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*Master thesis:*

**Regimes of Public Memory:  
The Symbolic Landscapes of Post-Yugoslav Transition**

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## *Abstract*

This analysis considers the national production of historical-cultural knowledge related to sites of memory through exploring the changes of state from the transformation of multiethnic Socialist Yugoslavia into today's ethnic-national state of the republic of Serbia. It focuses on the circulation of memories, objects, symbols and spaces in and out of political and social legitimacy, as place identity, sites of memory and historical belonging are framed in entirely different ways by different nations on the same terrain. Despite intermittent changes of state and thorough discrediting by social scientists, notions of a stable, coherent, essentialist and indigenist national identity still function as a critical part of the ideological apparatus of nation-building. Thus, historical interpretation of sites of memory on national territory is filtered through this essentialist national logic, which in turn also reaffirm national ideas.

This analysis explores the historical, intercultural and intergovernmental dynamics of physical sites, places and landscapes in transition, as they lie across and between multiple systems of social order and cultural belonging. As spaces are used by dominant powers to frame, socially produce and transmit ideas, identities and values, they are also a medium for the production of meaning, collectivity, narrative and shared identity that is strategic in the formulation of nationalized systems of knowledge. Furthermore, as socially-embedded cultural systems and interstitial zones, spaces also have the potential to be sites of resistance, conflict, community and a medium for intercultural and inter-governmental historical dialogue. The established rationalist functionalist Western conceptual frameworks founding modern nations thus come into question as they are negated and challenged by the actually erratic, inconsistent, arbitrary and capricious forms of national remembrance created by competing or interrupted forms of governance which create historical uncertainty, ambivalence and dissonance.

Since the fall of Yugoslavia, its successor states have experienced immense temporal displacement and geo-political disorientation as these nations seek to position themselves within a changing world, while at the same time, parts of various national pasts do not agree with the political agendas for the future. Using Henri LeFebvre's framework for understanding space as a social construction, this analysis examines the different ways in which states and people remember, neglect or claim present identities related to the socialist past in light of the political present.

**Key words:** cultural monuments, Yugoslav memory, sites of memory, cultural heritage, historical mediation, Yugo-nostalgia

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# RESUME

*REGIMES DE LA MEMOIRE PUBLIQUE:*

*PAYSAGES SYMBOLIQUES DE LA TRANSITION POST-YOUGOSLAVE*

Les changements du régime en Yougoslavie ont abouti non seulement au changement de l'interprétation de l'histoire nationale, mais aux conceptions très différentes de l'individualité nationale. La République fédérative socialiste de Yougoslavie s'est mise à l'extérieur de la politique mondiale globale, et a créé sa propre temporalité, pendant ce temps les Etats successeurs se positionnent très différemment dans l'espace et le temps, comme chaque nation invente sa propre histoire et ses propres images sur elle-même à travers les lieux auxquels elle appartient. Cette thèse examine les endroits de mémoire comme ils se déplacent à travers les différentes formes de gouvernance.

## POINTS DE RECHERCHE

Il est courant de discuter sur l'endroit donné ou "les moyens" de l'espace ou représentants, et quelles valeurs, histoires, idées, peuples et événements il doit incarner. Pourtant, comment cette signification est-elle formée et attribuée à un lieu particulier, et qui ou quoi attribue ses significations? Cette thèse n'examine pas "les lieux" ou "les espaces" comme un phénomène objectif, mais comme un phénomène créé socialement par le peuple, dans le but d'exprimer certaines idées, de contenir les mémoires, d'enraciner les communautés et d'aboutir aux buts, qui ont toujours un degré élevé de variabilité.

D'après la triade spatiale d'Henri LeFebvre, cette analyse étudie les différents éléments qui interagissent pour produire l'espace :

*1) Représentations de l'espace* - les idées conçues de l'espace, telles qu'elles sont transformées en représentations

*2) Pratique spatiale* - les activités, les actions et les pratiques, se produisant dans les espaces physiques de la vie quotidienne

### 3) *Espaces représentation* - les représentations cognitives et les images de l'espace telles qu'elles existent dans l'esprit des usagers de l'espace

Cette thèse étudie la mémoire "de l'espace" et les politiques sur un nombre considérable de niveaux différents, afin d'examiner la manière dont l'identité de l'appartenance, que ce soit un endroit historique ou une nation, n'est jamais unifiée, singulière ou essentielle, mais elle est informée par les actions plus larges de déplacement, les processus sociaux externes. Ayant en vue ce fait, nous voyons comment les endroits "stables" se transforment, en effet, en d'autres êtres entièrement, tandis que les nations reçoivent, migrent et s'attachent aux nouveaux lieux de mémoire. En examinant la production sociale de la mémoire spatiale, cette thèse se penche sur le rôle que les nations jouent dans la production, le signifiant, l'interprétation et la représentation des espaces à l'aide du recours au passé. Cependant, les manières nationales de mémoire, à travers leurs cadres modernes, rationnels et observationnels représentent une manière pour explorer de nombreux passés qui se trouve dans les terrains qu'ils englobent, car il existe d'autres perceptions historiques, compréhensions et expressions se trouvant au-delà de la portée du savoir national moderne.

#### STRUCTURE DE LA THESE

Etant donné que cette thèse étudie l'intergouvernementalité et l'espace sur un nombre considérable des niveaux, il est nécessaire d'adopter une approche à l'échelle. La première partie, *Etats remaniés*, étudie plus largement les considérations historiques globales sur la construction de l'état-nation, avec un accent particulier sur les contextes post-socialistes principalement la construction et l'effondrement de l'Etat yougoslave en relation avec le contexte géopolitique voisin. Enfin, la deuxième partie, *Monuments éphémères*, étudie la façon dont l'interprétation des lieux change en relation avec leurs contextes nationaux et, plus largement, mondiaux.

Les images très divergentes du passé yougoslave et du présent serbe sont créées par des études de cas, chacune portant les différentes facettes du modèle LeFebvre, telles qu'elles sont appliquées à l'espace national. Une étude de cas des "représentations spatiales" nationales, étant étudiée à travers la mémoire institutionnelle de l'Institut national de la protection des monuments de culture, décrit l'espace historique dans les termes d'exclusion largement ethno-nationaux. Cependant, l'examen hystorique des pratiques socio-spatiales changeantes de la zone d'Usce du Nouveau Belgrade, l'image compliquée et interrompue de l'appartenance

nationale, de l'identité et de la mémoire matérielle est montrée. Enfin, une étude de cas sur la mémoire virtuelle de Yougoslavie sur l'Internet étudie les espaces collaboratifs et l'open source de la mémoire nationale dans un espace déterritorialisé et médiatisé comme des expériences de la mémoire multi-sensorielle dans le présent.

