namely Croatian Peasant Party and Serbian Democratic Party.
On 20 June 1928	A member of the government majority, the Serb deputy Puniša Račić, shot five members of the opposition party Croatian Peasant Party, including their leader Stjepan Radić.
6 January 1929	January 6 Dictatorship- Using as a pretext the political crisis triggered by the shooting, King Alexander abolished the Constitution, prorogued the Parliament and introduced a personal dictatorship
October 3 rd 1929	The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes changes its name to Kingdom of Yugoslavia and its internal divisions from 33 Oblast to 9 'Banovinas'
1931	Alexander decreed a new Constitution which made executive power the gift of the King
March 25 th 1941	Prince Regent Paul signed Tripartite Agreement with the Axis; huge demonstrations followed. Anti-Jewish Laws (Korosčev Law) have also been introduced
March 27 th 1941	Prince Paul is overthrown by a military coup, General Simović became a Prime Minister, withdrawing the support to the Axis, thus withdrawing Tripartite Agreement
April 6 th 1941	Adolf Hitler made an aggression on Yugoslavia and conquered it. The royal family escaped and were under the protection of the British Crown. Kingdom of Yugoslavia's territory was divided between the Axis. Croatian Independent State (Hitler's Puppet State) was founded on the territory of Croatia and Bosnia.
April 6 th 1941- May 9 th 1945	Josip Broz Tito leads the resistance
November 29 th 1943	Josip Broz Tito proclaimed the creation of the Federal Democratic Republic of Yugoslavia. This 'new Yugoslavia' was founded on the same territory as the Kingdom, but with no monarch. Its foundations are primarily based on the principles of antifascism, leading in its fights against the axis and axis supporters within the country (Ustaše I Četnici)

May 9 th 1945	An important characteristic of former Yugoslavia is that it liberated itself from Nazi occupation alone, without the use of any alliances. In 1948, Yugoslavia was expelled from Stalin's Warsaw Pact and during the whole cold war era, it remained non-aligned (Malcolm 1994).
January 31 st 1946	The constitution of Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia established six republics, (Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and Macedonia), and two autonomous districts (Kosovo and Vojvodina), part of Serbia. The capital was Belgrade. - strong central government under the control of the Communist Party
1948	Josip Broz Tito splits from SSSR
1956	President of Egypt Gamal Abdel Nasser, Prime Minister of India Jawaharlal Nehru, and President of Yugoslavia Josip Broz Tito met on Brijuni Island (now Croatia) to discuss how to position in the relation to cold war; Eastern block and NATO
1961	Non-Alligned movement was established
1974	New Yugoslav constitution gave a legal right to any of the Yugoslav "peoples" to hold a referendum for independence
May 4 th 1980	President Tito dies
1980-1992	Economic crisis, conflicts between the centre and the periphery
1989	Slobodan Milošević becomes a president of Yugoslavia, interethnic tensions between Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo, Croats and Serbs in Croatia. Milošević gets a lot of support from the EU and US as he promised the 'liberalisation of the banks in Yugoslavia (Radeljić, 2011)
1990	First 'democratic' elections, nationalist right wing parties win
June 25 th 1991	Slovenia proclaims independence after referendum. Ten day way fought between the Slovenian Territorial Defence and the Yugoslav People's Army, from 27 June 1991 until 7 July 1991. It marked the beginning of the Yugoslav Wars.
June 25 th 1991	Croatia proclaims independence after referendum, Croatia gained independence without giving constitutional rights to the Serb minority, interethnic strife between Serbs and Croats in Croatia.
March 1 st 1992	Bosnia and Herzegovina proclaims independence, the war in Croatia spills to Bosnia and Herzegovina leaving ravaging consequences
September 8 th 1992	Macedonia proclaims independence. Due to Greek opposition to a new state containing the term 'Macedonia', the sovereign status of the state was not recognised until April 8, 1993, with an acclamation of the UN General Assembly, when Republic of Macedonia was admitted as 181st full-fledged member in the world organisation under the provisional reference Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. A conflict took place between the government and ethnic Albanian insurgents, mostly in the north and west of the country, between February and August 2001. The war ended with the intervention of a NATO ceasefire monitoring force.
May 21 st 2006	Montenegro Proclaims independence from Yugoslavia, being the last of the Yugoslav Republics to hold a referendum
On 5 June 2006	The National Assembly of Serbia declared the government of Serbia the legal and political successor of Serbia and Montenegro. Serbia and ex Autonomous Province of Vojvodina constitute Republic of Serbia
February 17 th 2008	The Autonomous Province of Kosovo unilaterally declared independence from Serbia. The declaration was immediately condemned by Serbia itself. Serbia continues to deny any statehood to Kosovo.
On June 17 2018	In the Greek border village called Psardes on Lake Prespa, Foreign Ministers of Greece and then called FYROM (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) signed

	<p>Prespa Agreement (named by lake Prespa on the border between Greece and Macedonia). The agreement was signed by Greek and Macedonian Foreign Ministers, namely Nikola Dimitrov (Macedonian) and Nikos Kotsias (Greek) and in the presence of the respective prime ministers Alex Tsipras and Zoran Zaev. After the ceremony, Tsipras and Zaev travelled across the border to the Macedonian village of Oteševo on the other side of the lake, in a highly symbolic move that marked the first time a Greek Prime Minister had entered the country since its independence in 1991.</p> <p>After signing the agreement, July 12 2018, NATO invited Macedonia to start accession and on July 30th 2018, Macedonian Parliament approved plans to hold a non-referendum which took place on September 30th.</p> <p>The question on the referendum was a three-fold question, 'Are you supporting Euro-Atlantic integrations, EU membership through the acceptance of Prespa Agreement?'</p>
February 2019	FYROM changes name to North Macedonia
	French President Macron gives VETO to the North Macedonia accession to the EU

