

SHIFTING DISCOURSES OF NESTING ORIENTALISMS: THE CASE OF WESTERN BALKAN FRAGMENTATION

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the issue of Western Balkan fragmentation in the context of the EU enlargement process through a post-colonial lens. The project is based on theoretical and conceptual framework and a discourse analysis of political statements in Slovenian, Croatian and Serbian media. Theoretical framework, based on Edward Said's orientalism and its applications to the Balkans, demonstrates that the Balkans have been perceived as the "other" of Europe. Analysis of the concept of "nesting orientalism" then shows that the Balkan nations internalize the Western "othering" and, in their desire to rise on the Western hegemonic scale, orientalize the rest of the region. The discourse analysis concludes that the fragmentation has occurred because of certain hierarchies that have been consolidated by a type of "othering" that is based on how the accession countries position one another vis-à-vis the European integration process. The thesis also contributes to the field conceptually because it demonstrates that the concept of "nesting orientalism" is still current, but that ways of "othering" within the Balkans have shifted.

Key words: Western Balkans, Nesting Orientalism, Orientalism, post-colonialism, EU enlargement process, European integration, discourse analysis.

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INTRODUCTION

One of the greatest challenges for the European Enlargement Policy has been integration of the Western Balkans¹. A project launched at the Vienna Summit in 1998 with the purpose of reintegrating the war-torn peninsula securing its stability and consequently securing the stability of Europe as a whole², has not born many successes. In the year 2013, the region is still highly fragmented and regional cooperation is not where it ought to be. Traditional international relations scholars offer two major explanations for why this is the case. The first group argues that the region is fragmented because nations fail to implement European norms, while the others believe that the policies of the European Union are simply not efficiently executed. A statement from Serbian foreign affairs politician Duško Lopandić, however, hints that explanation is not as straightforward. He stated “the attractive power of the EU is so strong, as to be a cause of the fragmentation in the region.”³ This paper examines the issue of the Western Balkan fragmentation through a post-colonial lens, which uncovers that the historical discursive “othering” of the Balkans in the West has fostered an internal “othering” within the region. Although this phenomenon, known as “nesting orientalisms,” was first observed by Milica Bakić-Hayden⁴ in the early 1990s, this paper argues that ways of “othering” have shifted. Now the basis of “othering” is no longer religious or cultural heritage, but one’s position in the European integration process.

¹ The region of the Western Balkans consists of former Yugoslav states, excluding Slovenia, therefore, Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, including Kosovo, as defined by United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 of 10 June 1999, and Albania.

² Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council: Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges, COM (2012) 600 Final (October 2012).

³ As quoted in: Milica Delević, *Regional Cooperation in the Western Balkans* (Paris: Institute for Security Studies, European Union, 2007), 28, http://www.christophesoloz.ch/links/doc/2007/2007_chai.pdf.

⁴ Milica Bakić-Hayden, “Nesting Orientalisms: The Case of Former Yugoslavia,” *Slavic Review* 54, no. 4 (1995): 917–931.

The post-colonial approach contributes to the scholarship on the fragmentation of the Western Balkans in the context of the EU enlargement process, which has mainly been examined through traditional theoretical frameworks. The following paragraphs explain what realism and liberalism enable us to see, but also what their limitations are and in what ways post-colonial examination can fill a gap in the literature. Ulrich Sedelmeier argues that most of the enlargement process is explained through a realist lens, focusing on EU foreign policy and the ability of the EU to ensure stability and shape its candidates through different policy instruments and conditionality.⁵ The assumption that drives this argument is that “actors are driven by narrow self-interests that are primarily influenced by material factors.”⁶ Thus, realists simply explain greater fragmentation of the Western Balkans following the EU enlargement process, which includes redistribution of resources to candidates who better comply with EU conditionality, as a fight for EU resources. Mustafa Türkes and Göksu Gökgöz explain that according to this type of redistribution of EU funds, the beneficiaries are the more developed regions, which consequently increases competition and social differences among the nations and raises the levels of fragmentation.⁷ The region of the Western Balkans is accordingly fragmented because of competition among states for available EU resources, for greater economic development and for gaining influence within the region.

The second dominant perspective on the EU enlargement is known as “liberalism,” which recognizes the importance of state interests and material factors, but draws attention to the fact that those interests are not given, but constructed through social interactions. This perspective focuses on the importance of norms and identity, as of “what EU institutions and member states consider appropriate behavior for the role that they collectively ascribe to

⁵ Ulrich Sedelmeier, *EU Enlargement, Identity and the Analysis of European Foreign Policy: Identity Formation Through Policy Practice* (European University Institute (EUI), Robert Schuman Centre of Advanced Studies (RSCAS), 2003), 2.

⁶ Ibid, 4.

⁷ Mustafa Türkes and Göksu Gökgöz, “The European Union’s Strategy Towards the Western Balkans: Exclusion or Integration?,” *East European Politics & Societies* 20, no. 4 (2006): 690.

themselves – as representatives of the EU – in their relationship with the CEEC's⁸ and the behavioral obligations their identity entails for this particular relationship.”⁹ In the case of fragmentation within the Western Balkans, the explanation is found in the non-internalization of the liberal, EU advocated norms within the region, which are necessary for smooth regional cooperation. Based on the theoretical premises of Reus-Smit and Snidal¹⁰ and Vachudova¹¹, one can argue that the fragmentation is a consequence of improper, undemocratic conditions within the Western Balkan states, which disables EU influence. More so, the cause is improper, even infantilized behavior of the Western Balkan countries and their various abilities to adopt EU values and norms.

The rationalist and normative-based explanations on the fragmentation of the Western Balkans offer certain perspectives, but, as Shohat and Stam point out, “it is not that one conceptual frame is ‘wrong’ and the other ‘right,’ but rather that each frame only partly illuminates the issues.”¹² The common criticism of the two perspectives is that they “only consider a one-way effect between either foreign policy or identity on EU enlargement,”¹³ while the interactions are much more complex and intertwined. Such explanations of the fragmentation do not help us fully understand the regional dynamics and the actual situation of the Western Balkans. More so, they don't allow us to see fragmentation as an identity-based process.

The post-colonial framework is best suited to help us further understand the complexity of the Western Balkan fragmentation. It offers a more nuanced interpretation of

⁸ Countries of Central and Eastern Europe, also generic term for former communist states.

⁹ Sedelmeier 2003, 4.

¹⁰ Christian Reus-Smit and Duncan Snidal, *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations*, vol. 5 (Oxford University Press, USA, 2008), 307.

¹¹ Milada Anna Vachudova, “Strategies for Democratization and European Integration in the Balkans,” *Slovak Foreign Policy Affairs* no. I (2003): 94.

¹² Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media*, Sightlines (London, England) (London ; New York: Routledge, 1994), 41.

¹³ Sedelmeier 2003, 5.

the power relationship between the EU and its candidate countries and the effects of this relationship on a candidate's identity. According to Mark B. Salter, post-colonial theory has two major purposes.¹⁴ First, it helps one understand how a colonial past has affected relations among states and knowledge politics. More specifically, the theory explains how a colonial past is reflected in the representations of "other," how the "other" identifies itself and how these cultural politics affect everyday life.¹⁵ In addition, post-colonial theory directs the researcher to "the different kinds of power and violence made evident by colonial relations expressed in identity, culture, nation, resistance and revolution."¹⁶ Furthermore, post-colonialism and especially its main concept of orientalism brings in the local and "lays foundations for alternative discourses of self and others."¹⁷ Lastly, the post-colonial approach, which draws on post-structuralism, unlike traditional IR theories, recognizes the power of discourses.

One may argue that the Western Balkans region is not a former colony of the EU; nonetheless, many believe Europe still acts as a modern empire, but that it has shifted from Eurocentrism to Europism, namely from movements from Europe toward the outside, to an inward-focused, homogenizing process.¹⁸ Studies of the past decade have suggested that post-colonial theory could be useful in understanding the interactions between the EU and the accession states, because of a highly unequal power relationship between the two. This unequal relationship is reflected in "representational frameworks within which the Orient and Eastern Europe [Western Balkans] are constituted."¹⁹ Thus, the post-colonial lens "could

¹⁴ M. Salter, C. Moore, and C. Farrands, "Edward Said and Post-colonial International Relations," *International Relations Theory and Philosophy: Interpretive Dialogues* (2010): 130.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid, 131.

¹⁷ Tim Dunne, Milya Kurki, and Steve Smith, *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity* (Oxford University Press, USA, 2007), 245.

¹⁸ Sandra Ponzanesi and Bolette B. Blaagaard, *Deconstructing Europe: Postcolonial Perspectives* (Routledge, 2012), 3.

¹⁹ Merje Kuus, "Europe's Eastern Expansion and the Reinscription of Otherness in East-Central Europe," *Progress in Human Geography* 28, no. 4 (August 1, 2004): 483.

provide fresh insights into how various strategies of ‘othering’ function in the current phase of Western and European identity construction.”²⁰ This paper takes application of post-colonial theory in the context of EU a step further, as it examines power relations, “othering” and identity construction within the region of aspiring EU members.

This thesis seeks to address the following question: In what ways does a postcolonial lens further our understanding of the increasing fragmentation of the Western Balkans? The question is dealt with from theoretical, conceptual and empirical perspectives. The first chapter serves as a theoretical framework in which the post-structural idea of the relationship between knowledge and power is introduced, specifically focusing on the colonizer-colony relationship, which is dealt with in post-colonial theory. The chapter then introduces Edward Said’s theory of orientalism, which was a groundbreaking theory of examining “othering” in the world. The Balkans has historically been perceived as the “other” of Europe, and consequently many orientalist applications and even new concepts like balkanism have emerged to explain this phenomenon. The chapter explores these applications and presents the historical discourses on the Balkans, constructed by the West.

The main focus of the second chapter is the concept of nesting orientalism, which focuses on the “othering” within the Balkan region as a response to norms and values constructed by the West. The chapter explores the process and regional discourses upon which Milica Bakić-Hayden developed this concept. Furthermore, it looks into important applications of the concept in the recent scholarship. Based on the theoretical framework and nesting orientalism, a methodology for empirical analysis is developed, which examines current “othering” within the region. The major recognized themes of “othering” are balkanist, religious, geographical and hierarchical. The last chapter presents the empirical

²⁰ Kuus 2004, 483.

findings and modern discourses of “othering” within the region, more specifically political discourses in Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia.

