

Balkan Dissonant Heritage Narratives (and Their Attractiveness) for Tourism

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Abstract The paper deals with the question of scientific and practical treatment of dissonant cultural heritage in the Balkan region and the way in which this heritage can be used for the development of tourism in the region. Cultural heritage is often seen as an important factor in explaining the post-socialist landscape of the Balkans. In terms of symbolic geography, the Balkans has been and still remains inserted in the long standing binary oppositions East - West, Europe - Asia, Christianity - Islam, Centre - Periphery, etc. These are in variations present also in travel writing through the dominant negative label of Western travel accounts. In investigating the historical heritage of the Balkans and its dissonant narratives, we put focus on those that left the deepest imprint on the region's multilayered identity: the Byzantine, the Ottoman and the communist / socialist. The main question put in this research is: How “dissonant heritage” of the Balkans together with its stigmatized image and identity can be interpreted for tourism? This research is done from an interdisciplinary interpretative approach, using a combination of methods such as narrative and discourse analyses. The research shows that Balkan discourse provides a full range of dissonant heritage narratives that can be used in creating tourism routes and narratives and it suggests the possibilities in order to overcome problems of conflicting interpretation of common cultural heritage.

Keywords Dissonant heritage, Narrative, The Balkans, Culture of memory, Tourism

1. Introduction

Cultural heritage is often seen as an important factor in explaining the post-socialist landscape of the Balkans. The destruction of socialist identity and common heritage, as well as inventing new traditions and interpretations of the past is a part of the general process of political, economic and cultural transition together with processes of European integration of the region. As the consequence of discrepant historical contexts as well as Western symbolic geography, the image of the Balkans has remained full of dichotomies – it is a misread, forgotten and isolated region, the “other” rejected Europe, the periphery – and it is adorned as an incredible phantasm of the Orient with passion, colours and emotions.

Heritage itself is not a relic of the past but an increasingly instrumental field in steering sustainable development and the well-being of communities, very often through tourism. Tourism is a phenomenon of great importance in the globalizing world – not only because it runs on the patterns of global economies, but also that it produces an interest in the specific experience, artefacts and narratives in local

contexts.

Aim and relevance of the research. This research is done starting from the thesis that it is very important for social and cultural development of the countries in the Balkan region, especially for the development of tourism, not to conceal any of the conflicting interpretations of heritage which is disputed, but, on the contrary, to use dissonant heritage with all its complexities and ambiguities in order for it to become a very important asset in the development of tourism. This is particularly important, bearing in mind that tourism is at the same time globalizing and localizing (in the case of the Balkans “orientalizing”) national identities or “nation brand” products of different tourist destinations. Core questions in this context are: How “dissonant heritage”, “rejected heritage” or even “dark heritage” of the Balkans together with its stigmatized image and identity can be interpreted for tourism? What kind of common narratives and tourist routes can be produced out of cultural heritage and cultural memory in order to create a joint tourist product of the Balkans? In this sense, we are not dealing to a larger extent with the notions of the Balkans as “the other” in relation to Europe, but putting in focus the heritage which is “dissonant”, contested or forgotten and which has a significant potential importance for tourism development in the region as a whole.

Research methods and outcomes. This research is done from an interdisciplinary interpretative approach. We have

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used a combination of methods to conduct a qualitative analysis by revealing meaning-making practices while showing how those practices configure to generate observable outcomes. By using different strategies such as narrative analysis, but also content, discourse and textual analyses, storytelling, etc., our primary intention was to develop deeper insights into tourism issues and topics.

2. Theoretical Overview

2.1. Dissonant Heritage and Cultural Memory

Memory is nowadays being renegotiated through the battle of globalization forces and practices of local cultures, in the manner of “memory without borders” rather than national histories within borders. Cultural memory, as agreed by authors of different orientations, relates to the interplay of memory, culture and society, in the process of creating and reconstructing identity, transmitting institutionalized heritage of a society, and thus reconstructing the past in the present [1]. The experiences of the present are largely based on specific knowledge of the past - thus the ways of experiencing the present are influenced by different perceptions of the past with which it can be connected. Cultural memory can be perceived as a set of fixed points that do not change over the time, as fateful events of the past maintained through various cultural formations. These “figures of memory” (i.e. narratives, texts, monuments, festivals, poems, images, etc.) form an array of “islands of time” with an ability to transfer the meanings of collective experience with a temporality that is suspended from time [2].