The theme of nationalism in the context of the second disintegration of Yugoslavia has been researched from the various disciplinary and cross-disciplinary approaches, i.e. political theory and international politics (for instance Jovic 2011, Radeljic 2011, 2013), political economics (Dallago and Uvalic 1998; Klanjsek and Flere 2011, Allcock 1993, 20012, Prug 2006), social anthropology (Bakic-Hayden 1995), psychoanalysis (Bjelic 2011), sociology, politics and international relations (Bieber 2011), social psychology (Ćehajić 2011), feminist studies (Korać-Sanderson 2006; Hall and Ateljevic 2007), media studies (Volcic 2006, Volcic and Andrejevic 2016, Mikula, 2011), or cultural heritage (Causevic 2019). Through the rapport between media, nationalism, gender, transition, collective memory, and politics Volčič (2006) highlights the influence which mass media propaganda had on sense of the belonging to a particular imagined nation (ethnicity) in Yugoslavia.

As previously mentioned, primordial hatred which dominated international media channels and European political elite thoughts in the early nineties which wanted to present the conflict as the result of the inherited inter-ethnic hate which was put under the carpet during Tito's times (for instance John Major, addressing the House of Commons, June 1993, in Malcolm, 1994:XX), these explanations have quickly been discredited for being racist, simplistic, and narrow minded. Jović (2011) for instance argues that these particular 'ethnic hatred' (p. 103) blamed for the disintegration of Yugoslavia, was not primordial, but it 'had to be created' (ibid). These attempts to blame some primordial sentiments on the break-up of Yugoslavia as mentioned, took a sway in the international media and political discourse as it gives a space to exoticise Yugoslavia as a country of primordial hatred, and in that sense position the rest of Europe as superior towards it (Bjelic 2011). Zizek (1999: 4) further argues the construction of the superiority of European subject by the usage of the 'reflexive' politically correct racism. Because of the geographical proximity the Balkans, whose western part is consisted of the post Yugoslav region, to the constructed European subject, i.e. it is the part of European continent, it is 'permitted' to speak about it in 'racist clichés' which might be less overtly applied to Africa or Asia because of an assumption of intra-European self-critique (Žižek, 2001, p. 5). Zizek (1999) further argues that 'Civilised' Europe pictures the way of life in the Yugoslavia as presented in the film 'Underground' (1995) of Emir (Nemanja) Kusturica, widely viewed and admired in Europe. Yugoslavia is presented as a place where 'lust for life', fatalistic lifestyles of love and hate, open emotions and a lack of rules position the people of Yugoslavia as backward and primitive, but at the same time, allowing 'normative' Europe to retain some reflective, hidden and subconscious

admiration for the region. Žižek (1999) argues that Europeans nurture a desire, or fantasy, to live in these untamed Yugoslav-Balkan style, but are not 'permitted' because of the universalist notions of 'civilisation' underpinning normative European identity, which Dolan (1990) calls 'the unconscious of Europe'. Žižek (1999, p. 4), notes that this is the main reason why Kusturica's movies are so popular in Europe notes that, 'political struggles and tensions are presented in a manner of a carnival, as a mythical Balkans shot for the Western gaze, internalizing the Western notion of a crazy nation, where war is simply our nature'. Žižek (1999, 2008) rhetorically asks under which historical conditions these constructions are deemed to be a necessity.

However, in the contemporary context of Europe, these untamed desires and emotions of violence and hate, once suppressed, have become awakened and consciously demonstrated. The demonstration of hate, demonisation of the other, have become the part of everyday life, political agendas, presidential campaigns, and particularly populist media propaganda (Thorleifsson 2017; Feischmidt 2020; Koch 2018). In the context of the Yugoslav break-up, Volčič (2006) and Kolar-Panov (1997) argue the role of media propaganda which was heating the nationalist sentiments in the 1980s and the sense of belonging to an imagined (Anderson, 1984) nationalist community. (Volčič 2006) argues that nationalist mass media led the shape up of nationalist identity and collective memory, drawing on Williams' (1977) argument which defines culture as a 'structure of feeling', and set of ways in which the feelings and the ways of thinking are shared, thus the current facets of national as well as supra and sub-national identities are expressed through the structures of communication within the country. In a similar vein, one can observe flourishing of the journalism based on populist idea. Indeed, these media outlets create symbolic violence towards the groups presented as 'the Others' and flourishing populist ideas which feed into political decisions such as for instance Brexit in the UK.

Most of the historical conflicts started because of loud voices and inconsistent politics from the outside which from time to time become dominant inside former Yugoslavia (Radeljic 2011), or by the loud voices from the media (Volcic 2007) which can also be observed in the global contemporary context in the time of writing this piece.

Thus, although the break-up of Yugoslavia was a very complex context, current dynamics of global politics and engagements called to observe the context of Yugoslav break up with more interest. Radeljic (2013) thus argues that the difficulty to talk about post-Yugoslav space is due to the complexity of the highly contested and debatable issues which occupy current politics of the post-Yugoslav space, resulting in the genuine concerns which further erode the understanding of the region. Furthermore, current political context in the EU and globally, witness that no region or nation is immune to the detrimental political decisions.