CHAPTER 1: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The region of the Western Balkans has been the most turbulent part of Europe in the post-World War II era. This research specifically focuses on the countries of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which means that it includes Slovenia and excludes Albania, because strong fragmentation of once unified states is especially controversial and interesting. When one discusses dissolution of one state and creation of a new, there is always a question of identity and discourses that help bring about certain identity. Slovenes, Croats, Serbs, Bosnians, Macedonians, Montenegrins and Kosovars all once felt a sense of belonging to Yugoslavia and identified themselves as Yugoslavs. However, nationalistic movements in forms of discourses changed their self-perception and molded the numerous identities we know today. This was not difficult because this region is also the most diverse part of Europe:

Axes of European symbolic geography intersect in Yugoslavia, whose territory has seen the meeting place of empires (Eastern and Western Roman; Ottoman and Habsburg), scripts (Cyrillic and Latin, and, into the nineteenth century, Ottoman Turkish), religions (Roman Catholicism, Orthodox Christianity, Protestantism, Islam, Judaism) and cold-war politics and ideologies (between the Warsaw Pact and NATO, communist-run but unorthodox, and non-aligned).²¹

Differences that exist in many different dimensions gave ground for separation of one nation from the other and contributed to regional fragmentation during the Yugoslav wars that took place in 1990s.

A desire for independence came along with a desire for return to Europe, which was believed would help fulfill goals of international recognition, differentiate new national identities from the Balkans and “legitimate and inform a new Western political and economic orientation.”²² The common discourse in the West has in fact been that the only proper

²¹ Milica Bakić-Hayden and Robert M. Hayden, “Orientalist Variations on the Theme ‘Balkans’: Symbolic Geography in Recent Yugoslav Cultural Politics,” *Slavic Review* 51, no. 1 (1992): 4.

²² Nicole Lindstrom, “Between Europe and the Balkans: Mapping Slovenia and Croatia’s ‘Return to Europe’ in the 1990s,” *Dialectical Anthropology* 27, no. 3–4 (September 1, 2003): 313–314.

European states are the ones belonging to the European Union and has simultaneously entailed that states to the east and south, non-EU members, are less European “and, in some cases, a threat to European norms and values.”²³ Merje Kuus argues that the Eastern enlargement was “underpinned by a broadly orientalist discourse that assumes essential difference between Europe and Eastern Europe and frames difference from Western Europe as a distance from and a lack of Europeanness.”²⁴ Taking into consideration that the Balkans has been perceived as the most “other” of Europe,²⁵ one can speculate that the West has perceived the former Yugoslav states as the least European.

Identity and discourses, which help shape one’s identity, are extremely important in the context of the Western Balkan region and also of the EU enlargement process. Discourses helped bring about the separation of Slovenia and Croatia in the 1990s and identify its people as different, as the “others.” Thus, the conclusion may be that they play an important role also in the present fragmentation. Traditional theories like realism and liberalism do not look at issues from a discursive point of view because they only focus on rationalist argument that focuses on the state’s interest or norms, which cause them to miss the ways identities are formed. More so, they do not question the relationship between knowledge and power in international relations, which prohibits them from seeing normative and political dimensions of the available knowledge. The examination of the issue through a post-colonial lens is thus important. The purpose of the first chapter is to present a more detailed explanation for why a post-colonial approach to the issue of EU enlargement is important and what it can help us see by the help of guiding principles of critical theories and post-structuralism. More so, it provides a broader overview of the post-colonial theory of orientalism and orientalist

²³ Lindstrom 2003, 314.

²⁴ Kuus 2004, 473.

²⁵ Maria Nikolaeva Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 3.

applications to the region of the Balkans and sets the stage for the more detailed examination of “nesting orientalism” and development of methodology of the empirical part of the thesis.

1.1 Knowledge and power

The 1980s was a time when a new view of the world and international relations developed, and important questions regarding the nature of the social actors, historical formations and structures and normative implications began to be considered.²⁶ The goal of this new, critical perspective was to trigger radical rethinking of “the normative foundations of global politics.”²⁷ One of the most controversial critical theories is post-structuralism, which “poses a series of meta-theoretical questions – questions about the theory of theory – in order to understand how particular ways of knowing, what counts as knowing, and who can know, have been established over time.”²⁸ Thus, the question arises: What is the relationship between knowledge and power? While traditional theorists perceive knowledge solely as a cognitive matter, post-structuralists recognize it as a normative and political matter.²⁹ Foucault claimed already in 1977 that “power and knowledge are mutually supportive; they directly imply one another.”³⁰ Therefore, one with power structures the prevalent knowledge, and then that same knowledge enforces the power of the one who created it.

In the context of the European integration, we must take into consideration that policies always consist of inclusion and exclusion, integration and disintegration, incorporation but also alienation.³¹ Therefore, a post-structural approach is important because it deals with the question of who is included and who is excluded by questioning dominate modes of thought,

²⁶ Scott Burchill et al., *Theories of International Relations, Third Edition*, 3rd ed. (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 140.

²⁷ Ibid, 160.

²⁸ David Campbell, “Poststructuralism,” *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity* (2007): 208.

²⁹ Burchill et al. 2005, 162.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Dr Jens-Uwe Wunderlich and David J. Bailey, eds., *The European Union and Global Governance: A Handbook*, 1st ed. (Routledge, 2011), 41.

knowledge and power within the European Union.³² This approach is also important because it studies how dominant representations are constructed and alternatives excluded.³³ Post-colonialism, which draws from the post-structural school of thought, focuses on a specific type of domination, which is power relation as a legacy of colonialism and, as it has been established in the introduction, beyond the typical colonizer-colony relationship. More specifically, it deals with “multiplicity of perspectives, traditions and approaches to questions of identity, culture and power.”³⁴ The next section provides a more detailed examination of the appropriateness of a post-colonial approach in the context of EU enlargement and fragmentation of the Western Balkans.

1.2 Post-colonialism

The traditional colonialism has ended, but the legacy of colonialism and dominance of the West³⁵ in setting global norms is still very strong. The role of post-colonialism in general is to “contest rationalist, humanist, and other universalist views and their modes of signification, especially where they claim that Europe possessed the finer forms of reasons, morals, and law.”³⁶ More so, post-colonialists bring in the local and reject the idea of “native essentialism,”³⁷ the idea that for centuries justified involvement of the West in the lives of “others” because supposedly the “others” are not capable of developing on their own. Grovogui also emphasizes that post-colonialism is crucial in understanding the relationship between the production of knowledge and policy-making.³⁸ The goal of post-colonialism is therefore to “critique, expose, deconstruct, counter and to transcend, the cultural and broader

³² Wunderlich and Bailey 2011, 41.

³³ Ibid, 42.

³⁴ Siba N. Grovogui, “Postcolonialism,” *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity* (2007): 239.

³⁵ West in this paper refers to Western Europe and Northern America, or so-called advanced industrial democracies.

³⁶ Grovogui 2007, 239.

³⁷ Ibid, 248.

³⁸ Ibid.

ideological legacies and presences of imperialism.”³⁹ The most important aspect of post-colonialism in the terms of this paper is to include the local⁴⁰ and to examine the issue of fragmentation by observing discourses within the Balkans and not simply accept rationalist/normative explanations made by the West.

The post-colonial approach toward the issue of EU enlargement is appropriate because many of the EU members participated in the colonization and, furthermore, because of the power the EU holds today not only in the region, but also in the world. In the modern days, there are two characters of the EU in which a post-colonial approach is applicable. First is the fact that the EU is a regional normative hegemon, imposing norms on weaker actors in the region. This is especially applicable in the enlargement process, which enables the EU “to project its norms and values in a way that is both efficient and legitimate.”⁴¹ The union promotes fundamental civil, political and economic rights outside its borders, but from a post-colonial perspective, by doing so limits “the agency of those it seeks to empower in relations characterized by epistemic violence, [and causes] the technologization of politics and administrative arbitrariness.”⁴² It can do so because it has created its own identity as a normative power and legitimized its influence on the other, non-EU members. Secondly, every entity must create its own identity in order to exist; this is the case also for the European Union. Edward Said claims that identity in itself does not have any “ontological stability; each is made up of human effort, partly affirmation, partly identification of the other.”⁴³ A concept may be understood only if we contrast it to something that it’s not. For example, one can only understand “peace” if he or she knows and understands its contrast –

³⁹ James D. Sidaway, “Postcolonial Geographies: An Exploratory Essay,” *Progress in Human Geography* 24, no. 4 (December 1, 2000): 4.

⁴⁰ Sidaway 2000, 4.

⁴¹ Hiski Haukkala, “The European Union as a Regional Normative Hegemon: The Case of European Neighbourhood Policy,” *Europe-Asia Studies* 60, no. 9 (2008): 1604.

⁴² Michael Merlingen, “Everything Is Dangerous: A Critique of Normative Power Europe,” *Security Dialogue* 38, no. 4 (2007): 436.

⁴³ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), xvii.

“conflict.” The identity of post-World War II Western Europe, which carries the strength of European identity, was defined as a contrast to the backward communist East and the “violent” Balkans.

The two characters are intertwined; the norms that EU exports to the rest of the world help construct the EU identity. When an EU accession country successfully adapts the EU norms, the EU identity is strengthened and legitimized, while the unsuccessful candidates are recognized as “the other.” The more the union grows, the bigger the power it holds, and fewer agencies are left for the local, who are different and may benefit from less universal and more locally sensitive solutions to their problems.

1.3 Orientalism

The leading sub-theory of post-colonialism that deals with the creation of identity is known as “orientalism” and was developed in 1978 by Palestinian-American scholar Edward W. Said.⁴⁴ Orientalism is important for this project because it lays the conceptual foundation for understanding the Western discourses of self and others, in this case of the EU and the Balkan other, and help make an argument that the EU identity was based on creating the Balkan “other” and contrasting it to “proper Europe.” This has affected the nations of the Western Balkans and, not only the relationship of the Balkans with the European Union, but also relationship among themselves.

Edward Said developed his theory based on observing significant discrepancy between the mystical false representation of the Middle East in Western literature, media and art and the reality of life and people in Middle Eastern countries. He defined the concept as “a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between ‘the

⁴⁴ Another important American scholar who deals with issue of “othering” in international relations is David Campbell. In his work ‘Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity’ he argues that identity of the United States is based on interpretations of an enemy/danger.

Orient' and (most of the time) the 'Occident.'"⁴⁵ Grovogui simplifies the definition by stating that "orientalism is a technique of power based in language and processes of translation of the identities, cultures and religion of the Middle East."⁴⁶ Orientalism pointed out that in the Western discourse people of the "East"⁴⁷ are utterly different from Westerners, and because of the idea of "native essentialism," completely the same among themselves, no matter the nationality or culture, people/nations that do not develop but stay primitive. In the discursive language, Said explains that "the Oriental is irrational, depraved (fallen), childlike, 'different'; thus the European is rational, virtuous, mature, 'normal.'"⁴⁸ Importantly, Said observes that Western societies have developed preconceived notions of the people, lifestyle and beliefs in the "orient" despite never having been there.⁴⁹ One can conclude that these imaginary identities reveal more about the "west" than the "orient."