#### METHODOLOGIE DE LA RECHERCHE

Cette analyse suit une approche interdisciplinaire, en utilisant un certain nombre des études de cas pour montrer les points de vue les plus larges. A ces fins, mon approche méthodologique primaire était une étude exhaustive de la littérature en anglais concernant les textes en sciences sociales avec des références largement historiques et culturelles dans les domaines de l'histoire, de la sociologie, de l'anthropologie, de la théorie culturelle et de la géographie urbaine et politique. Un certain nombre d'entretiens avec des employés dans le domaine de la culture, travaillant dans les institutions de l'Etat, a également contribué en fournissant un point de vue plus spécifique et local et l'intérieur de la perspicacité institutionnelle sur la façon dont les pratiques de mémoire sont influencées par le changement des situations politiques. L'analyse historique, dans laquelle la "biographie sociale de l'espace" fournit une manière d'explorer les lieux comme ils se déplacent à travers le temps, est également utilisée.

Etant donné que cette analyse prend en considération les terrains changeables des lieux officiellement délimités de la mémoire nationale et leur élargissement de l'abîme de la mémoire sociale publique, il est nécessaire d'examiner plus que le discours officiel. En adoptant une approche terre à terre, j'analyse le lieu de point de vue de l'observateur public, en examinant les lieux réels et les représentations spatiales à travers une série des visites des sites et des analyses textuelles du matériel disponible au public. Enfin, vu qu'une partie de cette recherche concerne le rôle de la mémoire publique dans l'espace virtuel de l'Internet, j'ai utilisé de sites internet, des blogs et des réseaux sociaux, ainsi que des analyses académiques de nouveaux médias dans le but d'explorer les dimensions sociales et les possibilités créatives de l'Internet et son potentiel pour le dialogue interculturel historique et créatif dans le domaine de la médiation de la mémoire (post) nationale.

## OBJECTIF PRINCIPAL DE LA RECHERCHE

Cette thèse n'est pas orientée vers les résultats purement pragmatiques, mais plutôt le but de cette recherche est complètement le contraire : le but est d'ouvrir les préoccupations théoriques contraversées et les questions négligées par les nations s'occupant de leurs propres intérêts, de poser des questions appropriées et d'examiner des approches alternatives concernant la gestion de la culture et de la mémoire publiques dans les situations des états changeables. En relevant le biais intellectuel, idéologique et national des opérations institutionnelles et les pratiques sociales de la mémoire, cette thèse vise à ouvrir les possibilités pour repenser et réimaginer les approches dans le traitement de la mémoire publiques, conçues pas en termes nationaux, mais en termes sociaux. En contextualisant les effets de la gestion culturelle dans le domaine des relations intergouvernementales et socio-culturelles, cette thèse vise à généraliser des questions plus larges sur l'éthique de la pratique de mémoire et sur les possibilités créatives se trouvant dans les nouvelles approches dans le domaine de la compréhension historique.

## HYPOTHESES DE LA RECHERCHE

1. Pendant la fragmentation de l'ex-Yougoslavie dans les nations indépendantes, le projet de la construction de la nation serbe déploie les régimes hégémoniques de la mémoire dans la reconstruction de l'identité de l'appartenance nationale suivant ses prochains objectifs politiques.
2. La réinterprétation de l'identité de l'appartenance à travers le changement de l'ordre politique reconçoit et reproduit le passé d'une nouvelle manière, comprenant d' "autres" passés qui sont politiquement défavorables à leurs fins, plus notamment, à ceux de l'état précédent.
3. Les concepts de l'identité nationale ne sont pas prédéterminés, fixés ou non-négociables. Mais plutôt exécutables, créés activement et renforcés de la part des performances nationales dans le présent.
4. Comme la légitimité politique a le rôle dans le passé national, l'espace officiel de la mémoire nationale représente la construction sociale, et dépend davantage de l'ordre du jour que de l'exactitude historique, tandis que les mémoires sociales sont rarement reconnues comme légitimes. Les cadres modernes et rationalistes pour la recherche du passé ne

reconnaissent pas la mémoire matérielle et l'expérience vécue comme une source légitime du savoir, en aliénant les subjectivités historiques incarnées, vécues dans l'époque du socialisme

5. En considérant les enjeux politiques et les conflits des intérêts intégrés dans le passé national, les approches alternatives, dénationalisées, hybrides, incorporées socialement et réflexives dans le traitement de mémoire, la médiation et la dépendance culturelle fournissent de nouvelles perspectives dans la création des compréhensions intersubjectives exigées par le monde intergouvernemental et interculturel.

#### RECOMMANDATIONS POUR LA CREATION DU CHANGEMENT ET LE MOUVEMENT VERS

#### L'INTERCULTURALISME:

Ces recommandations sont orientées vers la création de la différence dans les approches qui mènent à des perspectives plus larges.

- Le passé exploré dans le monde contemporain
- De l'objectivisme et de l'objectivité au dialogue phénoménologique
- Le travail de mémoire basé sur le lieu et la recherche créative
- L'histoire sociale et l'historiographie participative
- La culture mémorielle indépendante
- Le pluralisme sémiotique
- La pédagogie critique

## INTRODUCTION

This investigation of post-Yugoslav cultural landscapes explores how places and their pasts are mired in a complex constellation of forces, where they are influenced by social conflicts, inflected with personal memories, scarred with political traumas and pawned to prop up national ideological agendas. The terrains of space and memory alike are contested platforms in both the generative creation and social dissemination of various types of meaning, significance and knowledge which are often deployed in the project of nation-building that use it to make different historical, cultural and territorial claims.