Another argument which deems understanding of Yugoslav disintegration difficult and complex concerns the sense that the phrases such as nation, and ethnicity, then nationalism, ethnic identity, etc, although their meaning seem to be universally clear, when taken out of the context, their meaning becomes blurred, and differ depending on the geopolitical context (Gellner 1993). Post-Yugoslav scholars, for instance, use the term 'nation' but actually refer to 'ethnicity' or 'ethnic group' where 'nation' corresponds with the name of the Yugoslav republic, where one nation is the majority and other nations living there are the minority with the exception of Bosnia and Herzegovina whose population is divided into three constitutive nations, i.e. Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs and the fourth denomination called 'the Others' which corresponds with Jews, Roma, and national minorities. These challenges in overlapping of the terms related to the nation and ethnicity are due to the historical point when ethnic groups perceived themselves as nations under the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires, despite lacking the state at that time.

The 1974 Yugoslav Constitution represents a critical factor in understanding the political conflict in former Yugoslavia as it gave a legal right to any of the Yugoslav federal republics to hold a referendum and if more than 55% of the population votes for the independence, the republic can proclaim the independence (Yugoslav Constitution 1974). However, the independence of Yugoslav Republics was not such a straightforward process. Many internal and external political factors made this process rather difficult and uncertain. First, the role of the European Economic Community (EEC), present European Union, whose inconsistent politics towards former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) created havoc and inadequate resolutions. In the beginning, EEC overwhelmingly supported the unity of former SFRY, sending signals which encouraged Yugoslav Federal Government and Yugoslav People's Army (loc. JNA) to employ force against Croatia and Slovenia, the republics who wanted to break away from the Yugoslav Federation. Furthermore, the EEC banks and governments supported late Slobodan Milosevic in the beginning, because he was a former banker, and appeared to be an economic liberal with a great authority to implement economic reforms (Radeljic 2012) which would open the gates to European banks to start investing in Yugoslavia through installing Washington Consensus economic policy. The Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) fell under the influence of the late Slobodan Milosevic (Sell 2003). After Slovenia proclaimed independence, the JNA attacked Slovenia first. The conflict in Slovenia lasted eleven days; the Yugoslav People's Army withdrew and allowed Slovenian independence to happen. The Yugoslav People's Army withdrew to Croatia who also proclaimed independence. JNA in the meantime got empowered by various, mainly Serbian, paramilitary groups (ICTY 2002; Bec-Neumann 2007) and as such, it attacked Croatia first, and then the havoc culminated in B&H. There was a considerable number of Croatian Serbs living for centuries in Croatia who did not want an independent Croatia. Being fearful of Croatian Independent State, a puppet fascist state during the WWII, they wanted to keep their links with the rest of Yugoslavia, particularly with Serbia. Radeljic (2012) argues that the main reason for a brutal aggression on B&H was that the EEC, i.e. EU recognized Croatian independence far too early, before the rights of the local Croatian Serbs were guaranteed in the new Croatian Constitution. EEC (later EU) recognized Slovenia and Croatia's independence in the same package although Croatia and Slovenia had completely different political settings. The attack on Croatia thus started, and then erupted in B&H, as soon as B&H proclaimed its independence in a similar vein as in Croatia, the Yugoslav People's Army, empowered by paramilitary Serbian units and some local Serbs who joined paramilitaries, made an aggression on B&H. B&H became a soil where the Yugoslav People's Army, under the leadership of late Slobodan Milosevic transgressed its primary aim of keeping the unity of Yugoslavia into a dream of creating a Great Serbia which would include Croatian territories inhabited by the Serbs and Bosnia & Herzegovina. War in Croatia ceased in August 1995 after the offensive 'Flash' and 'Storm'. War in B&H, on the other side, ceased in December 1995 after Dayton Peace Agreement was signed. On the other side, North Macedonia proclaimed its independence in 1991, the same year as B&H, Croatia and Slovenia. Its political destabilisation was a consequence of Kosovo crisis. In 2001, Albanian nationalists in the North Macedonia helped by the Kosovo Albanians joined to seek the autonomy of the Albanian-populated area of North Macedonia (Phillips 2004). The cup ceased as Albanian separatists recognised North Macedonian governmental institutions in full and the government made Albanian population constituted and Albanian language official. The Montenegro won its independence in 2006 as Montenegro ceased its union with Serbia by a referendum. At last, Kosovo won its independence in 2008. However, the difference between Kosovo independence and the independence of the former Yugoslav republics was due to the point that Kosovo was not a Republic in Yugoslav federation, and according to the Yugoslav Constitution of 1974, only constitutive federal republics of Yugoslavia can proclaim independence. Kosovo was at the time of Yugoslavia recognized as Autonomous Region, being a constitutive part of the Federal Republic of Serbia. In 2008 Kosovo proclaimed its independence from Serbia. The difference between Kosovo and other republic according to the 1974

Constitution is that Kosovo was an autonomous district, it did not obtain a status of the republic, therefore the sovereignty was more difficult in the legal terms. Currently, there are 23 EEC countries which recognise independent Kosovo and five which rejected the recognition (Radeljic 2015).

No doubt the reasons for the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia are extremely complex. However, it is clear that since the dissolution of Yugoslavia the states in this former socialist republic have sought to establish new and distinct national identities for their own internal cohesion and also for the purposes of external promotion (Nelson 2012). It seems that the modernist conception of the nation as being politically determined, as being created by state structures, can be evidenced in the case of the former Yugoslavia.