The orientalist argument continues that the "west" acquires the imagined knowledge neither innocently nor objectively, but rather through a process that reflects the need to create and keep the superiority of the "west" over the "other."⁵⁰ As previously argued, one with power has the ability to create knowledge, which then reinforces its power. Said also argues that Western discourses not only shape perspectives on the "other" held by developed societies, but also affect and form how the "orientalized" nations perceive themselves and how they act in international politics. More so, Said observed that because of the power of the "west" and economic dependency of the less developed nations, "orientalized" countries participate in orientalism, remain subordinated and inferior to the "west" and fulfill the

On Orientalism-Edward Said, 2007,

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xwCOSkXR_Cw&feature=youtube_gdata_player.

⁴⁵ Said 1979, 2.

⁴⁶ Grovogui 2007, 245.

⁴⁷ East in this paper refers to all non-western civilization, in the context of Said's orientalism to Middle East and Asia.

⁴⁸ Said 1979, 40.

⁴⁹ *On Orientalism-Edward Said, 2007,*

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xwCOSkXR_Cw&feature=youtube_gdata_player.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

“western” expectations.⁵¹ Consequently, the image created about the “other” has ultimately shaped the “other.” This was possible because none of the traditional theories questioned the knowledge the powerful West created. The purpose of orientalism is to raise awareness about the imagined depictions of the non-Western world and Edward Said “lays the foundations for alternative discourses of self and others.”⁵² Despite the fact that the theory of orientalism was applied mainly to the Middle East, we can see similar power-knowledge relations within Europe.

1.3.1 Orientalism within Europe

Although Edward Said focused his research on the Middle East and Asia, other scholars observed similar constructions of “self” and “others” in other places around the world, including within Europe⁵³ and even within one country. Because the identity is constructed, the clear borders between superior and inferior are never set and never objective and are always moved further East or South. Milica Bakić-Hayden described this phenomenon as “nesting orientalism,” which is defined as:

A pattern of reproduction of the original dichotomy upon which Orientalism is premised. In this pattern, Asia is more ‘East’ or ‘other’ than Eastern Europe; within Eastern Europe itself this gradation is reproduced with the Balkans perceived as most ‘eastern’; within the Balkans there are similarly constructed hierarchies.⁵⁴

The concept of “nesting orientalism” will be examined thoroughly in the next chapter, with the focus on constructed hierarchies within the region of the Western Balkans; nonetheless, this definition is important for understanding the complexity of how the creation of identity of “self” and “other” plays out in international politics.

⁵¹ *On Orientalism-Edward Said* (2/4), 2007, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n0HYX9JVH8o&feature=youtube_gdata_player.

⁵² Grovogui 2007, 245.

⁵³ Important international relations scholar dealing with ‘othering’ within Europe is Iver Neumann. Major argument of his work, ‘Russia and the Idea of Europe,’ is that Russian national identity is based on delineation from a European ‘other.’

⁵⁴ Bakić-Hayden 1995, 918.

Many believe that the division between Western and Eastern Europe came to be in the twentieth century because of the iron curtain and the division between democratic and capitalist West and oppressive, communist regimes in the East. This is, however, not the case. Larry Wolff argues in his book *Inventing Eastern Europe* that intellectuals of Western Europe had already during the period of enlightenment, in the eighteenth century, created a superior, civilized image of self and contrasted it to the backward, even barbaric “shadowed lands” of Eastern Europe.⁵⁵ He continues that Eastern Europe, mainly the Slavic lands, served as a link between Asia and Europe, namely “between civilization and barbarism.”⁵⁶ Following the end of the Cold War, which took over the weight of separating the West and East and ending oppressive communist regimes in Eastern Europe, came the idea of “returning to Europe.”⁵⁷ Furthermore, new geo-political divisions of Europe came to life, like Central Europe and the Balkans, which played an important role in how the newly formed countries were perceived in the world and how successful their integration in the EU was and, therefore, their “return to Europe.” Central European identity was re-invented within the region⁵⁸ by important scholars of countries with Austro-Habsburg inheritance⁵⁹ and had a very neutral character.⁶⁰ Countries that successfully constructed Central European identity have also been more positively perceived by the West.⁶¹ The perception of the Balkans was nonetheless created outside of the region and a negative connotation was developed to this term. Maria Todorova claims that this was the case because of the Balkan wars in 1912-

⁵⁵ Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on The mind of the Enlightenment* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1994), 4.

⁵⁶ Ibid, 13.

⁵⁷ Todorova 1997, 154.

⁵⁸ Central Europe or Mitteleuropa was first defined by German scholars in the late 19th century, but was dismissed due to increased nationalisms following World War I.

⁵⁹ For example, Hungarian Gyo’rgi Konrád, the Czech Milan Kundera and the Yugoslav Danilo Kiš.

⁶⁰ Hans-Georg Betz, “Mitteleuropa and Post-Modern European Identity,” *New German Critique* no. 50 (April 1, 1990): 186.

Jacques Le Rider, “Mitteleuropa, Zentraleuropa, Mittelosteuropa A Mental Map of Central Europe,” *European Journal of Social Theory* 11, no. 2 (May 1, 2008): 157, doi:10.1177/1368431007087471.

⁶¹ Ibid.

1913,⁶² which was only re-enforced with the Yugoslav wars in the 1990s. It was clear that a Balkan country does not belong to the European Union because it is too unstable and, more so, violent. A more detailed examination of orientalist application to the region of the Balkans will now be taken.

1.3.2. The Balkan other

The Balkans is a geographical term for south-eastern Europe, named by a range of mountains, stretching from Bulgaria to Serbia and populated mainly by nations of southern Slavic ancestry. Božo Jezernik nonetheless states:

Whenever that term is used to denote something other than a mountain range in Bulgaria, a noticeable ideological prejudice is introduced with a negative connotation of slovenliness, passivity, unreliability, disrespect toward women, conniving, unscrupulousness, opportunism, laziness, superstition, inconsistent and overzealous bureaucracy and so forth.⁶³

Throughout history, this neutral geographical term, thus obtained an extremely negative connotation, especially in the Western European discourse. Le Rider writes about typical discourse on the habitant of the Balkans: “Homo Balkanicus is but a caricature originally conceived by westerners to designate a primitive European, of quaint interest when it comes to folklore, but barbaric when he takes up arms.”⁶⁴ The Balkan discourse in the West overemphasizes violence, which is highly ironic, knowing that history in Western Europe until the twentieth century, has been much more violent than the one in the Balkans. However, creation of a negative discourse in the area was not difficult, due to the very diverse historical, religious and political influences of the past, especially the “oriental” influence of the Ottoman Empire.

The strongest influence that separated “orient” from “occident” was the influence of Islam, which was in Western discourse symbolized as “terror, devastation, the demonic,

⁶² Todorova 1997, 3.

⁶³ As quoted in: Ivan Čolovič, “Balkanist Discourse and Its Critics - Hungarian Review,” March 29, 2013, http://www.hungarianreview.com/article/balkanist_discourse_and_its_critics.

⁶⁴ Le Rider 2008, 157.

hordes of hated barbarians.”⁶⁵ The Balkans is the region within Europe where this “dangerous other” crossed the border of “civilization” and with its presence “overturned” the development of the region and “barbarized” the people.⁶⁶ The Ottoman heritage made the region of the Balkans interesting for the application of Said’s orientalism. Many scholars, like Milica Bakić-Hayden, Robert M. Hayden, Jacques Le Rider, Maria Todorova, Slavoj Žižek, Božo Jezernik, David Norris, Vesna Goldsworthy and others have written about the Balkan “other” in terms of orientalism. Le Rider simply applied orientalism to the region of the Balkans, stating:

European discourses on ‘the Balkans’ belong to a form of Orientalism deprived of any positive features, to a cultural colonialism which expects from Occidental culture that it should restore some order and rationality to fragmented and underdeveloped territories.⁶⁷

Milica Bakić-Hayden and Robert Hayden began with a simple application of orientalism to explain discourses on the region, believing that balkanist rhetoric “shares an underlying logic and rhetoric with orientalism.”⁶⁸ Milica Bakić-Hayden’s research focus on discourses within the region brought a further development of orientalism that she named “nesting orientalism.”

Maria Todorova and Slavoj Žižek named discourses on the Balkans “balkanism.” Maria Todorova claims that balkanism is not solely a sub-theory of Said’s orientalism, because “there is the historical and geographic concreteness of the Balkans as opposed to the intangible nature of the Orient.”⁶⁹ Furthermore, she argues that balkanism treats differences within one type— within Europe— and presents “a bridge between East and West, between Europe and Asia” and also a bridge between stages of growth.⁷⁰ In addition, opposite to the presentations of the orient, which is very mystified, feminized and sensualized, the Balkans

⁶⁵ Said 1979, 59.

⁶⁶ This sentence does not present my views, but shadows the Western discourse on the Balkans. Based on Todorova 1997, 3.

⁶⁷ Le Rider 2008, 157.

⁶⁸ Bakić-Hayden 1995, 920.

⁶⁹ Todorova 1997, 11.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 16.

have been perceived as crude and violent.⁷¹ Todorova also argues that Balkan self-identity was persistently constructed against an “oriental” other, either a geographical neighbor (Ottoman Empire, Turkey), within the region itself (nesting orientalism) or by “Orientalizing” its own past (such as the Ottoman legacy).⁷² Maria Todorova declares balkanism to be a unique case of discourse, too complex to understand solely through the application of orientalism.

Slavoj Žižek provides the most radical view on balkanism, claiming that each nation or even region has its own “Balkan” or so-called inferior “other,” which is always a little more toward the southeast. He writes,

For Serbs, they begin in Kosovo or in Bosnia where Serbia is trying to defend civilized Christian Europe against the encroachments of this ‘other.’ For the Croats, the Balkans begin in Orthodox, despotic and Byzantine Serbia, against which Croatia safeguards Western democratic values. For many Italians and Austrians, they begin in Slovenia, the Western outpost of the Slavic hordes. For many Germans, Austria is tainted with Balkan corruption and inefficiency; for many Northern Germans, Catholic Bavaria is not free of Balkan contamination. Many arrogant Frenchmen associate Germany with Eastern Balkan brutality - it lacks French finesse. Finally, to some British opponents of the European Union, Continental Europe is a new version of the Turkish Empire with Brussels as the new Istanbul - a voracious despotism threatening British freedom and sovereignty.⁷³

The pattern is that all nations recognize the existence of the Balkans, of an inferior, backward “other,” but they reject the idea that the Balkans begin in their country. According to Žižek’s explanation, Balkans are imaginary, invented and have no tangible identity, therefore Said’s orientalism is applicable. Žižek also argues that the Balkans is Europe’s so-called ghost, “Europe’s persistent reminder of its own past.”⁷⁴ Therefore, he claims that balkanism is a consequence of Europe recognizing its own past in the Balkans, from which it wants to escape by “othering” the Balkans. His very radical explanation is also that balkanism is a case of “displaced racism,” which is politically more correct, because one discriminates against

⁷¹ Todorova 1997, 17.