As we have witnessed especially in recent decades misunderstandings, tensions and conflicts about the ownership, meaning and purpose of space have created eruptions of violence, bloodshed and political turmoil. In today's world, these disputes range from arguments over gentrification and migrant-invasions in urban neighborhoods, to struggles for land rights for indigenous societies, to contested ownership over holy sites. From Northern Ireland to Gaza, from the Brazilian rainforest to London's Docklands, and from East Timor to Kosovo, territorial disputes often have a deep-seated historical and cultural basis, rooted in very different conceptions of and relationships with the natural and cultural landscape. As this paper explores, group identities are constituted through the socio-cultural mediation of spatial memory, meanings and practices, which create a type of social and political subjectivity, as nations act to claim spaces through the creation of images of the past. Further, we see that public memories of places are not merely informed by direct contact with places themselves, but through acculturated *memorialization processes*, which signify, interpret and transmit meanings through processes of representing the past, often in national terms. As the force of modern nations exerts a growing force in the mediation of public memories which are disseminated through state institutions and organs, other types of unofficial or informal meanings, interpretations and signification systems continue to coexist alongside of dominant official historical interpretations. Thus, a major theme explored in this paper are competing historical interpretations based on space and the tensions between official national narratives of 'public' memory as mediated by state institutions, and the 'public' memory socially-generated by the historical and political subjects of state power.

As this paper explores, Yugoslavia and its successors' changing concepts of selfhood and socio-moral values directly influence the interpretation of the past in ways that have political ramifications for the future, which makes historical interpretation and decision-making relevant to all of society. We explore the phenomena of changing conceptions of the

past in line with national projects, as the politics of memory often entails interpretation of the past in ways advantageous to society's current goals for the future. This paper hopes to position the political process of decision-making in historical representation and historiographic interpretation as a fertile ground for cultural democracy and creative exploration at the interstices between states and other notions of purportedly closed social systems.

This analysis raises the broader questions: What would a truly democratic approach towards creating 'public memory' culture look like, who would be included and how would they participate? What is the future of national memory and cultural heritage in a post-nation-state world? How would a de-nationalized framework for approaching cultural patrimony change how we look at historical artifacts and historical knowledge itself? How can we engage the interpretive agency of historical subjects in addition to the accounts provided by external observers? How would a change in the politics and methodology of historical knowledge production affect the discourse produced about a place, its social communities, symbolisms and narration? How can historical interpretation be used to achieve intercultural understanding?

The paper examines as its *main subject* space and the politicization of spatial memory. 'Space' is a broad terrain, composed of the interactions between physical, symbolic and social elements. By examining not just the concrete matter of physical 'space' itself, but the way that it is socially produced (attitudes, actions, behaviors, labor, memory, representations, interpretations, associations, belief, rituals, functions, meaning, role, and so on that give it social currency, value and meaning) we observe that otherwise 'stable' spaces are actually highly plastic forms of cultural heritage that transform, evolve, mutate and change in physical form and social production alike. Furthermore differing attitudes, values and beliefs of various historical periods often conflict with one other, creating highly variable insights, perspectives and interpretations of the past of a single place.

This paper focuses on the process of social production of spatial memory and legitimacy in the midst of a post-Yugoslav environment. As concepts of essential national and place identity have been thoroughly discredited, this analysis illustrates in particular how in the Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav context, the meanings and significations of spaces are not inherent qualities of that place itself, but are shaped extra-nationally, by the events and currents in the wider regional and global environment. Sites, we examine, are not stable but are positioned between sub-national and supranational flows of power, which represent different and often conflicting desires, intentions, goals, ideals and visions of prospective

futures. Importantly, we must recognize space as a medium and embodiment of social representation that represents the expressions, activities, pasts and livelihoods of different socio-cultural groups. Nations, as social bodies that represent both unity and diversity, must balance between many competing interpretations to construct a coherent national selfhood and past in the creation of a shared political and historical subjectivity. In this milieu, this paper examines cultural practice and politics of knowledge in the spaces between governmental orders as a source of creative possibility and renegotiation of values that can enable new forms of historical understanding. Recognizing the role of nations in constructing, deciphering and interpreting spaces to build their power, new non-national approaches to space may be important to achieving international and intercultural understanding and peace.

Throughout this paper, new questions are asked about *modernity*, *cultural management* and more generally *cultural memory* in the era of the nation-state. Relevant is the issue of national constructions of culture in the face of changes of state and politically-problematic forms of heritage which do not serve a particular national agenda. This analysis poses questions about public memory in the face of changing national narratives, which also implicate cultural workers and their relationship to the social process of historical representation. It also invites the concept of expanding cultural action and memory away from institutional efforts for social engineering and towards individually-autonomous and ‘self-managed’ alternatives. As cultural managers typically operate within the realm of space that imposes order from the top, this paper entertains the idea of reconfiguring this order. Examining both official and unofficial forms of national memory and place identity this thesis aims to examine alternatives to memory and historical management, within an open, yet critical contemporary society. Michel Foucault offered the definition of critique as being partner and adversary of the same time, part of the thing that is being criticized.<sup>1</sup> With reference to this, this paper implicates the positionality for cultural managers in societies with diverse and intersecting publics, and prompts them to think about the complex ways in which vernacular memory and official national historical doctrine interconnect.

This paper examines the sphere of ‘public memory’ as it lies between contrived institutional practice and informal social practice, which is all the more complicated by changes of state and ‘correct’ or ‘incorrect’ types of memory and cultural heritage, dictated by national narrative and rationalist-functionalist historical attitudes. Though historical studies in Western practice have obtained the social status of a science, invested with the power,

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<sup>1</sup> Foucault, Michel. quoted: *Rewriting Art History*

resources, and discretion over national decision-making with real societal implications, we acknowledge this state-centered framework generates obvious conflicts of interest and leads to contentious forms of accuracy from historical accounts derived through other social bodies, including those of ‘other’ nations. While cloaked in technocratic rationality and exactitude, the actual process of national cultural historical consecration is anything but systematic, ‘correct’ or absolute science, as we examine how it is subject to haphazard and arbitrary elements of natural entropy, loaded historical emotions and strategic decision-making. It has been widely acknowledged that national historical lying is a fundamental part of how modern states function, though this lying does not do service to alleviate historical conflicts that are international or intergovernmental in their nature.<sup>2</sup> This paper aims to explore different attitudes and approaches in the treatment and operations of memory, away from a professionalized scientific, state-centered and bureaucratic endeavor, and towards the possibilities of socially-engaged creative memory practices aimed at intercultural historical understanding.

In its *approach*, this analysis explores the national construction of space via the conceptual framework laid out by theorist and sociologist Henri LeFebvre in *The Production of Space*. As LeFebvre, amongst others, recognizes that the conceptual modes of apprehension of Western, nationalized modern thinking and conventionalized academic approaches to the past limit the potential for other modes of historical-cultural understanding and perception, we turn towards independent and non-national approaches towards the past to enable new ways of knowing. By overturning modern, rationalized and Cartesian approaches to space, memory and identity, we will explore the past of place as a creative slate that is filled with the generative power of new types of meanings, expressions, functionalities and identities as alternative forms of cultural knowledge and expression, as it contests, stretches and opens our value, belief and knowledge systems.