Self-reflection and methodological research context

The previous sections presented theoretical and contextual tenets to situate its methodological research realms. As Noy (2015: 206) recommends, the fieldwork of research study keeps 'dialectic relations with research practices and is co-constructed through the organisation of daily, mundane and unnoticeable activities.' Thus, the statement is followed as the guidelines in reporting and presenting research. Noy (2015) suggested further that the conclusion of an ethnographic research project calls for reflection on how the researcher moves into, through and out of the space, place, relationships and practices, which construct the research settings, i.e. the field of study. There are many methodological concepts of positioning oneself while doing research. The traditional ethnographic concern with understanding the 'other' societies had been fraught with unequal power dynamics from the start. For the decades, ethnographic research was mainly based on ethnocentric approach and the representation of 'the other'. However, the research has for decades been inflicted with the self-reference criterion (SRC) is defined as "the unconscious reference to one's own cultural values" (Lee 1966: 106). In many cases, that ethnography was first and foremost a Euro-American discourse about 'others' made possible by the Euro-American colonisation of their interlocutors' themselves members of a specific socio-political group often take a stand on a conflict they are researching, and this is done unconsciously, without acknowledging that particular stand as a part of research. Thus, Gourevitch (1998) argues that while positioning oneself while researching a context of physical or symbolic violence, and the consequences of it, one is at best 'an involved outsider', as simply by being a human being, one becomes a part of the research context. Thus 'neutrality' is artificial and untruthful. So even geographically, nationally, religiously being a complete outsider, researchers' emotional baggage is filled with pain and suffering as it accompanies socio-political wars and conflicts. The researchers thus become a part of what they are researching and need to be aware of their own self positioning in this context. According to Herman (2001) *involved outsider* may also in the certain context be a researcher who is connected to the violence by virtue of belonging to one of the national, religious, or ethnic groups involved in it, or simply by virtue of identifying with a political stance of the struggle, for instance anti-racism, anti-colonialisation, socialism, etc. that is relevant to the analysis of the specific context. However, if one is intimately involved with the virtue of being a part of the research context as what was researched, the researcher somehow shares the same habitus as what they are researching. On another side, when emotional baggage even to the larger extent interferes with the research context is when the researcher is an insider, and belongs to the socio-political, or geopolitical group which is involved in the conflict. Therefore, the researcher needs to thoroughly think about their own positioning and emotional baggage while doing the fieldwork in the research context. This is not that one needs to position self as an involved outsider

or insider, as humans are idiosyncratic and some researchers' characteristics put them as an insider, while some in outsider or involved outsider side of the continuum. Thus, the reflection of the role(s) researchers' identity plays, and their own idiosyncrasies needs to be reflected upon in the process of conducting research and addressing the research point (Ingold 2017; Bourdieu 2003).

Bourdieu (1984, 2003) argues that positioning oneself and reflecting on the idiosyncrasies is in that sense way for the researcher to become, the researcher becomes an active research participant. Reflecting on Bourdieu's fieldwork, (Wacquant 2004) argues that in his work in France and Algeria, Bourdieu acknowledges that their representation in anthropological research was first and foremost a Euro-American discourse about 'us' and 'others', made possible by the Euro-American colonisation of their interlocutors' lands. There was little change until the mid-1950s and the early 1960s, when we see the beginning of the American civil rights movement, second-wave feminism, and many successful independence movements of previously colonised countries. These changes, along with a growing number of local ethnographers from the traditionally researched spaces, slowly shifted the discipline into what is usually called the crisis of representation. One of the crucial developments was the recognition of the Self in the knowledge produced about others – the researcher, as an always-positioned subject (producing subjective knowledge), became more visible.

Reflection on self in the research context of former Yugoslavia

Therefore, as a local insider researcher, I needed to reflect on my own idiosyncratic self while doing research to enhance research trustworthiness. The study featured here has taken a constructivist approach, applying ethnographic research methods. The study referred to here took place 2015-2020. It involved twenty-two lengthy semi-structured interviews conducted with the individuals involved in the presentation of heritage sites, and those involved in their interpretation to the visitors, these were mostly tour guides. Most of the interlocutors which took part in the study were known through my previous research in the area or were recommended by the interlocutors from my previous studies. Interviews with the tour guides and those preparing the sites' interpretation were recorded or the research notes have been taken. During the process of ethnographic analysis, the interlocutors were contacted several times during the process for the purpose of asking further questions or to clarify the interpretation and comment. *Do my findings and my analysis make any sense to my interlocutors?* As Weber (2017) notifies, the interpretation needs to make sense to the interlocutors, and be adequate at the level of meaning (ibid.) To accompany the study, short conversational interviews were also conducted with visitors, receptionists, and ticket officers at the heritage sites. It added 'thickness' (Geertz 1973) to the description. As Geertz (1973) would argue, this adds to the understanding of the complexity of findings. This is in line with Lincoln and Guba (1985) who argue that findings per se are not the result of thick description; but the result of the analysis of the contexts, concepts, individuals or societies that are described in a 'thickly' manner. Thus, simultaneously, the fieldwork also included participant observations of guided tours, museums, and heritage site visits. I observed the tours of Brijuni National Park ten times, the AVNOJ Museum seven times, and the Drvar Raid Cave four times. Additionally, I also observed numerous guided tours of Sarajevo (around thirty) and Belgrade (around ten). The main interest was in the articulation of the narratives that practitioners used when interpreting nostalgia, antifascism, and the Yugoslav legacy, as well as the sense of the reception of this narrative by the visitors. Photographs were used as aide memoire and observations were recorded via jotted notes, used in writing a more detailed research diary.