⁷² Ibid, 20.

⁷³ Slavoj Žižek, “You May,” March 18, 1999, <http://www.lacan.com/zizek-youmay.htm>.

⁷⁴ Slavoj Žižek, *The Fragile Absolute, or, Why Is the Christian Legacy Worth Fighting For?*, Wo Es War (London: Verso, 2000), 4.

white race on a European territory, in contrast to past discrimination of Africans and Asians.⁷⁵ Žižek's view on balkanism is very radical; nonetheless, it demonstrates the absurd character of discourses and the creation of the "other."

In the context of the Balkan 'other,' it is important to note that the Yugoslav wars in the 1990s caused a minor shift in the Western discourse on the Balkans. Despite there still being a negative perception of the region of the Balkans as a whole, in the context of war, Serbs have been perceived as the most Balkan of the whole region.⁷⁶ Lene Hansen argues that "the Balkanizing Serbia discourse holds that Serbian nationalism was of fundamentally different kind than the 'normal' Western and Central European ones."⁷⁷ She continues that in the discourse Serbia has been perceived as "barbaric, rampant, violent and irrational."⁷⁸ Nonetheless, in general, the term "Balkans" is, in the West, still perceived very disapprovingly as whole.

Said's major problem with orientalism and Western discourse on the "other" is that it marks all people and nations of the region as the same and that the one with the power of creating knowledge affects how the Orientalized perceives itself and acts in the international arena. When one thinks of Balkans, which has a negative connotation, he or she thinks of the whole region of south-eastern Europe in those negative terms, without taking into account the great differences among nations living there. More so, the stereotyping of the Balkans affected how the nations perceive themselves and how they act in the international arena. As mentioned previously, Milica Bakić-Hayden developed a theory that deals with this called "nesting orientalism." According to this concept, we see development of internal discourses within the region, which help move the starting point of the Balkans more to the southeast. In

⁷⁵ Žižek 2000, 5.

⁷⁶ Lene Hansen, *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War*, The New International Relations (London ; New York: Routledge, 2006), 160.

⁷⁷ Ibid, 166.

⁷⁸ Ibid, 167.

the context of EU enlargement and failed regional cooperation among Western Balkan states, examination of the effects of internal discourses may be important. The second chapter provides a detailed examination of the concept “nesting orientalism” and prepares a methodology for discourse analysis, which will be used to illustrate the importance of the discourse in the fragmentation of the Western Balkans.

CHAPTER 2: NESTING ORIENTALISMS AND METHODOLOGY

*The standard reaction of a Slovene (I am one myself) is to say: 'yes, this is how it is in the Balkans, but Slovenia is not part of the Balkans; it is part of Mitteleuropa; the Balkans begin in Croatia or in Bosnia; we Slovenes are the last bulwark of European civilization against the Balkan madness.'*⁷⁹

Slavoj Žižek

The theoretical framework of the first chapter presented a strong case that the Balkans have been perceived and discursively constructed as the “other” of Europe. Western Europe, and later the European Union, has shaped its superior, civilized and peaceful identity over the backward, unstable and violent Balkans. However, the Balkans is geographically and historically without a doubt part of Europe, and the European Union has also declared that its future belongs within Europe. Romano Prodi stated in 2002,

The integration of the Balkans into the European Union will complete the unification of the continent, and we have held out this prospect to them. Although there is still a long way to go, the Balkans belongs to Europe.⁸⁰

In addition, in 2003 it was declared that “the future of the Balkans is within the European Union,” at the Thessaloniki EU-Western Balkans summit.⁸¹ The creation of the new geopolitical term “Western Balkans,” which was adopted at the European Council in Vienna in 1998, demonstrated that Europe “at least has the virtue of associating the Balkans with the adjective ‘Western’ for the first time since the concept of the ‘Balkans’ was invented.”⁸² Robert M. Hayden continues that this new geopolitical term still signifies the following: “exclusion – the Balkans remaining somehow not European regardless of their location on the map – but possibly being on the way to become so, since they are now western.”⁸³ The “othering” of one region nonetheless cannot simply be overturned by the Westerners because

⁷⁹ Žižek, “You May.”

⁸⁰ Romano Prodi, “A Wider Europe—A Proximity Policy as the Key to Stability,” in *Speech Given at the Sixth ECSA-World Conference, Brussels*, 2002, 3, http://www.exclusion.net/images/pdf/567_veqot_prodi_ecsa_en.pdf.

⁸¹ “Western Balkans - EUISS,” accessed May 9, 2013, <http://www.iss.europa.eu/regions/western-balkans>.

⁸² Robert M. Hayden, *From Yugoslavia to the Western Balkans: Studies of a European Disunion, 1991-2011*, Balkan Studies Library v. 7 (Boston: Brill, 2013), xi.

⁸³ Ibid.

it affects how the nations perceive themselves and how they act on a regional and global level. The theory of “nesting orientalism” presents how balkanism affected the region and the relationship between different nations. The theory will also help establish a methodology for analysis of internal balkanist discourse in the next chapter.

2.1 Nesting orientalisms

“Nesting orientalism” was first introduced as a concept in 1992 by a Serbian scholar who lives and works in the United States, Milica Bakić-Hayden. Since then, it has been widely used in the field of international relations⁸⁴ as a possible explanation for the geopolitical division of Europe and disintegration of the Balkans. The concept began to develop when Bakić-Hayden applied the logic of orientalism to the political and intellectual rhetoric of the descending Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Her discourse analysis showed “an orientalist rhetoric that relies for its force on an ontological and epistemological distinction between (north)west and (south)east,”⁸⁵ compared to an ontological and epistemological distinction between “orient” and “west” as Said defined orientalism. More specifically, Bakić-Hayden observed:

Cultural and political discourse in the late 1980s representing various nations (narod) of Yugoslavia affords opportunity to examine a – conscious or unconscious – attempt to construct a seemingly common-sense symbolic framework which would cast the various peoples (narod) concerned as inherently democratic and advanced, or authoritarian and backward.⁸⁶

Similarly as in Said’s orientalism, the purpose of such symbolic framework is to shape a nation’s own superior identity and not to provide a realistic presentation of the “other.” Because the whole region of the Balkans was perceived as the same, northern nations (Slovenians and Croats) enforced their religious and historical characteristics, which are preferred by the West, and re-enforced the balkanist stereotypes on the rest of the region,

⁸⁴ Robert M. Hayden, Nicole Lindstrom, Merje Kuus, Maria Todorova, Michał Buchowski, Tanja Petrović, Dušan I. Bjelić, Andrew Hammond, Cvete Koneska, etc.

⁸⁵ Bakić-Hayden and Hayden, “Orientalist Variations on the Theme ‘Balkans’,” 1.

⁸⁶ Ibid, 3.

which do not share those characteristics. Nesting orientalism is therefore a concept that explains a phenomenon “in which there exists a tendency for each region to view cultures and religions to the south and east of it as more conservative or primitive.”⁸⁷

The problematic aspect of “othering” is that nations of one region, either of “orient” or, in this case, the Balkans, are all perceived as completely the same. The “othering” within Europe is nonetheless based on some kind of religious, cultural and political differences. Those so-called axes upon which Europe is geopolitically divided intersect in former Yugoslavia, which makes perceiving the region as a whole problematic and gives grounds for internal balkanist discourse. Bakić-Hayden writes,

Axes of European symbolic geography intersect in Yugoslavia, whose territory has seen the meeting place of empires (Eastern and Western Roman; Ottoman and Habsburg), scripts (Cyrillic and Latin, and, into the nineteenth century, Ottoman Turkish), religions (Roman Catholicism, Orthodox Christianity, Protestantism, Islam, Judaism) and cold-war politics and ideologies (between the Warsaw Pact and NATO, communist-run but unorthodox, and non-aligned).⁸⁸

According to values based on the European symbolic geography, Protestant Christianity is more favorable than Catholicism, Catholicism is preferred over Orthodox Christianity and the least favored religion is Islam.⁸⁹ The declining value of religion corresponds to geographical declining value from (north)west toward (south)east.⁹⁰ Based on this, the northern republics (Slovenia and Croatia) were able to reinforce the western stereotypes on the Balkans to create a superior identity over the southern republics, based on being predominantly Catholic, and over the former Habsburg territory, in contrast to the less favorable, predominantly Orthodox or Muslim religion and Ottoman heritage.⁹¹ Doing so has helped the northern republics gain support in the quest for independent republics, build their national identity and also put them

⁸⁷ Bakić-Hayden and Hayden 1992, 4.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

Bakić-Hayden based this argument on Mark Weber’s classic “The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism” (1923).

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid, 5.

in a better position in negotiations for EU membership. In the 1980s when communist regimes began to dissolve, the idea was that joining the European Economic Community (EEC) was the way to bring upon “civil society” as opposed to communism and, even more so, economic prosperity.⁹² The attractive power of the EEC was therefore immense. The next section presents the discourses within Yugoslavia based upon which concept of nesting orientalism was developed.

2.1.1 Discourses within Former Yugoslavia

Bakić-Hayden developed her concept based on discourse analysis of the rhetoric mainly of politicians and intellectuals of Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia in the late 1980s and early 1990s, which eventually led to the dissolution of former Yugoslavia.⁹³ Her discourse analysis has shown that north-western parts of Yugoslavia discursively presented themselves as different, even opposite, than the south-eastern nations. Supposedly they were “more progressive, prosperous, hard-working, tolerant, democratic... in a word, European, compared to primitive, lazy, intolerant Balkans.”⁹⁴ They have done so by reflecting religious differences and claiming how different religion affects the perspective on politics. They also highlighted the fact of once belonging to the Habsburg Empire, while the rest of the Balkans was under Ottoman/oriental rule. Bakić-Hayden presents such discourses with examples.

According to Bakić-Hayden, famous Slovenian politician Dimitrij Rupel claimed in his writing in 1989 that Serbian leader Slobodan Milošević, who is an Orthodox Christian, believed in fascism and centralism, while Slovenian leader Milan Kučan, who has a Protestant background, called for political pluralism and reform.⁹⁵ Those were powerful claims, but as Bakić-Hayden stated, when asked for explanation why religion would affect

⁹² Bakić-Hayden and Hayden 1992, 8.