We examine ‘national spaces’ lying across multiple systems of belonging and governance by focusing on the transformations in the *cultural and historical context* of former Yugoslavia. At the confluence of various types of historical ethnic and civilizational difference with recent governmental, ideological and political-economic shifts, former Yugoslavia is a highly relevant place to examine inter-cultural and inter-governmental politics of plurality and its interpretation. Since the fall of the old state, cultural landscape and

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<sup>2</sup> Hodgkin, Katherine and Susannah Radstone, ed. *Regimes of Memory*. London: Routledge, 2011.

heritage has been deployed in the re-creation of new pasts reaching towards the next political site on the horizon: European Integration. Since the onset of the transition period, the prospect of Europeanization has become fused with pre-existing nationalist ethnic trajectories, as well as neo-liberalism, in the remarking and re-nationalization of Post- Yugoslav cultural space and identity. Thus, we approach memory, history and representation of place as a strategic field of cultural and political interest alike. The analysis only briefly examines the time of the Yugoslav war, as many have focused on this period. While the war is essential to understand the cause of rupture, I am more interested in the wider historical lapses, variable interpretations and national discontinuities instigated by the war, rather than the war itself.

This paper's *aim of research* is to explore the major phenomena, trends, effects and tendencies occurring within post-Yugoslav cultural landscapes in the midst of re-nationalization of memory. This includes some major ironies, contradictions, and hypocritical actions, which will be briefly examined, as there is not enough room to delve into these historical issues. As oblivion does not provide source materials for study, this study is focused on changing representations and relationships to the cultural past and the ways in which memory migrates to new places. This paper is not oriented towards purely pragmatic results and simple solutions to be 'carried out' into order, but rather my goal in this paper is quite the opposite: it is to open up contentious theoretical concerns and issues neglected by self-interested nations, pose questions and investigate alternative approaches and attitudes to the management of public culture and memory. This analysis aims to reconsider the taken for granted assumptions behind nationalized cultures of memory that overlook, conceal and restrict existing forms of cultural variation, difference, plurality and hybridity. The paper implicates the effects of cultural-historical management<sup>3</sup> within wider intergovernmental and social-cultural relations, which implicate broader questions of the ethics of memory and the creative possibilities that lie in new approaches to historical understanding.

## RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

1. In the fragmentation of former Yugoslavia into independent nations, Serbia's nation-building project deploys hegemonic regimes of memory in the remaking of national place identity in line with its future political goals.

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<sup>3</sup> Cultural managers may be considered part of the dominant class that formulates representations of space, who consist of architects, philosophers, social engineers, as explored by Henri LeFebvre.

2. The reinterpretation of place identity through change in political order re-conceives and reproduces the past in new ways, which exclude 'other' pasts that are politically unfavorable to its own ends, most notably, those of the previous state.
3. Concepts of national identity are not predetermined, fixed or un-negotiable, but are enacted, actively produced and reinforced by national performances in the present.
4. As political legitimacy is at stake in the national past, the official space of national memory is a social construction that depends more upon agendas than upon historical accuracy, while social memories are seldom warranted legitimate recognition. Modern, rationalist frameworks for investigating the past do not recognize bodily memory and lived experience as a legitimate source of historical knowledge, alienating the embodied historical subjectivities lived in socialism.
5. Considering the political stakes and conflicts of interests embedded in the national past, alternative, de-nationalized, hybridized, socially-embedded and reflexive approaches to memorial curation, historical mediation and cultural depiction offer new perspectives in enabling the intersubjective historical understanding demanded by an inter-governmental and intercultural world.

This analysis follows an interdisciplinary approach in its *research methodology* using a number of case studies to illustrate broader points. As representations are always selective, the starting point for this investigation was the contradictory nature of various types of representations and interpretations related to national identity in the former Yugoslav region. Since a fundamental element of this research focuses on the capricious and indeed, constructed nature of official knowledge and history at the hence of changing forms of governance, my analysis considers examples of discourse outside of conventional or official discourse. To these ends, my primary methodological approach was an exhaustive literature review of mostly English-language social science texts with wide historical and cultural frames of reference in the fields of history, sociology, anthropology, cultural theory, urban studies and political geography. A number of interviews with cultural workers in state institutions also supplemented this background, by providing a more specific and local perspective and inside institutional insights on how memory practices and the cultural production of space is influenced by changing political situations.

However, since this analysis considers the shifting terrains of officially demarcated places of national memory and their widening chasm from public social memory, it is necessary to examine more than just official discourse. Taking a more pedestrian approach, I analyze place from the standpoint of the public observer, examining actual places and spatial

representations, through a series of site visits and textual analyses of publicly circulating material. Thus, textual analysis of national self-representations was the main mode employed for exploring the mediation of national space, place and identity. Lastly, as a portion of this research concerns the role of public memory on the virtual space of the world wide web, I made use of the internet and academic materials that explore the social dimensions and creative possibilities of the internet and its potential for creative social exchange.

The *structure of the paper* is divided into 2 sections: the first section, *Altered States* looks at the social production of space and memory, cultural patrimony and nationhood by examining how spatial memory and significations were created in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The second section, *Ephemeral Monuments*, examines changing place identities, significations and national memories through case studies in the Republic of Serbia, as and more broadly, the deterritorialized and re-nationalized memory of the former state. The paper consists of the following chapters, with a conclusion chapter that deliberates about new directions and possibilities in exploring intercultural conceptions of historical learning.

**Chapter 1: Space and State** explores the politics of and various cultural approaches towards spatial memory in changing nation states

**Chapter 2: Yugoslavia: A Place in Between** looks at the national production of meanings, memory and places during Socialist Yugoslavia

**Chapter 3: Representations of Space** analyzes official representations of space related to national memory, considering the Serbian National Institute for Cultural Monuments.

**Chapter 4: Spatial Practice** investigates changing spatial practice created by political transition, by examining the re-production of the state as exemplified by the area of Ušće.

**Chapter 5: Representational Spaces** considers an inter-subjective basis for a foundation of memory-practice and the creative collective production of historical knowledge.