In this research, I was fully immersed in the situation as an insider (Finley, 2001), ratified by growing up in the former Yugoslavia, visiting the sites during my childhood as part of the school curricula, being othered during the times of transition, but also more recently, as a genuine visitor to the site. It was also through my previous fieldwork there, I felt familiarity with the sites. My first ethnographic visits took place during 2006, it was a part of a multi-site study related to PhD research, which explored the process of heritagisation of the 1990s conflict and the breakup of Yugoslavia. My PhD research explored the context of Bosnia and Herzegovina. I was interested in understanding the commodification of the conflict in the nineties. Thus, during my PhD research, I was not able to focus on the World War II heritage and rehabilitation of antifascist sites as my PhD was about commodification and interpretation of the conflict in the early nineties in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Therefore, I returned to the topic of World War II heritage and legacy of antifascism, its presentation, interpretation, and commodification in the later occasions. I embarked on the interpretative longitudinal study, analysing the transformation and changes in the interpretation and rehabilitation of antifascist sites in the period just after the conflict in the early nineties and in the period from 2005 until 2020. During the war in the 1990s in the former Yugoslavia, antifascist heritage sites were also damaged, and the rehabilitation of their legacy was analysed. This research transferred some of the methodological tenets learned during the time when I was doing my PhD and they were utilised in this study on antifascist cultural heritage. During my PhD, I learned the importance of being aware of my own emotional baggage (Gourevitch 1998) which allowed me to reflect on myself and be aware of my own idiosyncratic self while doing an ethnographic work. I was not a silent observer, but I needed to position myself in relation to my emotional baggage (ibid.) and the context I was about to research. As someone who grew up in former Yugoslavia, we learned about antifascist battles which happened on these sites and somehow I found myself emotionally attached to these sites as this reminded me of my school, of my childhood friends with whom I have studied, and of all these antifascist heroes whose bravery we admired so much. Although the situation in which I found myself while doing this research and all these memories were both bitter and sweet, and the context rather challenging, this reminded me of my childhood and happy days. In that context, I had to reflect on how I position myself within the research context. My visitor profile seems to be very similar to many other visitors on these sites. Thus, the foremost important for this research was to address the context of researcher-self in the context of positioning oneself within the context of researching post-Yugoslav space (Radeljic 2011). In that context, Bourdieu's (2003) concept of 'participant objectivation' which he developed while observing self in relation to two different contexts, i.e. his own habitus, the village of Béarn, and the context of Algerian village Kabylia at the time of struggling nationalism and weakened colonial hegemony (Wacquant, 2004). In that process, Bourdieu (2003) notes the importance of studying oneself as a product of idiosyncratic nuances which should be reflected upon during the ethnographic work and put into the context. Bourdieu (2003) illustrates this by discussing how he positions himself when he researches Kabylia, an Algerian village where he spoke with a peasant from Kabylia observing the meaning of honour, by using peasants from the village where he was born, Béarnais, as an instrument of control, and he was able to reflect of it, make himself aware of the idiosyncratic nuances. Through this point of studying both Kabylia and Béarnais, going back and forth from one to another fieldwork Bourdieu notes 'The idea was to study Béarn, but also to be able to do a comparison between Béarn and Algeria, and especially to study myself, my preconceptions and my presuppositions...(Wacquant, 2004:389)' Through this process socio-ethnographer becomes study participant enabling the idiosyncratic nuances to become an inclusive part of knowledge creation. This process, Bourdieu (2003) calls participant objectivation.

In that context, reflecting on my own fieldwork experience and my own idiosyncratic nuances in researching post-Yugoslav space, I was able to bring into research context. I have also at the same

time as I was studying antifascist heritage in former Yugoslavia, I was conducting research in Belfast and Derry in Northern Ireland where study in post-Yugoslav space informed Northern Ireland and vice versa. I was studying Northern Ireland as well as a part of my PhD and returned to this study in 2016 again with several ethnographic visits in the meantime. The study in Belfast was also grounded in ethnographic research. Another point which is often overlooked while doing the fieldwork, as ethnographer is doing the observations and interviews with the interlocutors, ethnographer is also observed by the interlocutors, for instance.

Oh, you are from a war area as well. You understand. We would talk to you differently than if you were from Germany, England or France. (Tour developer, Belfast).

This is what I was told after one of my interviews in Belfast. I observed a tour and later, met with the tour guides and some of the tourists who were having a drink with a tour guide. During the research process, tour guides, tourists and myself shared our experiences, talked about international politics and solidarity towards the alterity on the international level, for instance the refugee crisis. I spoke to them about my own experiences of being altered in many instances in academia due to gender, disability and being a minority, looking like being white but being that other white, south-east European filth in academia. Indeed Žižek (1997) argues that in the modern history of the European Union, the Balkan has always been constructed as being 'the Other', and used to showcase the superiority of 'Europe', as Žižek (1999, paragraph V) further notes: *'When discussing the Balkans, the tolerant multiculturalist is allowed to act out his repressed racism.... Because the Balkans are part of Europe, they can be spoken of in racist clichés...'*. Through this, I was aware of my personal idiosyncrasies and values, and how they shaped the research process which took place. Somehow, I felt as an 'involved outsider', (Gourewich 1998; Hermann 2001), thus needed to untangle the etic and emic roles within the research context to first, attain the distance, and second, to understand how my personal values knitted themselves into the research context. The interlocutors in Northern Ireland understood me and I understood that these nuances from the academic surroundings and my research in post-Yugoslav space shaped the relationship between Northern Ireland and myself and the way I have been observed by my interlocutors in Northern Ireland. In this process, I became a study participant, enabling knowledge production reflected upon further along in the analysis, as an analytical resource (Bourdieu 2003). Later, as I came back to research post-Yugoslav space, I was also using the lens of Northern Ireland to give the meaning to my settings in post-Yugoslav space. In that sense, although I was a ratified insider in post-Yugoslav space there was also a position of involved 'outsider' (Hermann 2001) while I was doing the research in post-Yugoslav space, as I was observing it through the lens of my research in Northern Ireland. Mitski (2013) argues that epistemic, cultural, and psychological self gets in the way of research results arguing the importance of reflecting upon this. Despite being an outsider in cultural and geographic terms when it comes to Northern Ireland, solidarity and struggle experienced during the political conflict in the country where I came from, opened communication with research interlocutors in a fruitful way. On the other side, research I have been doing in Northern Ireland, shaped up my research in post-Yugoslav space, shaping it up and giving it original approach as through this self-reflection and introspection, I have become an active participant and gave a meaning to this particular research. Therefore, researchers need to untangle their etic and emic roles within the research context to first, attain the distance, and second, to understand how their personal values knitted themselves into the research context. In this process, I literally became a study participant, enabling knowledge production reflected upon further along in the analysis, as an analytical resource (Bourdieu 2003).