⁹³ Ibid, 3.

⁹⁴ Ibid, 8.

⁹⁵ Ibid, 10.

one's view on political perspectives, Rupel had no answer. Dimitrij Rupel also stated in one of his works, "Slovenian events and meetings were calling for civility, the rule of law, democracy and liberation of the prisoners, with one word for culture, while Serbian meetings were calling for violence and demolition of authorities."⁹⁶ Such discourse enforced the Western stereotype of the Balkan people being violent and made a stronger case for Slovenian independence. Furthermore, according to Bakić-Hayden, Dr. Peter Tancig, a Slovenian politician, stated in 1991:

The basic reason for all the past/present 'mess' is the incompatibility of two main frames of reference/civilization, unnaturally and forcibly joined in Yugoslavia. On one side you have a typical violent, crooked oriental-bizantine heritage, best exemplified by Serbia and Montenegro... On the other side (Slovenia, Croatia) there is a more humble and diligent western-catholic tradition...⁹⁷

Those are only a few examples of discourses of mainly Slovenian politicians that enforced the Balkanist discourse on the region and tried to create a new, European identity for its own nations.

Bakić-Hayden's work from 1995 illustrates even more balkanist discourses present in the region. She observes that while Slovenians and Croatians have enforced their Habsburg heritage, which shaped them into being more civilized and European, compared to, for example, Serbia, Montenegro and to some extent Macedonia, those countries "have felt compelled to defend their 'other.'"⁹⁸ Serbs would in that context highlight the importance of their contribution in protecting Europe from Islamic invasions. As Bakić-Hayden quoted Serbian scholar Petar Saric, "Even those in Europe who do not hold Serbia close to their hearts know very well that this old Balkan state represents the last barrier to the ongoing

⁹⁶ Dimitrij Rupel, *Srednja Evropa, Prehodno Obdobje*, 1992, 95.

"Slovenski dogodki in slovenska zborovanja so pozivali k civilnosti, pravni državi, demokraciji in osvobajanju zapornikov; medtem ko so srbski "mitingi" pozivali k rušenju oblasti... Slovenski zborovalci so pozivali h kulturi, medtem ko so srbski (črnogorski, vojvodinski...) zborovalci klicali k linču." Translated by the author.

⁹⁷ Bakić-Hayden and Hayden 1992, 12.

⁹⁸ Bakić-Hayden 1995, 924.

onslaught and aggression of Islam.”⁹⁹ Serbs in this case shifted the stereotype of violence from their own entity and imposed it on the Muslims. The presented discourses demonstrated how nesting orientalism played out and how religion, geography and historical influences of either Habsburg or the Ottoman Empire were what countries enforced in order to build their own superior identity to their south-eastern neighbors. Bakić-Hayden mainly observed nesting orientalism in the period before or immediately after the break-up of Yugoslavia, but many scholars have used nesting orientalism in the latter periods.

2.1.2 Application of Nesting Orientalism by other authors

Several authors have applied the concept of nesting orientalism to the phenomenon observed in the Balkans, and also to a broader region, mainly dealing with European integration. An important application was made by Merje Kuus, who observed the behavior of new EU and NATO accession countries that tried to shift the discursive border between Europe, Eastern Europe and the Balkans in order to move themselves to “proper” Europe. For her, it is nesting orientalism that captures this phenomenon and “the flexibility of the Europe/non-Europe framework: not a single monolith but a malleable set of various internal Europes and Easts which fit into and reinforce the discourse of Eastern Europe.”¹⁰⁰ Kuus’s application of nesting orientalism to the area outside of the Balkans and observation of similar behavior by the Eastern countries of Europe, strengthens Bakić-Hayden’s approach toward the “othering” within Europe.

Bakić-Hayden observed discourses surrounding the Slovenian and Croatian quests for independence from Yugoslavia. Nicole Lindstrom observed Slovenian and Croatian Balkanist discourse in their quest for joining the European Union and concluded that “casting

⁹⁹ Bakić-Hayden 1995, 926.

¹⁰⁰ Kuus, “Europe’s Eastern Expansion and the Reinscription of Otherness in East-Central Europe,” August 1, 2004, 480.

Slovenian and Croatian national identity and culture as European was viewed as a means to further their goal of joining European institutions.”¹⁰¹ Lindstrom argues that making a claim for European identity was built by proving its European character by reminding the world of its connection to the Western traditions and cultures in the pre-Yugoslav period, and more so by differentiating the countries from the rest of the Balkan region.¹⁰² For example, in Tuđman’s campaign for Croatian president, the common promise was to “free Croatia from the so-called Balkan darkness of Yugoslavia and ensure its return to its rightful place in Europe.”¹⁰³ Similarly, one of the major objectives in Slovenian foreign policy was a “final exit from the Balkans,”¹⁰⁴ which was included in a report called “Ten Years of Slovenia’s Foreign Policy.”¹⁰⁵ Lindstrom also concluded that Slovenia was much more successful in constructing its European identity than Croatia, noting, “Ironically, Western European leaders have utilized many of the same Balkanist stereotypes deployed by Croatian leaders to justify Croatia’s exclusion from European institutions and place Croatia within the Western Balkan geopolitical sphere.”¹⁰⁶ This is reflected in the fact that Slovenia has been a member of the EU since 2004, while Croatia is going to access almost ten years later, on July 1, 2013.

A modernized perspective on nesting orientalism is given by Slovenian scholar Tanja Petrović, who claims that nesting orientalism should be named “nesting colonialism.” In her opinion, the European Union and northern states of former Yugoslavia are treating the Balkans as “a periphery that has to be supervised and administered and that needs a continual assistance.”¹⁰⁷ Her approach highlights the modern cultural colonialism that is taking place in

¹⁰¹ Lindstrom 2003, 317.

¹⁰² Ibid, 317-322.

¹⁰³ Ibid, 319.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, 321.

¹⁰⁵ “Ten Years of Slovenia’s Foreign Policy | Ministry of Foreign Affairs,” accessed May 12, 2013, http://www.mzz.gov.si/en/zakonodaja_in_dokumenti/documents/ten_years_of_slovenias_foreign_policy.

¹⁰⁶ Lindstrom 2003, 316.

¹⁰⁷ Tanja Petrović, “Nesting Colonialisms: Austria, Slovenia and Discourses on the Western Balkans in the Context of the EU Enlargement” (Ministrstvo za Šolstvo in Šport, 2008), 1, http://www.drzavljanska-vzgoja.org/Portals/0/Dokumenti/clanki/Petrovic_DMG_2.pdf.

Europe, in which Europe is the sole decision maker of what is good and what is bad and believes that no other power inside of Europe can make proper, rational decisions. This is only possible when one has a solely negative picture of the area, and, from this perspective, nesting orientalism being a sub-theory of orientalism makes perfect sense. Edward Said observed that orientalist discourse on the Middle East justified the exportation of U.S. norms and values in that region. The same is true for the Balkans and the European Union. Despite the absence of a traditional colonizer and the colony relationship, we do have an example of modern cultural colonialism.

Crucial application of nesting orientalism in terms of this thesis was done in 2007 by Cvete Koneska, who sees nesting orientalism as having an important role in the failed regionalization of the Western Balkans. She stated:

Balkanist discourse, deployed initially only by the West, recently became domesticated and internalized among the Balkan states. In what is referred to as ‘nesting orientalism’ or ‘nesting balkanism,’ each state/society applies Balkanist rhetoric to those states (populations, societies) to its South and East, while excluding itself from the Balkans. Adopting such binary, orientalist rhetoric to one’s neighbours hardly encourages better cooperation on regional level. If anything, it only prompts competition between states on how not to be associated with the Balkans.¹⁰⁸

She claims that being Balkan implies not being European; therefore, it is important for countries who strive to become a member of the European Union—to become European—to not be associated with the region of the Balkans.¹⁰⁹ Koneska claims that this phenomenon makes regionalization more difficult. Nonetheless, the question remains whether nesting orientalism contributes to greater fragmentation of the region. Discourse analysis allows us to examine the narrative constructions of “otherness” in the region and scrutinize the issue of fragmentation in a way that rationalist literature cannot grasp.

¹⁰⁸ Cvete Koneska, “Regional Identity: The Missing Element in Western Balkans Security Cooperation,” *Western Balkans Security Observer-English Edition* no. 7–8 (2007): 85.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

2.2 Methodology

Author Lene Hansen wrote, “Without theory there is nothing but description, and without methodology there is no transformation of theory into analysis.”¹¹⁰ This paper so far presented a post-colonial theoretical basis in which the Balkan is perceived as the “other” of Europe, the image that was constructed by the dominant West. In addition, it demonstrated how the region of the Balkans reacted to the Western “othering” and began to “other” its own south-eastern neighbors based on European cultural, religious and political axes. Both ground concepts of this paper, orientalism and nesting orientalism, are based on the analysis of discourses. The most viable methodology for illustration of how nesting orientalism affects fragmentation within the region of the Western Balkans is thus discourse analysis. Many authors have analyzed balkanist discourse in the West, but not many have analyzed balkanist discourses within the region itself. This thesis will attempt to do so.

2.2.1 Discourse analysis

Discourse analysis is defined as “analysis of language-in-use whether spoken or written.”¹¹¹ According to Maggie MacLure¹¹², there are two major discourse traditions, each having wide-range approaches to discourse analysis. The first, which emerged from Anglo-American linguistics, is known as “linguistic discourse analysis.” The second arose from European philosophical and cultural thought and is known as “post-structural discourse analysis.”¹¹³ Linguistic discourse analysis focuses on a micro-analytic structure and the meaning of texts, while poststructuralists focus on discourses on a macro level with social formations and institutions.¹¹⁴ This paper will focus on post-structural discourse analysis

¹¹⁰ Hansen 2006, 1.

¹¹¹ James Paul Gee, *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis: Theory and Method*, 3rd ed. (Routledge, 2010), 205.

¹¹² Maggie MacLure, *Discourse in Educational and Social Research*, First Edition (Open University Press, 2003).

¹¹³ Ibid., 174.

¹¹⁴ MacLure 2003, 182.

because we are interested in the role of discourses in the creation of knowledge, which is, according to poststructuralists, “produced by and for particular interests, in particular circumstances, at particular times.”¹¹⁵ The theoretical framework has shown that the Balkanist negative image was constructed in order to help construct a superior image of Western Europe. Discourse analysis demonstrated how this has been done and what discourses have enabled this to happen. Nonetheless, the question is what discourses occur in the local/regional level of the Western Balkans. Colonial discourse analysis, which is a subdivision of post-structural discourse analysis, helps us achieve that. As Ana Isabel Madeira explains, colonial discourse analysis is based on Foucault’s idea of the governmentalisation of the state “to govern at a distance.”