**Chapter 6: Conclusion and Recommendations** examines possible new directions in addressing the conflicts of spatial memory, and recommends a number of conceptual and pragmatic approaches.

## SECTION I: *Altered States*

To begin this analysis, Section I: *Altered States* examines the shifting relationships between nationality, cultural memory and space. Examining the ways that space is signified and invested with socio-cultural, historical and national meanings we will first explore theoretical concerns relating to the politics of spatial memory. Then we will glance at the changing politics of spatial memory in the broader post-socialist context, before investigating the characteristics and positioning of Socialist Yugoslavia's spatial memory and orientation.

Throughout this analysis, we will examine the practice of nations creating power, meaning and notions of social unity or difference through their signification of physical spaces with political meanings and socio-cultural values. We begin our exploration of national memory by the critical assertion that states do not merely exist as natural conditions, but they must be *produced*. Modern nations depend upon reliable social reproduction across geographic spans of space, and intergenerational lapses of time to ensure the continuity and social survival of national memory through the active engagement of memory. To these ends nations (like other social units) make use of and deploy the complex interaction of *non-material culture*, knowledge, values, memories, beliefs and attitudes; *social processes*, actions, behavior, rituals and practice and tangible *material objects*, symbols and artifacts. The shifting interactions between these elements, which recognizes temporal and situational factors, acknowledge that society's attitudes and beliefs towards its actions and artifacts change with contexts, while meanings, significance and content reified in objects is likewise situational and socially-constituted.<sup>4</sup> In chapter 1, we explore how nations, through 'national values' and ideologies, national rituals and performances, and national cultural property, articulate, disseminate, produce and reproduce the nationalized systems of signification, which interpret the past and impact the future.

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<sup>4</sup> Appadurai, Arjun. "Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value." *The Social life of things: Commodities in cultural perspective*, Arjun Appadurai, ed. Cambridge University Press, 1986.

# CH 1 SPACE AND STATE

## 1.1 LIEUX DE MEMOIRE: SITES OF MEMORY

In a world of converging states and spaces, culture and its relations to the past are involved in the subsequent conjoinment of differing memories that come into play when considering the symbolic and physical aspects of cultural landscape. Sites of memory, as they have been notably explored by Pierre Nora, are sites of frozen time where “memory crystallizes” and “secrets itself at a particular historical moment”. With the acceleration of modernity and disappearance of the historical past, there are *lieux de memoire*, sites of memory, in place of *milieux de memoire*, real environments of memory.<sup>5</sup> Thus, these spaces serve as evidentiary remains and symbolic reminders of the past, after the original context has long since changed. Vernacular and formally-recognized sites, monuments, landmarks, buildings, spaces, spatial ensembles, landscapes and places alike become containers for symbolic contents of experience, memory and associations, which dwell inside of symbolic objects. Though these meanings may be formally recognized or remain private and invisible, these semiotic considerations of landscape reveal that most any environment has a cultural or historical value. As we will later explore, competing types of meaning and memory can be embodied in the same space, which also take shape in various modes of representation, which may be only mental representations. However, modern memory, on the other hand, is archival: “it relies entirely on the materiality of the trace, the immediacy of the recording, the visibility of the image.”<sup>6</sup> Thus, the dialectic between actual places and their mental representation, remembrance and cultural transmission opens up questions not only about the significance and symbolization of sites, but about the *social processes of their representation*.

Exploring modern memory, Nora examines the nationalization of memory and its exacting documentation, along with sites interpreted in light of national events and narratives, as a chasm has formed between this archival memory and other modes of historic remembering. Across multiple systems of governance these narratives, however correct, methodologically perfect and scientific they may appear, come into conflict with other national narratives which also claim the same legitimacy. Likewise, in the condition of changing states, the transformation of historical narrative and remaking of its spaces of

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<sup>5</sup> Nora, Pierre. “Between History and Memory: Les Lieux De Memoire.” *Representations*, 26, 1989. University of California. p.7

<sup>6</sup> Nora, Pierre. “Between History and Memory: Les Lieux De Memoire.” *Representations*, 26, 1989. University of California. p.13

memory offers a unique opportunity to explore the same sites across different political, cultural, economic and social systems.

## 1.2 PUBLIC PASTS: SOCIAL MEMORY AND NATIONAL NARRATIVES

The growth of the nation-state and its modern modes of knowledge-production has had a fundamental influence in not just changing the course of history, but importantly, has created a different mode of *historical perception*. National histories and meta-narratives in the modern states constituted and created new concepts of selfhood, new social bodies and new relationships to the past. Pierre Nora, among others, has explored the historically-recent obsession with and explosion of memory culture, invested in the processes of documentation, preservation and validation of the national past, and its evidentiary, written and rationalized permutations. The intellectual heritage of the enlightenment has altered how knowledge is constituted and has left the lasting impression of rationalized approaches towards the past, to be regarded with absolute certainty and without interpretative leeway or space for humor, paradox or doubt, as history takes the form of a monolith. The growth of the nation has created the dominance of a bureaucratized memory culture, connected to state institutions, activities and agenda as the processes of production and topics of historical knowledge created as they pass through regimes of memory constructed by the state apparatus. Such developments also reposition informal memory practices, which are typically intimate and familiar with no need for documentation, evidence or written elaboration.

Hodgkin and Radstone recognize *Regimes of Memory* created by social and political orders to filter, classify or censor selected aspects of the past or selected pasts altogether.<sup>7</sup> Political and social orders, they examine, restrict memorial contemplation of particular pasts that bring up uncomfortable issues or question the legitimacy or morality of those in power. These regimes also omit and constrict the domain of official memorial representations and forms of memorial expressions. These regimes of memory filter and constitute the dominant narrative, which typically suppresses the existence or representation of competing groups and competing ways towards approaching the past. Importantly, regimes of memory also restrict *modes* of historical expression, which also limit, omit, censor, ignore or dismiss performances and transmissions of memory that do not fit the standards of the reigning regime of memory and its ways of constituting legitimate knowledge. The concept of bodily memory, for

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<sup>7</sup> Hodgkin, Katherine and Susannah Radstone, ed. *Regimes of Memory*. London: Routledge, 2011.

example, is recognized and given legitimacy across traditional societies but is discounted in the Western frame of epistemology, which instead reaffirms and insists upon the mind-body split. Indeed the question of bodily experience and social memory has come under scrutiny in the modern world, which is based upon ‘objective’ readings of the past via masses of documents, evidences, records and discourses, and which similarly dismiss the direct lived experiences and reflections of historical subjects.