So heritage is by definition “the contemporary uses of the past”, the “active processing” of the past [3]. The concept of “dissonant heritage”, according to Tunbridge and Ashworth [4], is located in the claim that all heritage is a contemporary interpretation shaped by narratives of history. Different meanings of the past give space for the discordance and lack of consensus over heritage. So, not only what is interpreted, but how it is interpreted and by whom, will create quite specific messages about the value and the meaning of specific heritage places and the past they represent.

...All heritage is someone's heritage and therefore logically not someone else's: the original meaning of an inheritance (from which 'heritage' derives) implies the existence of disinheritance and by extension any creation of heritage from the past disinherits someone completely or partially, actively or potentially. This disinheritance may be unintentional, temporary, of trivial importance, limited in its effects and concealed; or it may be long term, widespread, intentional, important and obvious [5].

The notion of dissonant heritage in the way it will be used in this article is related with the process of coping with ambivalent and largely unwanted past. The tensions that underlie heritage open the possibility of the creation of dissonance as emotions and memories are revived, both in

terms of chronology and cultural memory. The importance of cultural awareness in relation to culture of memory and mediation of history through heritage is actually about cultural learning as “*the process of conflicted appropriation in which cultural meanings are constantly reinterpreted and re-inscribed together with those who have accepted them as their own*” [6].

2.2. Theory of Narrative and the Production of Meaning in Tourism

Narration, in its many forms, is often seen as central to both travel and tourism research and practice [7]. Different scholars have tended to approach tourism and travel narratives from distinct perspectives, mainly related to travel writing [8] and tourist stories / experience [9], thus contributing to the wide body of knowledge. Existing research has indicated that narratives of travel and tourism are not only an essential ingredient in the construction of personal, collective and place identities but are also important in the process of contemplating, experiencing, remembering and disseminating travel and tourism experiences, both factual and fictional.

Paul Ricoeur, the most prominent exponent of the theory of the narrative, [10] considers that narrative is an ongoing temporal process from which can emerge other processes of dialogue, intentionality, consciousness of the world and of other conceptions of temporality beyond that of lived experience and ultimately personal identity. We may conceptualise a narrative as a cultural artefact, a work or text or product that can take many forms but which has the ultimate purpose of telling or unfolding a story, where a telling involves a teller or narrator, an audience, and a subject. Patrick O'Neill [11] comments that narrative is a “*...purely discursive system of presentation ... and in this sense all narrative is in principle fictional to begin with.*”

But narratives are not necessarily linear and coherent; they can be carried by articulated language, spoken or written, fixed or moving images, etc. [12]. As narrating means not only telling a story, but also identification [13], one can say that it enables human thought and values to be expressed, to enter in communication process and to stimulate interaction.

That is why the role of narrating has become central to any trans-disciplinary discourse – in this case tourism. Narratives mediate between harmony and dissonance - they are neither monolithic nor uncontested – as they are stories of meaning and power. Different narratives may exist in a touristic discourse almost separate from the rest of the society and its history. The role of narratives in tourism can be perceived also as a communication where those who produce them and those who “consume” them enter the process of negotiation and embodied performance, a co-construction of narrative. In this way, rather than merely appropriating existing meanings of the past, a narrative (text) is informed by and depends upon the contingencies of the present [14]. There is also a theoretical question that concerns the relationship between narration and experience [15]. Narratives, both

fictional and factional, are presented to be experienced and enjoyed, as well as to be effective on a long-term basis.

Established narratives make meaning, shape action, meld tourist behaviour, serve to select aspects of culture to be displayed for visitors, etc. Narrative is a key instrument in tourism policies of a country. It helps to understand the motivation for action (and tourist demand) and public policies in general. Thus it can be said that a tourist route is an act of storytelling, an exclusive access to meaning. So narrativity is linked both to evaluation in tourism and to the identity of the place itself. This raises many questions: Why narratives are being created and for whom? What are their purposes in tourism, and more specifically in cultural tourism? How can narratives be produced for re-creating the meaning of “dissonant” or even of “dark” heritage, thus contextualizing or de-contextualizing the image and identity and *sense* of a place?

As we will see in the case of the Balkans, there are also grand narratives and counter-narratives, related to interpretations that are explicit (articulated), implicit, appropriated, etc.

3. The Balkans between History and Symbolic Geography

Throughout history, the multicultural mosaic of the Balkans was developed by the construction of parallel ethnic identities in close acculturation processes, often using the same narratives and symbol bearers (myths, legends, symbols), in spite of the diverse religious affiliations. Due to the fact that this region was the crossroads for different external political influences, the overlapping identities have spontaneously been developed and thus have become integrated within pluralistic national ethnic identities. Each of the Balkan ethnic identities incorporated in itself both the material and the immaterial heritage – often the same, but with later policy interventions – using opposed, “dissonant” interpretations of it.