The analysis of the discourse is linked to the superposition of discourses produced at the global level with the discourses produced at the local level, a process through which the relations of power-knowledge are developed in parallel to the technologies of government at a distance.¹¹⁶

The concept of nesting orientalism showed that discourses constructed on the EU level are not only superiorly positioned to the ones on the local, but also cause reproduction of discourses within the Western Balkan region. Furthermore, as nesting orientalism showed, countries of the Western Balkans used religious, political and cultural axes that are preferred in the West to separate themselves from the negative Balkanist identity.

Many scholars have analyzed Balkanist discourses present in the West, but not many have analyzed the Balkanist discourse within the Balkan region itself. Since the discourse within the region is reproduced from the West, useful guidelines can be taken by scholars who analyzed Balkanist discourse in the West. One of the most important analyses was done by Lene Hansen in her book *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War* in which she developed step-by-step guidelines for discourse analysis. In addition to

¹¹⁵ Maclure 2003, 175.

¹¹⁶ Ana Isabel Madeira, “Comparing Colonial Education Discourses in the French and Portuguese African Empires: An Essay on Hybridization,” in *International Handbook of Comparative Education* (Springer, 2009), 181.

recognizing guiding themes of “othering” based on theoretical and conceptual framework, it is also important to carefully choose the text to be analyzed, in particular its character (policies, media, speeches) and scope (time period, number of sources to include). This is the case because discourse analysis

is an analytical tool designed by the analysts to tease out the meaning of texts in their interaction with other texts in a social and political environment. In this sense, to analyze discourse is to analyze meanings that emerge through the use of language in context.¹¹⁷

Therefore, the discourse analysis that examines present nesting orientalism does not focus solely on the language expressed, but also on the structures of meaning that are made comprehensible through the kind of loaded expressions identified by theoretical and conceptual framing.

2.2.2 Method

The guiding themes identified by the theoretical and conceptual framework are the following: First is the theme of Balkanist discourse, aptly summarized by Hansen, in which the West perceives the Balkans “as violent, tribal, hating, backward, and as having embodied this Otherness for hundreds if not thousands of years.”¹¹⁸ Secondly, nesting orientalism strongly imposes religious and geographic themes. It was discovered that enforcing religious differences (Protestant > Catholic > Orthodox > Islam) and geographic position (northwest > southeast) served for creating superior identity of one nation over the other in the area of the Western Balkans in 1980s and 1990s. Recent history also created hierarchies within the region itself; therefore, we must take into account the hierarchy theme. In this sense, Slovenia is superior over the rest because it has been marked as a success story of the region and is already an EU member, Serbs are perceived as the worst pupil of the region because of their

¹¹⁷ T. Jusic, “Media Discourse and the Politics of Ethnic Conflict: The Case of Yugoslavia,” *Media Discourse and the Yugoslav Conflicts: Representations of Self and Other* (2009): 31.

T. Jusic, “Media Discourse and the Politics of Ethnic Conflict: The Case of Yugoslavia,” *Media Discourse and the Yugoslav Conflicts: Representations of Self and Other* (2009): 31.

¹¹⁸ Hansen 2006, 85.

extremist nationalist image that was enforced especially following the Yugoslav wars, while Croats are placed somewhere in between. The core reference point for the current re-creation of hierarchy in the region is the EU integration project as it has become a medium through which the countries “other” each other. This presents a marked shift compared to historical ways of “othering,” reflecting the new ways of superimposing the Western balkanist discourse on the Balkans countries, which consequently internalize it. Therefore, rather than framing the “other” directly, they position themselves by referring to how they have been faring against “others” in the run up to the EU accession.

This paper analyzes statements of politicians and intellectuals in Slovenian, Croatian and Serbian media, surrounding bilateral disputes. I focus on these issues specifically because they constitute key points in the EU accession process. These three countries have been chosen for several reasons. The first is that they have constructed the strongest discourses in the period of the Yugoslav break-up and were also the ones analyzed when Bakić-Hayden developed her theory of nesting orientalism. This is also possible because they all have someone inferior in terms of religious, cultural and political axes of Europe. For example, Bosnia, Herzegovina and Kosovo have a large Muslim/Albanian population and a strong Ottoman heritage, therefore they have the lowest score on “the hegemonic western scale,”¹¹⁹ which makes it a lot harder to perceive someone else within the region as inferior. Analysis of discourses within those three countries would nevertheless be very interesting because we see disputes between groups of different cultures and religions within one’s border. Discourses of Macedonian media cannot be examined because of language constraints. Thus, as in the case of Bosnia and Kosovo, it would be remarkable to see how the current crisis with the Albanian minority portrays itself discursively. It would be possible to analyze

¹¹⁹ Bakić-Hayden 1995, 924.

Montenegrin discourses, but because of time constraints and the much smaller size of the state, I decided to exclude it in this analysis.

The specific bilateral disputes chosen for this analysis were primarily based on the Enlargement strategy paper of the European Commission, which stresses the importance of solving the following issues: The countries are to come to an agreement about solving border disputes, bring about effective reconciliation and completion of the “process of rendering justice for crimes committed during the wars in the former Yugoslavia,” respect the minorities and avoid nationalistic outbreaks.¹²⁰ The desire is to find discursive themes on many different levels of disputes, not solely in hard politics/security issues. That way this paper could illustrate how infiltrated nesting orientalism is in the relations among the Balkan states and how it contributes to the greater fragmentation of the region. The following chapter investigates empirical instances based upon theoretical and conceptual framework and examines whether the concept of nesting orientalism is still important and whether it has changed.

¹²⁰ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council: Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges, COM (2012) 600 Final (October 2012).

CHAPTER 3: EMPIRICS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

This paper so far has presented a theoretical framework that demonstrated that the Balkans have been constructed as the “other” of Europe. In addition, it presented common discourses in the West regarding this region. Special attention has been given to the phenomenon of nesting orientalism, which occurred in the region as a response to the Western “othering.” This tendency of nations in the region to view cultures to the south east as more primitive and conservative helped make a case for dissolution of the former Yugoslavia, which resulted in the creation of several separate states. The discourses in the late 1980s and early 1990s relied on European political, economic and cultural axes, which prefer some over the “other” and have helped build identities of the new states against one another and greatly fragmented the region. The argument of this paper is that the phenomenon of nesting orientalism is still an important factor in the fragmentation of the region and that it is a consequence of the EU enlargement process. The purpose of the empirics section and discourse analysis of the current discourses in the region surrounding bilateral disputes is to demonstrate how discourses contribute to fragmentation and examine whether discourses have shifted from the ones upon which the theory of nesting orientalism was developed. The first section of this chapter presents the findings of empirical work, while the second part of the chapter discusses the results.

3.1 Overview of Empirical Analysis

For the purpose of this thesis, nearly 100 articles of popular online media in Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia were examined. Research was focused on present bilateral issues that raised a lot of attention and generated many responses from important politicians and intellectuals. The oldest articles are from 2007-2008, while the majority of the articles

examined were published in 2012 and 2013. Slovenia only borders Croatia; nonetheless, two important bilateral issues, border disputes and a bank debt issue, have created great tension between the two countries and attracted great media attention. These disputes have been so important because Slovenia, as an EU member already, used its membership to show off its power and blocked Croatia's accession process to the EU. Currently, the countries have come to an agreement regarding both issues, and the Slovenian parliament ratified Croatia's EU accession.¹²¹ The most vocal issues in Croatian and Serbian media in recent years have been different disputes regarding the reconciliation process and, more specifically, the apprehension of war criminals and their surrender to the Hague and, on the other hand, recent controversial liberations of Croatian, Bosnian and Albanian officers Gotovine, Markača, Orića and Haradinaja. Another source of conflict has been a disagreement between the Croats and Serb minority over the implementation of bicultural signs in the city of Vukovar. Many articles were also produced during the visit of former Serbian president Boris Tadić to Kosovo, when his caravan was stoned by Albanians. Discourses are organized by a state, therefore I will first present discourses of Slovenian politicians, followed by Croatian and Serbian discourses. The strategy is to search for religious, geographical, Balkanist, hierarchical and EU themes within the media. The political statements were all reported in the original languages; therefore, all translations were done by the author of this paper.

3.2. Discourses in Slovenian, Croatian and Serbian media

3.2.1 Slovenia

Slovenian politicians were among the most vocal ones in the late 1980s and early 1990s, declaring Slovenian superiority over the rest of Yugoslavia, mainly because of their Catholic religion and Habsburg heritage. Slovenia currently only borders Croatia among the

¹²¹ "Slovenian Parliament Unanimously Ratifies Croatia's EU Accession," *EurActiv.com*, February 4, 2013, <http://www.euractiv.com/enlargement/slovenian-parliament-unanimously-news-518839>.

Western Balkan states, and the two countries have several unsettled issues coming from once-unified Yugoslavia. Since Croatia is also a Catholic state with strong Habsburg influences, the discourse expected in Slovenia was the Balkan discourse, namely Slovenian politicians proclaiming Croats as aggressive, non-European, non-democratic, Balkan, etc. Discourse analysis showed that this is the case. The most critical politician regarding the border dispute is Zmago Jelinčič, the head of the Slovenian National Party. He made several statements in 2007 and 2008 proclaiming Croatian politics aggressive: “Slovenian politics has kneeled in front of aggressive Croatian Politics.”¹²² “Because there is no one who would want to stop Croatia in this aggressive quest...”¹²³ His party also stated that Croatia should enter Europe with the rest of the Western Balkan countries because despite its advantage in terms of economic development, there are no advantages in terms of legal legitimacy.¹²⁴ Just as critical has been politician and law expert Marko Pavliha, who stated that Croatian politics toward Slovenian have been “from day to day more arrogant and sinister.”¹²⁵ More so, his comment that “neighbors prefer Balkan splashing over European stroke,”¹²⁶ emphasized his inferior view of the Balkans and demonstrated that Croatia is in his eyes perceived as the negative Balkans.

Many statements were given also by Dimitrij Rupel, former prime minister and one of the strongest “balkanizers” in the period of the Slovenian quest for independence. His language in the present is much milder, however. Regarding the border and bank dispute with Slovenia, he emphasizes a more European, civilized behavior. “We have been very constructive and prepared for substantial consensuses. What bothers me is that on the

¹²² “V Državnem Zboru Zelena Luč Za Nadaljevanje Hrvaških Pogajanj z Evropsko Unijo,” September 15, 2009, <http://www.dnevnik.si/clanek/1042299294>.