The split between informal social ‘memory’ and official ‘history’ has been thoroughly examined by many scholars in the field of memory studies. In his books *How Societies Remember* and *How the West Forgets*, Paul Connerton explores the cultural variances in ways societies remember their pasts, analyzing both traditional societies and modern nation states. By approaching memory in terms of social performance and transmission, rather than in terms of historical paraphernalia, he recognizes the social and *non-material basis* of cultural memory common in traditional societies which express memory through *performances* of the body, social *rituals* and *activities* aimed at memorial transmission. As Connerton’s cultural comparative reading of memorial practices illustrates, the apparatus of the state and its forms of knowledge production are crucial elements influencing historic understanding. Thus, across social systems, we witness culturally-variable strategic responses to handling and managing the existential task socio-cultural perpetuity and transmission over time and space, that are influenced by different goals, values, motivations, purposes and interests, in which cultural memory may range from serving personal, perhaps ancestral functions to national political ones.

The question of social memory and personal participation is a relevant concern in modern industrial nations, with a complex organization of labor, in which cultural memory is bureaucratized and channeled through institutions. In the logic of this system, state organs and institutions are entrusted to secure and safeguard the knowledge base of a society, and are responsible for presiding over public memory. National institutions such as museums, libraries, archives and national academies produce, support and preside over a base of knowledge regarding the nation, its conservation and perpetuity. In this ideal model, nations and national institutions are to be viewed as entrusted and authoritative experts, who have the best interest of the public in mind and act on the will of the national public. The growth of the managerial society has led to a memory culture where historical professionals in a large and complex society are trusted to remember for ‘us’, and represent ‘our’ memories, as memory has become a specialized occupation fit for experts, tied to national systems of knowledge-production. On the other hand, social memory and non-national memorial culture does not

operate within a national legal or occupational system, as it is practiced informally, and open to participation, authorship, improvisation, and new directions with a flexible framework. Such informal memory systems also validate knowledge and perform the past in ways that are not literal or based upon documentation within a bureaucratized system based upon evidence-collection, but engage the imaginative capabilities of human's sensorial experience with one's cultural and historical environment. These memory cultures serve different functions and have different publics, but in an ever-integrated world, these spheres are connecting in new ways as the ideal unified bond between 'society' and 'nation' begins to unravel. We may ask the question of "which public?" as we note the presence of plural and intersecting types of diverse public social bodies and forms of public governance that not singular nor homogenous, as nations, nationals, national institutions and ideas are migrating off of their state's territory in new and unprecedented ways. With this comes the critical question of to which people, to which cultures and, if at all, to which nations are cultural custodians and managers of memory are liable to? Who, and how, do they represent?

### 1.3 LEFEBVRE'S THEORY OF SPACE

Considering not memory conceived broadly in the abstract, but instead the *memory of national territory*, with its spaces, peoples and pasts, new questions arise about historical representation as nations come to interpret the pasts of spaces that have been encompassed by many different forms of social organization. Though the pasts and meanings of certain places, sites and objects may appear self-evident or obvious, they should not, however, be taken for granted. These meanings, images, significations and forms of knowledge had to not only be socially constructed, but be disseminated and reproduced throughout society. As 'objective' attitudes towards the material world have been replaced by phenomenological perspectives in social science research over the past decades, historical perspectives can likewise profit from a multitude of disparate understandings, rather than a singular, unified or coherent understanding, as we can note how historical observations are not 'objective' but are in fact socially constructed, and are indeed *historical perspectives*.

The critical question of the social production of meaning comes into play with space, a concept first recognized by Husserl. Edmund Husserl was the first major philosopher to overturn fundamental elements of Cartesian modern ways of perceiving, posing that meanings do not *emanate* from objects, but are instead perceived and constructed by subjects. The fundamental contributions and phenomenological perspectives of Husserl were built upon and expanded by Maurice Merlot-Ponty, Sartre and also Heidegger, a student of his.

Phenomenological perspectives have reoriented the way we approach these very concepts of space, objects and history, as these considerations beg us to reconsider the process by which we attach meanings to and actively produce our conceptions of objects.

Recent scholarship reflects that space is indeed not a passive element, subject to political control, but rather the social production and activation of space is a *constitutive* element in the social relations of production with a society. Michel Foucault has demonstrated that the social control of space is a productive force in the discipline of modern society. Work by critical geographers and scholars, notably Henri LeFebvre, David Harvey and Edward Soja reveal that even this conception of space is a product of social relations, itself an intellectual outgrowth of capitalist expansionism in a global marketplace that produces homogenizing effects. While these perspectives emphasize the oppressive role of the modern state in how it orders social space, DeLeuze and Guattari have reflected on the recursive homogenizing and differentiating processes of space, which recognize alternatives to authoritarian determinism. Such recent theoretical insights, including those of Henri LeFebvre offer new understandings of politics, economics, globalization and culture in a world that is swiftly moving in unanticipated directions.

The groundbreaking work of Henri LeFebvre examined space as a critical component in and indeed a product of a society's social-productive relations as his work has left a lasting influence. With the publication of *The Production of Space* in 1974, the French intellectual pioneered and opened debates about the relationships between space, state, territory and capitalism. He is notable in his elaborated opposition of the entire Cartesian tradition to consider space not as an a priori, fixed, concrete entity, but as a particular secretion of a society's specific social relations. Building on the work of Husserl, LeFebvre recognized bodily inhabitation, experience and perception as a key way that space is produced. Many contemporary philosophers and geographers have continued to build upon the work of LeFebvre, who reoriented discussions about space in new directions. His influence was felt stronger in some contexts for his support of *autogestion, or worker self-management*, which were influential in the political economy and urban design for a number of governments, including that of socialist Yugoslavia.<sup>8</sup> With an enduring influence, LeFebvre's major theoretical contribution was on the social construction of space.

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<sup>8</sup> Sabine Bitter and Helmut Weber. *Autogestion, or Henri LeFebvre in New Belgrade*. Berlin, Sternberg Press, 2009.