The fieldwork in both former Yugoslavia and Northern Ireland, followed already mentioned Geertz' (1973) 'thick description' approach which specifically highlights that besides the codification of

conceptual regularities, theory building needs to include descriptions of insights provided by the language, philosophy, geopolitical and socio-cultural concepts which co-construct the public meanings. According to Hammersley (2008), thick description defines both the process and the product of research inquiry, in this case the construction of meaning of the troubles in Northern Ireland, through the commodification of their narrative, and the context of interpretation and commodification of the narrative of antifascist heritage sites in post-Yugoslav space. The goal the description in a 'thickly manner' Lincoln and Guba (1985) was to achieve a Weberian *verstehen* (Weber, 2017: 20–23) – i.e., to thoroughly understand how sense is made of historical sites by visitors and those working in the sector, thus this approach gave a grounding to research analysis to understand the perceptions and understandings. Weber (2017) recommended that research needs to satisfy 'adequacy at the level of meaning', arguing that the findings need to be understandable to those involved with the sites. As part of the research, the findings were fed back to the interlocutors, asking them whether they agreed with the interpretation, and whether the interpretation has any meaning to them.

The empirical research in former Yugoslavia was undertaken during the summers of 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2020 at the sites located in the former Yugoslav socialist republics, now sovereign states, namely Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H), Croatia and Serbia. The sites in Bosnia and Herzegovina included AVNOJ³ Museum in Jajce, Raid on Drvar Museum⁴ in Drvar and Sarajevo guided tour. The sites in Croatia included Tito's Museum on the Iceland of Brijuni⁵ and the opening ceremony of the City of Rijeka which was proclaimed a s European City of Culture, whose opening ceremony was inspired by antifascism and workers' legacy. The opening ceremony of Rijeka, European Capital of Culture in February 2020 was observed as the ceremony was inspired by Rijeka's antifascist heritage and socialism, accompanied by the lyrics and melody of a famous Italian antifascist song 'Bella Ciao' (see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-hUzWdF7OzU>). Serbian part of this research included guided tours through the city of Belgrade which was capital city of former Yugoslavia (now capital of Serbia). The observed sites played important historical roles in establishing the ideology of antifascism and its main components of socialism, equality and shared humanity (Carmichael, 2010). (see Figure 1 for geographical setting).

During the times of my PhD research in 2008, the AVNOJ Museum in Jajce was still in a stage of refurbishment, but possible to visit. I interviewed an AVNOJ Museum ticket officer, and a tour guide who came with a small group of American tourists in the museum and one tour guide who brought the group to the museum. Since then, I have continued researching these sites which, despite the official trend of constructing the narrative of national identity and neoliberal capitalist discourse through the interpretation of cultural heritage, continued to promote antifascism and shared humanity. I have returned to the site in 2018 to do some further research. AVNOJ Museum is still a part of school visits, also tourists who were interested in researching antifascist heritage, either as a

³ AVNOJ stands for Antifasisticko Vijeće Narodnog Oslobođenja Jugoslavije (Eng. Anti-Fascist Council for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia), was the organization for the national liberation and Yugoslav resistance against the Axis occupation during World War II. The second conference took place in the City of Jajce in Bosnia and Herzegovina on November 29 1943. AVNOJ Museum commemorates the antifascist legacy of former Yugoslavia

⁴ This Museum commemorates the victory of Yugoslav partisans against German airborne forces which executed a raid on the Yugoslav partisan high command almost succeeding in eliminating Josip Broz Tito, the leader of the Yugoslav antifascist struggle in 1944

⁵ the Brijuni Islands, Croatia, was Tito's summer residence (1947–1980). Numerous international political meetings happened there, like the founding of the non-aligned movement during the Cold War. The non-aligned movement actions were an important factor in the decolonisation process, leading to the attainment of freedom of new sovereign states (see Vieira, 2016).

hobby or as a part of their academic research, they pay the visits to the site. political meetings, like the founding of the non-aligned movement during the Cold War.