¹²³ “Jelinčičev Predlog Referenduma o Hrvaški Brez Podpore,” *Vecer.com*, January 18, 2008, <http://web.vecer.com/portali/vecer/v1/default.asp?kaj=3&id=2008011805285886>.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ “Pavliha: Ne Na Dopust Na Hrvaško :: Prvi Interaktivni Multimedijški Portal, MMC RTV Slovenija,” January 31, 2007, <http://www.rtvlo.si/slovenija/pavliha-ne-na-dopust-na-hrvasko/66410>.

¹²⁶ Marko Pavliha, “Marko Pavliha Glede Prijazne Sosedbe Hrvaške,” January 2, 2007, http://slovensko-morje.net/index.php?page=news&view_news=5607.

Croatian side they think that they can succeed without following the requirements of the EU.”¹²⁷ “Our relations are not settled, but not by the fault of Slovenia, we have given many initiatives and we are continuing to give them, also here and now.”¹²⁸ Such statements have demonstrated his belief in a superior, more European behavior of Slovenia in the bilateral disputes with Croatia. In a similar matter, Jožef Horvat, a politician of the New Slovenia – Christian People's Party, stated that “Croatia obviously does not hold the given word, does not respect the underlying principles of European behavior and thus closes its own door to the EU.”¹²⁹

Official political statements demonstrate this sense of Slovenians to present the last “bulwark of European civilization.”¹³⁰ Slovenian politicians proclaim Croatians as aggressive, non-European and “Balkan” and emphasize Slovenia’s own democratic, European characteristics to show their superiority. Even more critical are commentaries from citizens in the forum sections, which demonstrate that the majority of Slovenians have this sense of superiority over the rest of the region or, more specifically, over Croatia. One of the commentators says, “It is necessary to block Croatian entrance to the EU, until they learn the European Culture and stop the Balkan wrangling.”¹³¹ In addition, a comment in an article with a statement from Slovenian politician Jelko Kacin on a Croatian newspaper webpage stated:

Slovenia should have filed a law suit against Croatia due to disrespect of international agreements and clearly demand from the EU to deny entrance of the countries who do not respect undersigned agreements, because this is unique world example of disrespecting international law...If all behaved as

¹²⁷ “Rupel: Hrvatska Prekinila Odnose s Slovenijo,” *Zurnal24*, January 29, 2008, <http://www.zurnal24.si/rupel-hrvatska-prekinila-odnose-s-slovenijo-clanek-16537>.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ “Jelinčičev Predlog Referenduma o Hrvatski Brez Podpore.”

¹³⁰ Žižek, “You May.”

¹³¹ “Erjavec: Hrvatska Nenehno Spreminja Stališča,” *Vecer.com*, September 27, 2012, <http://web.vecer.com/portali/vecer/v1/default.asp?kaj=3&id=2012092705831186>.

Croatia, the world would be ruled by chaos and anarchy. Croatia behaves as it was beginning of the middle ages, uncivilized.¹³²

Prevailing themes in Slovenian discourse on disputes with Croatia are Balkanist and hierarchy themes, compared to the past when the more powerful themes were religious and geographical. One can conclude that the discourse has shifted and adapted to the new context, in which Slovenia is now an established European “civilized” country, dealing with its inferior neighbor. The discourses have become milder but have not changed much in substance. The consequences of this discourse are harming to the bilateral relationship between the two countries, which consequently contributes to a greater fragmentation of the region.

3.2.2 Croatia

The orientalization of the rest of the region in the late 1980s and early 1990s was extremely powerful in Croatia as well. Croats are, like the Slovenians, mainly a Catholic nation, with strong Habsburg roots and without Ottoman influences. Croatia, in addition to the EU members Slovenia and Hungary, also borders Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro, which are, according to old European axes, inferior. There are several open questions between those states, mainly border disputes and reconciliation questions. The expectation was thus that Croatian politicians would use language enriched by balkanist discourse. This is, however, not the case; official political statements of the recent years have been politically correct, emphasizing a strong focus toward European integration. Nonetheless, a closer look highlights less blunt but still controversial statements based on other themes, which harm the relationship between the states.

The most controversial statements were made by some political/religious figures regarding introducing a biscriptual¹³³ sign in the city of Vukovar, which is a constitutional

¹³² “Komentari: Jelko Kacin: Hrvatska Vlada Sama Će Odgoditi Vaš Ulazak u EU,” *Vecernji.hr*, January 14, 2013, <http://www.vecernji.hr/komentar/497684/stranica-1/>.

must because of the high population of Serbs in the area, but problematic because the city was a war scene. Politicians have been mainly careful in their statements and do follow the requirements of the constitution; nonetheless, the matter brought 20.000 people to protest on the streets of Vukovar¹³⁴, which shows that this is a major issue. The Cyrillic alphabet is also an important part of Orthodox religion; therefore, such protest can highlight some elements of nesting orientalism, where the Catholic Church is superior to the Orthodox branch of Christianity. The Leader of the Croatian Association of Defense War, Petar Janjić-Tromblon, stated:

The Chetniks¹³⁵ are infiltrated, they work in our police, state institutions, they obstruct our laws and processes, celebrate their Christmas with cockade on their heads, three fingers in the air, and with a flag on which it says in Cyrillic that Vukovar is a Serbian city, profaning monuments of our veterans. And now our government will reward Cyrillic by putting it on squares, monuments, streets. Well, it cannot. Say no to Cyrillic.¹³⁶

Also against implementation of the bscriptual signs is Vukovar's priest Ante Perković, who stated that no one is against Cyrillic as letters, but against "Cyrillic which is in this moment a sign of continuing aggression and conquest of this area."¹³⁷ The discourse is mainly relying on the recent war, however, identifying all Serbs as Chetniks and connecting the Cyrillic alphabet with aggression is controversial and further divides the people of the two nations. In addition, a statement made by lawyer Zvonimir Hodak also regarding this issue demonstrated a strong hierarchical theme. He stated, "Where is this country (Croatia) heading? With time we will become a minority in our own country... We need an impulse of national pride, to feel again that we are the winners."¹³⁸ He is referring to the Croatian liberation war, in which

¹³³ Similar as bilingual but referring to two separate alphabets, Latin and Cyrillic.

¹³⁴ "Više Od 20.000 Ljudi Prosvjedovalo u Vukovaru," *Danas.hr*, February 2, 2013, <http://danas.net.hr/hrvatska/vise-od-20000-ljudi-prosvjedovalo-u-vukovaru>.

¹³⁵ Refers to Serbian nationalists/militants.

¹³⁶ "U Grad Vukovar Može Turski, Kineski Ili Japanski, Ćirilica Ne!," *Www.24sata.hr*, January 19, 2013, <http://www.24sata.hr/politika/prosvjed-radi-cirilice-vukovar-nikada-nece-biti-bykobap-298099>.

¹³⁷ "Ima Jedna Nacionalna Manjina s Kojom Stalno Imamo Problema," *Danas.hr*, July 4, 2013, <http://danas.net.hr/hrvatska/u-zagrebu-prosvjed-ne-cirilici-u-hrvatskoj>.

¹³⁸ "Veliki Dio Srba u Vukovaru Misli Da Je to Srpski Grad. Kad Hrvatska Reprezentacija Izgubi - Slavi Se," March 21, 2013, <http://www.slobodnadalmacija.hr/Hrvatska/tabid/66/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/205567/Default.aspx>.

Serbs lost and were perceived as the “bad guys”; consequently, the Serbs are inferior to the Croats. His language demonstrates that such discourse is still alive and even further enforces it.

Lidija Čehulić states that bilateral disputes of Croatia with its neighbors are far from harmless because of an “emotional charge.” She argues, “Once you mention the word Serbia in Croatia or the word Croatia in Serbia, then, unfortunately, because of recent bloody history, among most of citizens, it has negative emotional charge.”¹³⁹ The war has left a scar, but it is impossible to overcome the past with discourses that enforce the bad memories. When there is an issue with Serbia, all the Serbs are perceived as Chetniks. Generalization of a negative image on a region as a whole, or in this case on a nation, is thus one of the characteristics of Said’s orientalism and does not give Serbs a chance to prove the opposite. The recent statement of former Croatian president Stjepan Mesić demonstrates this. He claims that unlike Germany, Serbia has not reached catharsis after defeat in war and have not changed. He continues that “Serbia has sentenced Slobodan Milošević, but not because he went into the war, but because he didn’t fulfill the goals of the war.”¹⁴⁰ Such statements encourage two things: perceiving Serbs as the most Balkan of the region and enforcing a hierarchical advantage of Croatia over Serbia.

Discourse analysis of political statements regarding controversial bilateral disputes of Croatia with Serbia has shown that the “othering” is still very present and shapes the relationship between the two; however, it has shifted from the past. The discourse enforces hierarchy of Croatia over Serbia and enforces the nationalistic extremist image of Serbia. This is not done by blunt language, but in a much more sophisticated way. Croatia can afford

¹³⁹ “Granični Problemi: Granica Sa Srbijom Na Dunavu - Najspornija,” November 2, 2012, <http://mojzagreb.info/hrvatska/hrvatska/granicni-problemi-granica-sa-srbijom-na-dunavu-najspornija>.

¹⁴⁰ “‘Srbija Je Ostala Ista, a Milošević Je Optužen Jer Nije Ispunio Ciljeve’,” *Vecernji.hr*, April 4, 2013, <http://www.vecernji.hr/vijesti/srbija-je-ostala-ista-a-milosevic-je-optuzen-jer-nije-ispunio-ciljeve-clanak-533924>.

to criticize in such a way, because it is in a much higher position in the eyes of the European Union; nonetheless, it must be more careful than Slovenia in its statements.

3.2.3 Serbia

Serbia scores lower on the “the hegemonic western scale” because of its mainly Orthodox religion and the influences of a prolonged fight with the Ottoman Empire.¹⁴¹ Bakić-Hayden demonstrated, however, that Serbia also balkanized its “inferior” neighbors, Muslims. Balkanist discourses have been therefore the most expected in the disputes with Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Similarly as in Croatian media, one can observe that official political statements are mild. In 2012, a convoy of Serbian President Boris Tadić in Kosovo was stoned by about 200 Albanian extremists. There was no official political judgmental statements regarding this scandal. Aboot/high priest and peacemaker of the region Sava Janjić commented:

Effusions of religious and nationalistic hatred by extremist groups, such as ‘self-determination,’ unfortunately only shows that the conditions in which Serbs live in this part of Kosovo and Metohija are far from normal, and the Christian sanctity are at risk.¹⁴²

Janjić only blames extremist groups for the incident and not Muslims as a whole, but he nonetheless emphasizes that followers of Christianity are in danger, which reflects discourses of the past.