This heritage had different types of “destiny” – it was used, misused and interpreted in many different ways, especially during war conflicts and the transition period in the whole region. It was neglected, destroyed, re-appropriated or recuperated by public policies in different ways and with different aims and motives. Still, there are many sites and buildings which remain neglected as “heritage of others” and not used for community development [16]. Within this politics of (re)creation of national identities of new nation-states, the heritage from earlier periods was incorporated or rejected. Thus cultural heritage in the Balkans in the 90s was used mostly for construction and reconstruction of identities, as inspiration for poetics and politics of representation (victimization, denials, megalomania, etc.), as part of the ethnic-based cultural policies that offered nationalistic visions of cultural development [17]. In relation to this, Maria Todorova perceives “historical heritage” from the standpoint of its

continuity and its perception, pointing out that “*the main feeling of all the individual Balkan discourses consists in the fact that they are without any doubt Europeans, but were sacrificed in order to save Europe from the attacks from Asia*” [18]. This is further explained through the positioning of the Balkans on the East – West axis periphery, far away and yet so close to the main currents of history.

In terms of symbolic geography [19], the Balkans has been and still remains inserted in long-standing binary oppositions. These Balkan ambiguities all emerge in travel writings and narratives, as well as within culturally and socially mediated interpretations in a more broad sense. In Balkan travel writing, the dominant negative label of Western travel accounts [20] in defining the characteristics of the region is being followed and reinterpreted over time, representing the Balkans as the exotic Oriental [21], or through violence and the primitive [22], as a Land of Discord; Savage Europe; Wild and Beautiful, The Other Europe, etc.

3.1. The Balkan Metaphors: The Bridge, the Crossroads and the Border

The identity of the Balkans has been dominated by its geographical position over time. The most common definition of the Balkans stresses its peripheral position – between the East and the West, Europe and Asia [23]. It has the status of a crossroads of cultures, languages, religions, traditions, civilization, etc. Historically the area of the Balkans was known as a crossroads of diverse cultures - Slovene, Croatian, Serbian, Bosnian, Montenegrin, Bulgarian, Romanian, Greek, Turkish, Albanian, as well as cultures of specific ethnic groups such as Roma, Jews, Ukrainians, Hungarians, Slovaks, Czechs, Vlachs, etc. It has been a juncture between the Latin and Greek bodies of the Roman Empire and the meeting point between Islam and Christianity.

This “transitional” region is consistently between stagnation and progress, between the past and the future, between preserving the existing state and a revolution. Metaphors used to describe the “essence” of the Balkans - the bridge / the crossroads / the border – have been and still remain the basis for the creation of stereotypes, as the dominant representation form, both inside and outside of the Balkans [24]. Although the Balkans are not unique or original in this regard (as this is common for some other nations of Central and Eastern Europe), these metaphors remain the basis for the interpretation of cultural heritage and identity narratives of the Balkans. It could be said that the Balkans have become a metaphor, a chain of symbolic images [25].

3.2. The Powder Keg: The Balkans as the Space of Conflict and Destruction

Throughout its turbulent history, the dual character of the Balkans was burdened by “crust and dust” that were to

become the main references of its name for centuries. The Balkans, as a kind of “no man’s land”, which was neither European, nor completely Asian, contained many contradictions that were brought to their limits. Thus, Balkan ground became a “powder keg” and Balkan spirit rose into the spirit of endless frictions, a struggle of the “one” against the all “others”.

This is shown in the meanings attached to “balkanization”, as the term was to characterize the divisiveness and fragmentation of the rest of Europe in the wake of the First World War [26]. And it was in the following times that the term was gradually extended and gained a variety of meanings for different phenomena. Balkanization has become synonymous with a return to the tribal, primitive and barbaric. Balkan mentality (*homo balcanicus*) has been one of the main references for cruelty, dirt, poverty, barbarism, backwardness, intolerance and fatalism. Inversely, the inner self-identification narrative includes values related to traditional culture, such as bravery, honour, freedom-loving, and hospitality, pride, as well as overemphasized emotions, passion and energy temperament. This tendency towards the essence-making and separation of characteristics of a group (of people) or of their social practices produces an image that those very references are immutable and that they are typical for this group, unlike other groups [27].

3.3. The European Inner “Other” and Self-Orientalization of the Balkans

Violence, as the main stereotypical narrative of the Balkans, has always been linked with the East. This fact further emphasized the Oriental nature of this region and intensified a foreign feeling of “the internal other”, a dark side of a collective memory of Europe.