Since the dissolution of Yugoslavia in the mid-1990s, the heritage sites that have celebrated antifascism and shared humanity have essentially been subverted in the official ideological discourse by the dominant political parties (Rivera 2008). This symbolic act provided space for the consolidation of new national identities, which was accomplished through othering (Ignatieff, 1994). In the post-Yugoslav space (Radeljić 2013), 'the other' is usually the national minority, i.e. a person who moved from one of the less developed republics in the Yugoslav federation to a more developed republic (for instance, a Bosnian or Serb in Slovenia), or a person of a mixed background (Pistotnik and Brown 2018). Despite the policies of purifying history, othering and social exclusion as mechanisms for creating national hegemony (Ignatieff, 1994) and consolidating global capitalism (Castellò and Mihelj 2017), these antifascist heritage sites still promote a legacy of shared humanity by ratifying the attributes of antifascism and equality, once considered as symbols of the Yugoslav legacy (1945–1990).

Thus, in the context of doing ethnographic research, it was important to acknowledge personal idiosyncratic nuances. There is a fear of going 'narcissistic' while doing research, and the fear of self-indulgence (Lynch 2000) and in the context of mainly foreign researcher, fear of acknowledging dissonance, or as it is the case of 'local' researcher, there is a fear of acknowledging consonance between ourselves and the research context (Finley 2001), researchers need to be aware of bringing these in the research context. If this research was done by the outsider researcher, the research findings may have been different. In order to understand our full contributions to the knowledge, and in order to contribute to the knowledge, it is important that ethnographer is aware of these idiosyncratic nuances, is able to reflect on them without fear of academic scrutiny. Through this process ethnographer becomes a research participant and contribute to the knowledge in a way that the knowledge created is meaningful to the interlocutors (Weber 2017). Furthermore, knowledge created in such a way should also be well understood in academic circles. Although approaching new knowledge creation by involving the concept of self-reflection and introspection does not follow the rules of essentialisation of the phenomena, but understanding them as a part of their context and indeed the context of the context which consists of theoretical, managerial, methodological and introspective nuances which all have to be reflected and understood while doing the research related to cultural studies (Askergaard and Linnet 2011).

Instead of Conclusion: What did this research explore?

Through the lens of the interpretation, commodification, and transformation of the meaning of antifascist cultural heritage, this research explored the legacy of antifascism in the context of former Yugoslavia. Research also aimed to understand the influence that global political context and rising populism has on the promotion and interpretation of the heritage sites that carry with them the legacy of antifascist heritage which celebrates building connections across divides, creating a sense of what Jacques Derrida (2000) refers to as shared humanity. Through examining the positioning of the researcher-self in the context of meaning, interpretation and commodification of antifascist legacy, research has particularly dived on the meaning of nostalgic sentiments surrounding research about reformulation of the meaning of self-serving reconstructions of the past which plays a significant role to be reflected upon, and the role of the ethnographer within the process of the narrative production and articulation. My local background of an insider was both an asset and disadvantage (Ohnuki-

Tierney 1984; Kanuha, 2000), as during the fieldwork it was relatively easy for me to over-identify with the emotive dimensions and socio-political activist engagements of respondents. Reflection on myself both as a researcher and as a nostalgic local helped to make distance and untie the commotion between the etic and emic positions. This is in line with that of Whyte (1993, orig. 1943) adopted in his classic fieldwork research of an Italian neighbourhood in Boston, USA. Whyte's (1943) reflective engagement is further elaborated by Bourdieu's (2003) 'participant objectivation' through which idiosyncratic personal experiences methodologically subjected to sociological control constitute reflection on the overlapping words which produces real cognitive effects as it enables the social analyst to grasp and master the pre-reflexive social and academic experiences of the social world that researcher tends to project unconsciously onto ordinary social agents. In this process, the researcher becomes a study participant, enabling knowledge production reflected upon further along in the analysis, as an irreplaceable analytical resource (Ingold 2017).

Another point which I would like to reflect on in this text was also why throughout this research I thoroughly reflected on nostalgia in the presentation of the findings and their discourse. The findings of my research were not in line with media articles which practiced constant mockery of former socialist states on their supposed nostalgia and longing for the communist past. For instance, one of the articles published in the Economist is titled '*Many eastern Europeans feel nostalgia for the communist era*' where nostalgia is presented as irrational where this 'irrationality', i.e. 'being nostalgic for the times of communist era' places post-socialist Eastern Europeans outside European norms of modernity, allowing exotification. It is very often that media articles and academic discourse report about nostalgia with a feel a mockery within the text. However, when there is self-reflexivity involved, the stories reported are much more complex. Mutic (2018) reported about nostalgia, so called Yugonostalgia in more reflective and warm way than it was the case before. In a similar vein as it was the case with the article published in the Economist, Mutic (2018) also based her story on the interviews with locals, but the story contained empathy and subtlety. Mutic (2018) used her story in a reflective and introspective way; arrogance and mockery, as seen elsewhere were not present. Hence, nostalgia in Western European media is used to justify the perception of people from former socialist countries as irrational due to their supposed longing for the communist past. Buchowski (2006) elaborates on this arguing that the presence of different shades of Europeaness understood in a hierarchical sense, encourages a perception of the 'otherness' of former socialist countries. This 'irrationality' sets them up outside the norms of European modernity and inspires ridiculing and mocking. These stories affirm an (un)conscious bias which is difficult to prove as majority, although expressing their egalitarian views, hold the beliefs constructed due to their own socio-cultural backgrounds (Noon 2017). These beliefs are in many cases very negative and result in prejudices and discomfort (Gartner and Dovidio 2000). Therefore, it is important to understand that we as the researchers bring our own idiosyncrasies into the research and need to reflect on them without a fear to be labelled as narcissistic (Finley 2001). Every researcher comes with different emotional baggage derived from socio-cultural or geopolitical and economic backgrounds. Therefore, these influence the analysis and the interpretation of the fieldwork findings. Thus having different researchers, both insiders and [involved] outsiders who reflect on their own position while doing research, and being aware of the emotional baggage they bring to the research, it thickens the description and deepens the understanding of the phenomena under scrutiny.