LeFebvre asserts that every society produces its own space, which connects society's mental space and modes of knowledge and representation to its physical and social space that is lived and also imagined. Space, in this view, is not a universal ordering scheme, but rather, "it subsumes things produced and encompasses their interrelationships in their coexistence and simultaneity—their (relative) order and/or (relative) disorder."<sup>9</sup> His work also implicates the manufacture of 'objective' forms of knowledge, as he acknowledges the necessary socio-spatial subjectivities of its creators. Examining the spaces of various historical societies, LeFebvre noted that space is at once "field of action" and a "basis of action" that encompasses both actualities and potentialities simultaneously.<sup>10</sup> A society's mode of production, he found, is heavily related to the space it secretes, or otherwise produces, as concepts of 'making' 'doing' and 'being' are one in the same. At the same time space is a social product, or a complex social construction (based on values, and the social production of meanings) which affects spatial practices and perceptions. The production of social space is comprised of the biological reproduction (the family), the reproduction of labor power, and the reproduction of the social relations of production.

By examining space as a byproduct of social relations, especially of a society's relations of production, LeFebvre considered the production of space in modern Western capitalist societies. Criticizing the notion of empty space and the Cartesian matrix which has enabled modern Western capitalist relations of production, he identifies that it is based in its core on its insistence of so-called 'abstract space'. He examines "abstract space", a mental space without objects, as a bi-product of modern knowledge-power relations, and as a form of space that engenders global spatial domination in synchronicity with the capitalist project. Space, he examines, and particularly its representation is commanded by a hegemonic class in any society to reproduce its dominance. Control of space, and its modes of social production is the key way that power is concretized as it is subjected to increased managerial control in modern nations, who seize it as a strategic medium. LeFebvre notes, as Nora later elaborated, moves in modernity for how life-as-lived have transformed into life-as-representation and tendencies in abstraction. LeFebvre investigates a move of Western society towards spaces of remembrance, in sync with the project of modernity, as he criticizes the Western bias to treat representation and its exacting documentation as reality itself.

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<sup>9</sup> Lefebvre, Henri. *The Production of Space*. Donald Nicholson-Smith, trans. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1974. p 73

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* p 191

Though LeFebvre recognized the distinctiveness of every society's space, he did as well develop a number of conceptual distinctions for examining space across different social systems. In *The Production of Space*, he marks a historical move from 'absolute space' marked by natural space, continuity, unity and coherence, to a historical breach of a time of 'abstract space,' related to modernity. Marking a distinction between officially-conceived abstract space, premised on order, and space in its actual social performance, practice and production he breaks down 'space,' conceived in the abstract, into discernable elements. A key contribution of LeFebvre to debates about space is his separation of the conceived reality of *spatial discourse*, from the lived and perceived reality derived from *spatial practice*. In doing this, LeFebvre's argument shifted the focus from space as a type of object in itself, to the social processes and factors of its production. He provides three different layers by which we can examine space, focusing on the contradictory, conflictual, and ultimately political character of the processes of production of space:

#### LEFEBVRE'S SPATIAL TRIAD

LeFebvre's conceptual triad is useful to help understand the dynamics of changes of state, related to their places of memory and sites of national interest. In sync with his theory, space is produced through the interaction of these 3 elements:

- *Representations of Space*
- *Spatial Practice*
- *Representational Spaces*

#### REPRESENTATIONS OF SPACE

As outlined by LeFebvre, representations of space (otherwise known as spatial representations) are spaces as they are conceived, prescribed, ordered and calculated, and are the space of the dominant class in any society. This is the space of philosophers, architects, planners and social engineers, who co-opt space to conceive and produce a social order. This is conceptualized space without life, including canons, monumental space, maps and plans, transport and communications systems, information conveyed by images and signs and verbal signs that confer particular definitions and conceptions onto pre-existing objects or construct space anew. Representations of space include the conception and depiction of physical, social and natural environments that conceive, disseminate and validate particular values and meanings. In modernity, they often take the form of plans or orders to be executed and are

often abstract in nature. They may imply the propensity to utilize resources for spatial reconfiguration or exploration and thus social-economic power. Representations of space can be oriented differently for the consumption and use of various groups or targets, latent with types of often overlooked meanings. These representations of space do not appear as sinister discourse, but rather, their permutations are banal, accepted and quotidian. The values, historical conceptions and constructions of identity of spatial representations may be mediate on maps, textbooks on national history, films or promotional tourist brochures. Representations of space depict, envision, and act to construct a society's socially and politically legitimate space and orient the direction of ideals. They are prescriptive, and about creating order are a medium for objects, an object in itself, and the locus of objectification of strategic plans, which serve to confer legitimacy to a series of relations.

#### NATIONAL SPATIAL REPRESENTATIONS

Representations of space are a critical part of the knowledge-power machinery of the modern industrial state. The power of official representations of space is one way the state claims ownership over its territory and consecrates its identity. Spatial representations of the state are laced with and constitute knowledge, from epistemological regimes that bear pedagogical authority to disseminate values, prescribe and enforce a social order, as they legitimate state's totalistic ownership and singular claim of territory.

The semiotic realm of representation also concerns the ways in which meanings of place are produced, authenticated and socially-disseminated through an interpretive machinery that implicates political power and its property that it constitutes as its subjects. Representation becomes political and reflected as reality, as it "proceeds by strategic highlighting, selecting samples and multiplying examples."<sup>11</sup> Space becomes at once a medium for power, and also a semiotic realm, in which processes of signification pass through the state's ordering filter. Representations of space are what make spaces known and give them social currency, meaning and value, as terrain becomes signified with national meanings. LeFebvre notes how spatial representations are the space of the dominant class of any society, who are in some way in collusion with, or come to constitute socially legitimate authorities. These national socially distributed through state organs in forms of educational curriculums, PR campaigns, websites, maps, travel guides, television programs, architectural

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<sup>11</sup> Pierre Nora. "Between History and Memory: Les Lieux De Memoire." *Representations*, 26, 1989. University of California. p 17

diagrams or film, as physical spaces become mediated in terms that are typically favorable to national objectives.