The European “Orient” used to be part of the imaginary of medieval chivalry, weapons and conspiracies. This frozen image of the Balkans has been transmitted and reproduced in extraneous contexts with almost no changes for decades. The “otherness” of the Balkans in relation to Europe was proven in processes of identity construction for both “sides”. The concept of “nesting Orientalism” [28], following Edward Said’s “Orientalism”, is part of the attempts to apply these approaches within the Balkans. But the very differences between Orientalism and Balkanism were further elaborated, particularly taking into account the presence / absence of colonial discourses towards the West. This is what Todorova calls an “imputed opposition”, in contrast to an “imputed ambiguity” [29].

As Alexander Kiossev shows through the concept of “self-colonizing cultures” [30], the acculturation processes existed in all periods of cultural history of the Balkans and they were often parts of decisions deliberately made by the cultural public. The Balkans as an uncertain field of counter-identification and self-stigmatization is still present in contemporary artistic practices, for example in the films of Emir Kusturica and the music of Goran Bregović, thus

leading to a further spread of an unambiguous image of the Balkans [31]. It can be said that Balkan “mythistory” derives from the absence of a clear distinction between mythological and historical national origins in the Balkans. Such a broad appropriation of myths of origin of a nation is the dominant identity narrative mode [32] of the region.

However, Balkan historical, cultural and geographical heritage, with all its complexities and ambiguities, can become an asset and not necessarily an encumbrance. It is a wide field of mutual cultural, historical, ethnic and / or religious overlapping, whether it is the Balkans alone or Europe in general. The idea of accepting all cultural and historical layers of identity, regardless of their sharp and sometimes cruel historical and political dimensions, leads to a better understanding of the past and a more creative approach towards the future. This is in a way an attempt to revise Europe’s symbolic geographies of the Balkans and to think of the common heritage that unites this region, despite the fact that it is most often neglected, unwanted, appropriated, destroyed or simply banished to oblivion. It is a response to the notions of the Balkans that comes both from inside as well as from outside, an attempt to reconfigure the Balkans and to create counter-narratives in order to develop more incentives for the discovery of this region in tourism.

4. Balkan Dissonant Heritage Narratives and New Culture of Memory Incentives for Tourism

The Balkans has been proclaimed a field of age-old ethnic hatred and religious intolerance. This image was especially fostered by the civil wars in the former Yugoslavia by the end of the 20th century. These wars were even labelled as “Balkan Wars” in the Western public discourse. Although the majority of the countries were not part of the warfare, this largely contributed to the stigmatization of the entire region as “non-European” and further underlined doubts about the Europeaness of Balkan peoples. As the consequences of wars, migrations and later socio-political changes, significant parts of the heritage of the Balkans became “dissonant heritage”. Not only have the communities and their identities come into conflict, but the interpretation over the meaning of heritage has also become a contestable issue. Heritage was even destroyed; there are many examples of it throughout the region. Since the Greek civil war, the Slavic Macedonian inscriptions on graveyards have been destroyed, as this part of the heritage was considered unwanted and treated as “non-heritage”. Similarly, the Slavic Macedonian language was not permitted to be spoken and slowly had disappeared as immaterial heritage of this part of the Balkans. In Serbia, as well as in other Balkan countries that throughout history used to be part of the Ottoman sphere, the Ottoman material heritage was destroyed to a large extent, as it was also considered heritage of the “other” – the enemy. However, immaterial heritage artefacts and elements such as

songs, costumes, language – words, cuisine, etc., have been kept, appropriated and used as “our own”. In addition to this Turkish, Islamic and Oriental elements were all erased from the national identity of Bulgaria as part of the nation-building processes. The Ottoman heritage in Romania was not so contestable, since it did not belong to the core, but to the vassal states of the Empire, and thus did not threaten the Romanian national identity in an aggressive way.