An enormous amount of media was generated in the recent year about four suspects of crimes upon Serbian civilians who were found innocent and liberated. Those men were two former Croatian generals from the Yugoslav war, Ante Gotovina and Mladen Markić, former Bosnian military officer Naser Orić and former Kosovo Liberation Army commander Ramush Haradinaj. The judgments triggered a turbulent response among civilians and also

¹⁴¹ Bakić-Hayden 1995, 924.

¹⁴² “Albanci Na Kosovu Kamenovali Kolonu Predsednika Srbije Borisa Tadića!,” *Vesti.rs*, June 1, 2012, <http://www.vesti.rs/Boris-Tadi%C4%87/Albanci-na-Kosovu-kamenovali-kolonu-predsednika-Srbije-Borisa-Tadica.html>.

numerous commentaries from politicians. Most of them condemned decisions from Hague and called the court unjust but repeatedly stated that European integration must remain the main focus and goal of the state and pictured Serbs as a nation with higher morals and values. For example, Branko Ružic, leader of the Socialist Party of Serbia, stated that the consolation for Serbians should be that in Croatia and Kosovo, “the state of mind allows people to celebrate war criminals, while the Serbs have a value system and moral dimensions from which others are still far away as nations.”¹⁴³ This statement proclaims Serbs as superior over the region in terms of morals. However, no other balkanist discourses were generated.

The responses from politicians regarding the liberation of the generals were mild, although they did not hide their disappointment. Almost all of them sent a message to the people to keep calm because the focus of the state is European integration. The president of the National Council for Cooperation with the Hague Tribunal, Rasim Ljajić, stated, “Serbian public has the right to anger and rage, because this is a case of selective justice or injustice. But in these difficult circumstances we cannot make decisions that could harm Serbia.”¹⁴⁴ In a similar manner, Serbian Prime Minister Ivica Dačić and Deputy Prime Minister Aleksandar Vučić emphasized the importance of European integration and the “interest of the citizens to continue their path towards the EU.”¹⁴⁵ An interesting comment against the EU was nonetheless made by the president of Serbia, Tomislav Nikolić, questioning how the EU did not condemn Croatian celebrations and adding that Serbia would never be accepted to the EU if it behaved in this way.¹⁴⁶ This statement demonstrated the belief of Serbs that they are not treated equally by the Western powers.

¹⁴³ “Srbija: Posle Orića i Gotovine, Haradinaj Nije Iznenadenje,” *Kurir*, November 29, 2012, <http://www.kurir-info.rs/markovic-posle-orica-i-gotovine-haradinaj-nije-iznenadenje-clanak-533635>.

¹⁴⁴ “Reakcije: Srbija Ima Pravo Na Bes,” *B92*, November 29, 2012, http://www.b92.net/info/vesti/index.php?yyyy=2012&mm=11&dd=29&nav_category=64&nav_id=664367.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ “Nikolić o Gotovini: Što Hoće, Da Se Srbi Okupe i Da Ih Pobije?,” *Vecernji.hr*, November 26, 2012, <http://www.vecernji.hr/vijesti/nikolic-gotovini-sto-hoce-da-se-srbi-okupe-da-ih-pobije-clanak-479657>.

As in the case of Croatia, discourse analysis of Serbian media regarding bilateral disputes showed almost no balkanist discourse. Serbian politicians have been extremely careful in what they say and how they articulate themselves. There is a pattern of defensive language in which Serbs believe they are presented with a negative image and that they need to change it. There are no trails of discourses against the Muslims, which would be their inferior “other” according to the European axes. Also common is the pattern of emphasizing the road towards Europe, which seems to be used to pacify the public in the controversial issues where Serbs feel injustice has been done to them. One can conclude that great feelings of unequal treatment separate the nation from the others and create greater fragmentation within the region.

3.3 Discussion

The discourse analysis of Slovenian, Croatian and Serbian media has given a variety of results, which were in some cases different than expected. Nonetheless, the results can help us draw some conclusions. The prevalent theme of “othering” within the Balkan region is hierarchical. The countries balkanize as much as they believe they are entitled to, or as much as they can afford to regarding their position in the EU accession process. Slovenians have scored the highest on the hegemonic Western scale, have not been involved in the armed conflicts of the Yugoslav wars and have already been accessed to the European Union. Consequently, discourses of Slovenian politicians have shown to be the most balkanist and the language used the bluntest. They can afford to do so because of their position vis-à-vis the rest of the region and within the European Union. On the other hand, Croats are positioned lower on this hierarchy and must be more careful with their language. The discourses regarding Serbia were mild but reinforced images of the war. More so, they were reinforcing a Chetnik image of Serbs and generalizing it to the whole population. One could also observe

a religious theme in a sense, that Orthodox writing and symbols have been connected to the violence from the Serbian side in the Croatian independence war. The third case study of Serbia has shown a struggle for Serbs to defend themselves from the nationalistic/violent/extremist image and paint a new, better identity. Statements show that politicians are well aware of their unfavorable position within the region and in this accession process and that any type of powerful “othering” would harm their future negotiations with the European Union. When close to nationalistic speech, politicians immediately remind the public of the ultimate goal, which is European integration.

This discourse analysis has shown that “othering” within the region is still very much alive and active, but that it has taken different forms and adapted to the current situation in European politics. The Yugoslav war and the process of European integration have changed the dynamics and hierarchy within the region, and the countries have adapted to their new positions. The smallest change has been seen in the case of Slovenia, but because of its equally superior position within the region, in the past and in the present, this is not astonishing. Nonetheless, Serbs who would openly place Muslims in the inferior position in the past cannot do so in the present. This is the case partly because of their bad reputation, but also because such discourses are in general not as accepted in the West as they were 20 years ago. The Serbs thus want to appeal to the West and consolidate their own path to the European Union.

The empirical work of this paper has brought upon several conclusions, but there have also been several limitations. Most limiting has been the time constraint, which did not allow for examining discourses of a greater number of bilateral issues from which this thesis could significantly benefit. In addition, this thesis would benefit from an examination of discourses from all the countries of the Western Balkans, especially because these three cases have shown significantly different ways of “othering.” Especially relevant would be the

examination of discourses within Bosnia, Herzegovina and Macedonia, where issues among different national groups exist within one border. Nonetheless, this thesis demonstrated the strong role of discourses in the region, which contributes to fragmentation, the opposite of what the EU desires. A more systematic and detailed analysis of discourse could nonetheless bring about better solutions and political guidance for solving this immense problem and slowly reintegrating the region.

CONCLUSION

The primary aim of this thesis was to address the important issue of Western Balkan fragmentation in the context of the EU enlargement process and provide a new perspective, which takes into consideration the complexity of local interactions, identity and discourses. The research question was thus: In what ways does a post-colonial lens further our understanding of the increasing fragmentation of the Western Balkans? The post-colonial framework has proved to be appropriate, because it allows us to see not only the unequal relationship between the European Union and the Balkan accession countries, but also the unequal relationship among the accession countries themselves and the hierarchy within the region that was shaped by different levels of success in this process. The major argument of my research is consequently that the fragmentation we see in the region of the Western Balkans is not only a result of the fight for resources or non-compliance with the EU norms. The fragmentation has been made possible because of certain hierarchies that have been consolidated by a type of “othering,” which is based on how the accession countries position one another vis-à-vis the European integration process.

The research question was tackled from a theoretical and conceptual set up, and with an empirical analysis of political statements in the local media. The following contributions to the field have been made: In the sense of the post-colonial scholarship, this thesis demonstrated that in the case of Western Balkan fragmentation and localized “othering,” the West is still an organizing principle that shapes the criterion for the superior and the inferior. I can comfortably argue that without the European Union to which the nations want to appeal and position themselves higher on the hierarchy, this discourse would not take place and consequently the nations would not be as divided. More so, the European enlargement process, the purpose of which is to integrate, actually functions in a contradictory way since

accession defines who is European and who is not. Therefore, one can argue that the process in itself is a modern type of “othering.” Another important contribution in terms of post-colonial theory is that ways of “othering” are always changing and adapting to the conditions in a society.

A second contribution is conceptual. The guiding concept of this thesis has been nesting orientalisms, which was developed by Bakić'Hayden in the 1990s. This thesis tested whether her theory is still current and important. The conclusion is that the concept is still well and powerful, but that it has changed its meaning. The goal of nesting orientalism is still to create one's superior identity over the other, but the way the “othering” takes place has changed. In the period of its defining, the theory was mainly based on religious and geographical axes of Europe, while today it is based on the self-positioning of states by referring to how they have been faring against others in the run-up to the EU accession. One must be a lot more sensitive to the language because discourses are much less blunt than in the past, yet, because EU accession has been so important, the agents have been extremely sensitive to such discourses.

A final contribution of this paper is empirical contribution. First of all, the discourses in local languages have been made accessible for the English speaking public. More importantly, the discourse analysis of political statements demonstrated what type of language is used today that enables “othering” and helps create one's superior identity. It also demonstrated how the EU membership of one state allows it to more powerfully and more directly “other” those who have not yet successfully complied with EU conditionality. The discourses have shown how strong the reference to the EU in modern “othering” is and how important “return to Europe” actually is for this region.

Although looking at the problem through a post-colonial lens made us see many otherwise invisible aspects of the Western Balkan fragmentation, it has some shortcomings. First, the way the lens has been applied positions the EU as the primary incentive for orientalizing and does not take into account other underlying factors that may contribute to it. The responsibility of nations themselves is taken away. It is true that nations believe such language will help them construct a European identity; however, the EU desires effective regional cooperation, which would help speed up the process of integration much more. Second, there is a difference between nationalism and orientalism, although the two are connected. Nationalism is not taken into consideration in this approach. Lastly, a post-colonial lens does not take into account the effects recent wars have had on the relationship between the nations. The wounds are still very fresh and the reconciliation process is far from being finished, which can also contribute to the “othering” and, more so, fragmentation within the region.

This project has raised many additional questions and interests. First of all, similar research should be done including all countries of the Western Balkan region. There could also be several improvements in the research design, which was limited because of the time constraint. This year is a breaking moment for the region because Croatia will be accessing in the EU in matter of months. It would be interesting to compare Croatian rhetoric of “othering” before and after the accession and see whether it will use the same strategies of coercion and “othering” in solving bilateral issues as Slovenia. Such a project could examine whether the findings of this thesis truly hold. To conclude, no matter the shortcomings and additional questions raised, this thesis has presented certain new aspects of the problem of the Western Balkan fragmentation and contributed to the post-colonial study of the EU enlargement process. In addition, it demonstrated how the concept of nesting orientalism has shifted. The findings of this thesis can help improve the approaches to the enlargement

process of the Western Balkans and, hopefully, prevent such “othering” from further fragmenting the region in the future.

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