As I was researching post-Yugoslav space and visitors to the antifascist heritage sites and museums, through my own self reflection and introspection, I included myself as a research participant. There was importance to offer the fieldwork experiences, reflections, and participant objectivations (Bourdieu, 2003) about the research on nostalgic sentiments, their meaning and notion in the post-Yugoslav space to understand them well. Through my own personal reflection and introspection, I was

able to waive research findings to late Mark Fisher's (2014) research about Nostalgia, but not a Nostalgia for the Past, but indeed, it was a Nostalgia for the Future. The main research findings revealed nostalgia, but this is not nostalgia for the communist past, as it has been portrayed by both academia and journalism, but this was a real nostalgia, nostalgia for the future which was promised but never came to the fore. This was the same nostalgia for the future which is also present in many other European countries, where Mark Fisher for instance notes:

'Oh, things were great in the 70s, let's go back to the 70s, but I think the real issue is "What kind of future did we expect from the 70s?" I mean, there was a trajectory, and this trajectory was interrupted. And now we find ourselves haunted by this future that we vaguely expected at the time, and that was terminated somewhere during the 80s by the values related to neoliberalism. From this point of view, it's no coincidence that the 80s saw a traumatic and violent defeat of the Left, at least in the UK' (Fisher 2014, <https://my-blackout.com/2019/04/26/mark-fisher-hauntology-nostalgia-and-lost-futures-interviewed-by-v-mannucci-v-mattioli/>).

Thus, reflecting on Yugonostalgia with some mockery and exotification, the nostalgia as a unique phenomenon of post-socialist countries does not provide the holistic picture as it does not include the future, but only provokes the story of exotification. Fisher's (2014) work adds the context of neoliberal capitalism to the story of nostalgia and in that sense we are able to put the nostalgia in the former socialist countries under the same denominator as the nostalgia of the west European countries, in Fisher's case, it was the UK. People in both contexts are not nostalgic for the past, but for the future which has not happened, but which has been promised. The ethnographic part of this research also reveals the importance of understanding the commodification of nostalgic sentiments for the antifascist past, through which antifascist legacy is reclaimed. Citizens of a post-Yugoslav space actively try to find solace from the socioeconomic injustices exacerbated through crony capitalism and populism, by seeking out experiences that induce nostalgia towards the times of the former Yugoslavia which they miss as at that time there was a hope that future is going to be better than it is today. This is not nostalgia for the past, or political ideologies of communism, but rather hauntings from the future which never happened, manifested as nostalgia for the hope that tomorrow will be better than today. Thus, the present moment informs the past, but is also haunted by the future. This is not some kind of specific ex-Yugoslav trend, but these kinds of longings for the 'past' have been present in the global context, for instance, Fisher notes (2014, p. 25), 'What should haunt us is not the no longer of actually existing social democracy, but the not yet of the futures that popular modernism trained us to expect, but which never materialised.' Fisher further argues about the idea of the future itself in present-day society. Thus, the concept of past and future have less to do with the temporal bodies, more with the context of the disappearance of future which is evident through popular culture such as music which allows a glimpse of hope and resurrection of the future. The arousal of neoliberal capitalist ideology in the late 80es perceived home, healthcare, education as a privilege, while these were perceived as a basic human right in the 70s and 60s. These issues hence bring the hauntings from the future, which was promised, but never happened. This future haunt the neoliberal societies globally. Thus, being haunted by the futures that failed to take shape is fertile ground for othering, populist rhetoric and historical revisionism to enter the mainstream, both globally and in the post-Yugoslav space. Voicing an antifascist narrative by visiting museum exhibits, events and visiting antifascist sites, is subversive in the current socio-political and economic settings of social exclusion, othering and crony capitalism, and it is precisely this process of subversion that enables the feeling of empowerment and solace in the visitor experience. The society today still relies on the XX century vision of the future derived from the corporate sources the end of the twentieth century Fisher (2014). Thus, these are not only the actors who co-create and subvert the narrative, but rather the social context that feeds into the subversion. Hence, via the agency of consumer culture observed through the lens of visiting antifascist

heritage sites, political activism is intersected with consumerism (Chatzidakis, Larsen, and Bishop, 2014). Thus socialism returns manifested as a nostalgia for the future that still haunts and survives in these spaces, it sparks as a spectre in a Derridian sense (1994), it is a visible incorporeal spirit which haunts the present with the future which did not happen. Under these contours and contexts, the spectre of Yugoslavia in the seventies, when there was the hope in better tomorrow, these thoughts and feelings haunt the present societies as well. Under these circumstances, accompanied by rising populist rhetoric both globally and locally, visiting antifascist heritage sites for the citizens of former Yugoslavia works as a protest against populism, cronyism, social injustices, populist rhetoric and historical revisionism, camouflaged as a nostalgia for the past, but standing firm as a nostalgia for the future. Thus, consuming nostalgia while visiting antifascist heritage sites, provides temporary solace against contemporary evils such as right-wing populism, and at the same time, that nostalgia haunts the society.

As Radeljić (2013) argues, the main challenge in discussing the 'post-Yugoslav space' is due to the complexity of the phenomena and highly contested issues that occupy its current socio-political settings. Thus the lack of ability to discuss may result in further erosion of the understanding of the region (ibid.) Hence, self-reflection and introspection if put in the research context, may thicken the description and deepen the understandings of post-Yugoslav space in a more grounded and holistic way.

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