Beside national cultural canons and traditions [33] (represented in school curricula), the cultural routes recalling the historical significance of the nation are very often used within the process of identity building. For example, FYR Macedonia has created cultural tourist routes to discover the antique Macedonian identity, starting with the archaeological site Vergina, which is on the territory of today’s Greece, thus recalling the life and deeds of Alexander the Great. This process of “antiquization” of Macedonia is done in opposition to identities of Albanian Illyrian, Greek antique, and Serbian Medieval, thus renouncing itself, at least officially, from Slavic identity and traditions. However, the constructions within the project Skopje 2014 became a major factor of tourist attractiveness of the city of Skopje in spite of heavy polemics (or maybe because of them) which still dominate the Macedonian society [34]. Numerous sculptures, from the mother of Alexander the Great to the sculpture of the “dressed” Prometheus, have provoked endless debates showing how the past can be dissonant heritage. This is still attractive for guided tours within the city of Skopje, showing how blocks of new public buildings in neo-antique style are hiding old bazaars and the Albanian part of the city, where Albanians have built a monument to Skenderbeg facing the “Christian” part of the city with his sword. All these efforts were done in the name of the “return to national roots”. It is very important to stress that the national narratives are constructed in ways that are silencing certain historical phenomena that are not compatible with the given ideological frame, and selecting only the suitable ones.

The main question that arises from such an example is: How to transform negative stereotypes and dissonant narratives into the touristic appeal of the Balkans? Should an imaginary tourist route be called *From Teuta (Queen of Iliria) through antiquity till Alexander the Great*, leading both tourists and communities to see themselves as gatekeepers of certain traditions, towards a more pragmatic and progress-oriented future? How to put the conflicted narratives about the past into dialogue within tourist narratives if they cannot be debated openly in the wider socio-political context? How can contested and conflicted heritage i.e. dissonant heritage become a resource for the development of new, proactive participatory touristic practices? How can a tourist, in this context, become a real stakeholder of bottom-up cultural policies? We will try to answer some of these questions by further examining the dissonant heritage of the Balkans with the most prominent illustrations of it.

In investigating the historical heritage of the Balkans, one

has to take into account those that have left the deepest imprint on the region’s multilayered identity: the Byzantine, the Ottoman and the communist / socialist.

4.1. The Medieval Imperial Narratives and the Byzantine Controversies

It was a millennium of Byzantine power that brought a lasting political, religious and cultural influence, and then half a millennium of Ottoman rule that was the longest period of political unity throughout the history of the region. Contrary to the external stereotypical perception of the Balkans being constituted of Ottoman elements of heritage or those perceived as Ottoman, the internal perception prevailing among some Balkan peoples, also as a stereotype, was about the Byzantine elements of heritage being the core constitutive elements of religious and national identities. The Balkans used to be under the very strong influence of Roman rule and thus carries this layer of heritage as well. According to the popular cliché, Western Christianity (Catholicism and Protestantism) is seen as the only genuine successor of the Roman tradition, especially the legal system. However, there is another argument that the Empire actually continued to live through the later Byzantine and even Ottoman Empires, which disabled a more deep understanding of the Byzantine heritage and arts. It can be said that all of these stereotyped interpretations also belong to the dissonance of history and heritage of the Balkans.

Balkan “Byzantism” is how Milica Bakić-Hayden calls all the ambiguities of the Byzantine heritage narratives in the Balkans [35]. There are a lot of errant perceptions of the Balkan links with the Byzantine, since this term (like Balkanism itself) has gained a series of dissonant connotations, mainly related to the religious aspects of the Byzantine Empire and the development of Orthodox Christianity. As Nikolay Artetov observes,

“There is a line of demarcation among Balkan Slavs, following the border between the Ottoman and Habsburg empires (earlier between the Byzantium and the Catholic world)... that generates among Catholics a feeling of superiority over Orthodox Slavs, and conversely an inferiority complex and compensating reactions among the Orthodox” [36].

Roman routes have begun to be explored and created in both the cultural and tourism sector of Serbia in the last twenty years, as a response to the need to justify more its “European” common routes/roots. Thus Byzantine heritage and narratives have been neglected, as there are no complex routes meant for foreign tourists that are developed around “non-debatable” Serbian medieval heritage linked to Byzantine history. The route connecting the four Roman imperial cities and birthplaces of sixteen Roman emperors [37] became a narrative with the aim to give self-confidence both to inhabitants of the Balkans but also to the tourist industry, which was blocked in the vision of a tourist offer that has to be spectacular, attractive and pompous. It seemed quite successful in re-creating the meaning of ruins which

previously did not have a lot of sense. In other words, there were ruins of one empire which had nothing to do with people on this territory today. But the story that “Serbia was a motherland of sixteen last Roman emperors” started serving its purpose in creating a touristic product with a narrative that puts in silence the other side of the medieval imperial story, namely the Byzantine.

4.2. Ottoman Heritage Narratives: The Bridges as Places of Divisions

In the collective memory of the Balkans, bridges have great significance, as symbol bearers of human achievements, but also as attempts to make closer communities from both sides of the bridge. Bridges were also public spaces, spaces used for festivities, but even for everyday social and cultural practices. In essence, throughout history, the bridge has been a symbol of the capacities of one State to connect its territories and to glorify its power. This is a response to the bridge metaphor - exemplifying how the real bridges of great historical significance were neglected and sometimes completely destroyed, because they were perceived as the heritage of the “others”.

However, Balkan bridges constructed during the Ottoman times are not retold as a part of the policy of the empire, but are remembered in the national narratives as the actions of local individuals who were paying debts to the place of their origin, like the famous Bridge on the river Drina in Višegrad, Bosnia and Hercegovina, whose story became “codified” in the novel by Nobel prize-winner Ivo Andrić. Thus, this bridge is not telling the story of the grandeur of the Ottoman empire, but of the strong national feelings of Mehmed paša Sokolović, who, in spite of the fact that he had been abducted as a boy, converted to Islam and became a big Vizier in Istanbul, still had strong feelings for his native country and people, thus giving them a bridge, to facilitate their lives. In addition, this narrative was crucial in helping the Christian population to deal with their conversion to Islam which remained as a historical trauma of the whole region.

This bridge became more than a historical monument. The film director Emir Kusturica decided to create a new “Stone city” devoted to Ivo Andrić – “Andrićgrad” near the bridge [38]. The project is a kind of follow-up of his “Wooden city” project, in the near-by Mokra Gora region in Serbia, which represents a wooden village (it is not very specific from which region, as Kusturica created a village where many Slavic traditions in housing could be found). Andrićgrad is to represent an imaginary of all lost cities in the Balkans. That is why he wanted to use the old castle stones from Trebinje, which provoked local riots, and the stones ultimately had to be brought from outside. The very idea of building a city near the bridge in Višegrad raised a lot of controversies: the Bosniak population contested any construction in Višegrad near the place where many citizens of Višegrad had been killed because of their Muslim religion during the war in Bosnia in 1992; the Serbian population found it strange that Serbian public money would finance a project in Bosnia and

Hercegovina, etc. This comes as no surprise, since almost all of the films and projects by Emir Kusturica have been the topic of debates. As a result, those two cities have already become touristic attractions.

Other remarkable examples of Ottoman bridges are also placed in Bosnia and Hercegovina: the famous Old Bridge in the city of Mostar (ruined in the last war, but reconstructed with the help of the international community); the Latin Bridge over the River Miljacka in Sarajevo; the Arslanagica Bridge near the city of Trebinje; the bridge on the Žepa near the town Rogatice, etc. Also significant is the Stone Bridge, a 15th century Ottoman reconstruction of a Roman bridge across the Vardar River in Skopje, FYR Macedonia; Terzijski Bridge over the river Erenik near Đakovica in Kosovo; and Mes Bridge near the Shkodra lake in Albania. All of these bridges today have multiple narratives and thus stand as symbol bearers of those cities in different ways for different groups of the population.

Thus, many of these bridges are part of the “heritage which divides”. The route “Ottoman caravan” would connect those narratives leading toward “discovery” tourism, which is meant to lead tourist to places which exist in their imagination, with weak or wrong meanings, giving them opportunities to discover other aspects of those bridges and memory places, as public space which contains numerous narratives of communities around it but often can be read in a much larger, even European and world, context.

Nevertheless, sometimes they incorporate a traumatic narrative, as we will see in the next illustration around Latin/Princip Bridge in Sarajevo. The Bridge on the Drina for the Bosniak (Muslim) community, as all the other bridges of the Ottoman Empire, belongs to their sense of cultural identification - those bridges are symbols of the greatness of the culture they wanted to participate in, symbol bearers of the importance of the State in which they were respected citizens. Thus, the destruction in 1993 of the Old Bridge in Mostar by Croatian forces, which had no strategic or military significance, was aiming toward the destruction of self-confidence and respect and raising the feeling of hopelessness among the Bosniak community.

Ottoman cultural routes should create complex new narratives - incorporating dualism, multiple identification or conflicting values, enabling tourists to “intervene ideologically”, as politics of identification and incorporation of imaginary, of narratives which are produced by communities, but also by academics and artists, into cultural touristic practices might be revelatory for both inhabitants and tourists. That would demand “negotiation (rather than negation) of oppositional and antagonistic elements” [39].

4.3. Communist / Socialist Variations of Balkan Narratives: From the Unwelcomed Past to the Nostalgia for the Lost Utopia

Although it relates to the shortest period of time in the recent history, the communist and socialist variations of Balkan heritage are most often overlooked, ignored and

denied, usually by those who insist on the persistence of the old imperial heritage. We can say that the term East Europe fits more adequately the specific historical heritage of communism and socialism. It is also a core context for the lasting debate on Central Europe and the Balkans. Ideologies, narratives, representations and memories re-enacted in monuments and memorial parks in the Balkans during socialist Yugoslavia were mostly linked to World War II, revolution and revolutionary acts which preceded the creation of socialist Yugoslavia.

The socialist common heritage attracts a number of regional tourists. Although a controversial place with a successful leader or dictator, Josip Broz Tito's grave and the Museum of History of Yugoslavia which is linked to it are the most visited tourist sites in Belgrade, Serbia. On the other hand, some new tourist routes are being created such as the "bicycle routes" to discover "Le Corbusier" New Belgrade – the only socialist city built according to his premises. The re-valorisation of New Belgrade as a tourist attraction point is part of this nostalgia process. In the 60s and 70s, New Belgrade was a dormitory, a grey place with no venues for cultural and social life. Today, New Belgrade is one of the most attractive Belgrade neighbourhoods, symbolizing the prosperity of those times, but combined with new modern urban bearers – shopping malls – reinforcing the already existing Yugoslav consumerist utopian socialism. However, from Kumrovec in Croatia, Titovo Velenje and all other cities that used to bear Tito's name (Užice, Korenica, Titograd, Veles, Drvar, Mitrovica), key socialist memory places like Tjentište memorial, and even the former presidential ship Seagull (Galeb) which was bought by the city of Rijeka, can be part of this nostalgia route. How powerful this might be could be illustrated by the exhibition "Deadlock area", which consisted of activist art from the Collection Marinko of 200 works by artists from over sixty countries and that opened at this ship in the port of Rijeka in 2011, visited by thousands of tourists [40]. The other one is the interactive multimedia exhibition "Long live life" in 2013, which depicts the everyday life of common people in SFR Yugoslavia in the period after 1950s, up to 1990s in ex-Yugoslav countries [41].

There are some other examples from the 20th century that tell a different story of part of this region. For example, the monument to the unknown soldier at the mountain Avala near Belgrade – an example of representational culture of interwar Yugoslavism [42].

4.4. The Balkans in the European Community of Collective Memory on 20th Century World Wars

The turbulent history of 20th century Europe is nowadays being partly reconfigured, with some attempts at creating a common European history. The Balkan Wars, WWI, WWII memory politics and festivities are facing a very difficult issue today: how to memorialize, how to celebrate wars, when today it is well known that war not only had a "liberation" aspect (the Balkan wars for example), but also moments of brutal killing and the torturing of innocent

people. As a kind of response to the "powder keg" notion of the Balkans, these narratives should offer a wider scope on the events that influenced the destiny of the common history and heritage of Europe.

Gavrilo Princip, a member of Mlada Bosna, a revolutionary pro-Yugoslav organization, assassinated the Austro-Hungarian heir Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Bosnia and Herzegovina's capital, Sarajevo, when he was crossing the Latin Bridge. The controversies and debates are still open as to whether it caused or merely provoked the beginning of the war. Is Princip a terrorist or a hero? The Museum in Sarajevo is an attractive tourist place that tells a story, but these stories differ. So the footprints of Gavrilo Princip disappeared, as well as his name, from the bridge. This is the one of the "traumatic places of memory", and different communities are interpreting this place in different ways. In this case, Gavrilo Princip is perceived as a martyr for the wrong idea (Yugoslav idea), as a Serbian terrorist who was a fighter for the idea of a Greater Serbia, as an innocent victim, manipulated by external forces (the secret organization "Black hand"), etc. But all of those controversies are increasing the touristic potential and attractiveness of the Latin Bridge and the Mlada Bosna Museum, which act as a storyteller of the event that launched the process leading toward the Great War (World War I).

The period 2014-2018, when the 100 years of the Great War will be commemorated, could be a stimulant for tourist workers to develop more coherent "war routes" – not only with battlefields, hospitals, graveyards, Army camps, and front lines, but with narratives of places of memory about civilian life during times of war, about civil heroes in their everyday struggle. The paths leading from Belgrade toward the Albanian mountains and then Greek islands, French Riviera, etc. were not only paths of militaries, but also of civilians who ended up in French schools, who brought new music instruments back home, new knowledge, skills, even openness toward the avant-garde and surrealism.

The specific issue in cultural route memorizations represents the history of the Holocaust. Holocaust museums of today are a fact in a majority of European countries, as well as Jewish museums where the history of the Holocaust is also represented. In the Balkans there are numerous locations of concentration camps or killing fields: Jasenovac and Jadovno, Croatia; Prebilovci in Bosnia and Hercegovina, Topovske supe and Staro Sajmiste, Serbia. Today, only Jasenovac has a touristic articulation, although heavily criticized by Serbia for "not telling the truth", for hiding the numbers of victims, etc. Staro Sajmiste Concentration Camp in Belgrade, Serbia (The Old Belgrade Fair) is a memorial site, which during the Second World War served as a concentration camp for the mass interment of Jews, Roma and Serbian people (it was on the territory of the so-called Independent state of Croatia); it is a symbol of suffering and trauma, but also a symbol of urban architectural modernity in the 30s and of the artistic Avant-garde in the 50s, as well as a contemporary urban slum in the 90s. Visiting a holocaust memorial as a tourist might be profoundly emotional for a

moment there - incorporating this visit in large “memory routes” of anti-Semitism, as memory places linked to 19th century pogroms, research centres which embedded theories necessary for the development of Nazism, etc., which all might give a deeper understanding to the roots of racial policies and the real meaning of genocide. Connecting those memory sites in the tragic route of concentration camps and scaffolds, it would represent a reality in which prisoners were moved from one camp to another.

The negotiation of dissonant meanings and their resolution in the acceptance of the intertwining notions of memory narratives could contribute to more inclusive attitudes to heritage and society, even creating conditions in which this heritage becomes a multicultural pilgrimage site, thus introducing a new type of tourism in the Balkans.

5. Concluding Remarks

This research showed that Balkan discourse provides a full range of dissonant heritage narratives. In producing new tourist “products” those narratives should be taken in account. They can be re-constructed, new, missing narratives added, and thus a politics of oblivion will soon be transformed into an active policy of memory which finds in tourism its best advocacy argument and its stakeholder. It is obvious that throughout the region it is necessary to revitalize the relationship towards dissonant and forgotten heritage, and to become aware of the importance of cultural memory. The presented illustrations touch on the complexities of the Balkan dissonant heritage discourse and narratives.

Only tourism might contribute to overcoming barriers – contemporary borders of nation-states, lack of mediated information, and deliberate manipulation through school manuals, memory site recognition and narrative creation. Raising the collective consciousness throughout the Balkans for the most important cultural sites and their incorporation into tourist routes as common products, is imposed as the first task in creating attractiveness for tourists outside the Balkan region. By mapping specific points related to Balkan cultural heritage we tried to point out numerous possibilities which exist for cultural tourism beyond border development (through cultural routes as an instrument). Thus cultural tourism and every single route created in negotiation with the research community, civil sector and tourist practitioners would become a political - better yet bottom up policy act “*as a form of calculation and strategic action dedicated to social transformation*” [43]. Understanding and interpreting, resonating, debating - these are premises for critical thinking which is preliminary for a real experiential tourism, which would create long-term impacts.

Each content element in any of the cultural memory routes should incorporate contradiction and controversies in their representation, and thus this controversy would become “attractiveness” and would give the possibility of participation (at least intellectual curiosity participation) in

imaginary creation (civic imagination), for both domestic inhabitants, regional and foreign tourists. Thus cultural memory tourist routes become a part of the process of regional public rhetoric, mediated through one new form of tourist product, usually cleansed of any political meanings (although this attempted “emptiness” is also political). We need new narrative strength to represent different and opposing contents as a dialogical discursive exchange.

However, it is important to explore the ambivalence of different layers of identity in a cultural and historical context to identify the potential for coherent design and the shaping of tourist routes. These would include mapping the spaces of alternative routes; development of route typologies (tangible and intangible heritage styles / epochs), definition of thematic routes and new narratives, etc. The attractiveness of these kinds of Balkan narratives is established in the development of specific tourism products, such as discovery and nostalgia tourism. This would also mean a range of more complex processes:

- Creating a new culture of memory with cultural heritage narratives and cultural routes in tourism;
- Establishing the balance between the negative forms of representations of the Balkans and its authentic representational competitiveness;
- Reflecting on dissonant heritage as unused resource for cultural tourism development, more specifically cultural memory routes development;
- Positioning of the Balkans as a space of resilience in the globalizing world, the unique cultural space of diversity;
- Fostering regional cooperation and joint presentation of cultural heritage routes in tourism.

We have explored a different point of departure on Balkan tourism narratives - reading its dissonant heritage as a possibility for understanding the region and its history behind the dominant discursive constructions of the Balkans.

Let the Balkan in!

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