*Representations of national space have symbolic political functions for nation-building that naturalize state power such as: legitimizing founding origins; evidential significance to events in national meta-narrative; representation of past or present social communities that denote belonging and entitlement—who rightfully belongs, owns or claims the area, and who is alien and who does not belong and is exempted from feelings or statuses of entitlement and certain rights; claiming rights to political proprietorship through descendents or inheritance; pedagogical production of a national knowledge base as a type of canon used for the production of political subjects; national position-taking, which situates society in relation to external historic and geographic space and contexts through extra-national references*

#### SPATIAL PRACTICE

The realm of spatial practice encompasses the empirically observable dialogic engagement between social process and the physical environment. It refers to human activities that construct a place and its meanings, and recursively how these places influence human activities. Spatial practice is space as it is appropriated and constitutive of social relations and processes, which have socially productive and reproductive functions. At once product and process, “actions of social practice are expressible, but not explicable through discourse. They are, precisely, acted, and not read.”<sup>12</sup>

A society’s spatial practices in the form of activities, practices, work, actions, rhythms, neglect, destruction or indifference create an amalgam of actions. Spatial practice need not be unitary, conscious or coherent, as activities evidence themselves into forms, whether intentionally symbolic or not. Spatial practice deviates from the neatly formulaic conceptions calculated in representations of space, as its activity exceeds capacity for representation, and indeed often bears marginal attention to officially produced spatial representations. Spatial practice is the direct embodied engagement with space that informs its symbolic signification, that activates space as a process, a medium for action, rather than conceiving it as a set object. Spatial practice is both stage and receptacle for representations of space and representational spaces. However, spatial practices, can and do unwittingly contribute to, indeed ground, the social production of place, regardless if these are depicted into the domain of spatial

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<sup>12</sup> Lefebvre, Henri. *The Production of Space*. Donald Nicholson-Smith, trans. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1974. p 222

representation. They bear an emancipatory potential, through activities that interfere with and challenge the dominant schemes that produce the established meaning and order of a place, or even bear no mind to prescribed or proscribed boundaries.<sup>13</sup> Spatial practice is likewise the realm of negotiation of power, between people and their modes of political, social or economic production, as physical action is the interface between social and personal abstractions. This is the essential material level of space, which is the necessary base from which representations of space emanate, and in which spatial subjectivities (representational spaces) are situated. Spaces can be practiced, enacted and produced in conflicting and incoherent ways, and are conditioned and interpreted by the social relations and processes that surround them.

#### NATIONAL SPATIAL PRACTICES

Spatial practices may become 'nationalized' in a number of ways as activities in a particular space link and synchronize that place with particular meanings, or affiliations with community or nationhood. Though these practices are temporal events, the meanings that they create are often long-lasting. Such examples of national spatial practices include national ceremonies, invented traditions, groundbreaking ceremonies at memorials, or mundane acts such as hanging a national flag, singing an anthem, or visiting a particular site. These involve the bodily participation of individuals whose social bodies are reworked into the body of the state. Through eliciting bodily engagement and direct involvement, they engage people in symbolic behaviors in which group identities are formed, solidified or contested. Routine symbolic behaviors, actions and rituals are important for defining and stabilizing national identity, and the area of such national spatial practices are a key area for action for oppositional groups that seek to challenge the current state of affairs.<sup>14</sup> Spatial practice has implications for cultural identity politics, as forms of symbolic contestation are situated between the real practices of individuals and the official doctrines of the state.

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<sup>13</sup> De Certeau's concept of 'pedestrian speech acts' is one modality of spatial practice, which neither recognizes for social prescriptions, nor rebels them while it creates its autonomous sphere of action. De Certeau, Michel. *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Trans. Steven F. Rendall. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984.

<sup>14</sup> Pavlaković, Vjeran. "Deifying the Defeated: Commemorating Bleiburg since 1990." *L'Europe en formation*. N. 357. Automne 2010 p3

## REPRESENTATIONAL SPACES

LeFevbre's conception of representational spaces is a more or less subjective realm, which generally resists depiction as an 'object' made visible for analysis. Representational spaces appear as they are lived and conceived, and simply exist, as the mind takes its own individualized impression of space, regardless of what is socially deemed correct or proper, as they are embedded with complex symbolisms, signs and meanings that do not follow an order, logic or rationality. They are psychological forms of signification, inflected with emotional resonances and personal attachments. These spaces are often coded or linked to the clandestine or underground side of social life, and also to mythic realms of art, births, and the sacred. They are the often-incoherent space of typically non-verbal signs and symbols, and associated meanings and significations without concepts, calculations or analysis. Representational spaces obey no rules of consistency or cohesiveness, they simply are. These are the spaces of subjectivity, that is, they are formed by the everyday life and activities of "users" or inhabitants of physical space that is imposing and generally imposed, of social subjects of space.<sup>15</sup> These are the undersides of spaces dominated by order, and hence are passively experienced spaces, making symbolic use of its objects.

Representational spaces are mostly alive and in the present (memory and consciousness) though they refer to forms that have been previously signified. They depend on 'users' pre-existing knowledge and experience to become comprehensible. In opposition to firm, concrete and absolutist representations of space, representational spaces are directional, situational, relational, qualitative, fluid and dynamic, as they are generally marginal and reactive, and are situated outside of conventionalized practice. Representational spaces are excluded, absent from or otherwise not afforded representation, as they are experienced subjectively and often serve quotidian social and personal functions, rather than official ones. However, they take the form of various types of expression, in the form of music, dreams, art, literature or symbolisms. Representational spaces have a subaltern status as they are generally reactive and private, rather than proactive and public. Manifesting themselves through complex and disordered meanings, signs and symbols, they are difficult to communicate, express or illustrate.

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<sup>15</sup> Henri Lefebvre. *The Production of Space*. Donald Nicholson-Smith, trans. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1974. p 23

## NATIONALIZED REPRESENTATIONAL SPACES

Nationalized Representational Spaces evidence the ways that states colonize and rule the terrain of the subconscious of political subjects. Derived from both spatial representations and spatial practice, representational spaces may become inflected by meanings and associations originating from the state, far after the actual spaces and stimulus, or even the states that elicited the powerful presence of the nation have disappeared. Nationalized representational spaces evidence the presence of the state in the personal mind, filtered through national signs, symbolisms, logics, images, impressions and mental maps of a place that we rely on to diagram and comprehend our world.

Memories of outmoded political systems operate in the area or representational spaces. Even though a given place may be reconstituted of a new nation, spatial users read space through how it has appeared in the mind. Thus images, associations, events, feelings and memories from a previous social or political system are invoked, experienced and felt in the clandestine parts of personal memory, even if they are not warranted official recognition. In the post-Yugoslav context, many people of older generations mentally map the region in ways informed by the SFRY, even if these places are officially absent today. For example, cities famous for certain activities during SFRY evoke a similar emotional response at their mentioning, even if these spaces have since ceased to exist. Similarly, parts of urban or national geography are filled with personal and collective memory of certain events typical for Yugoslavia, for example, the city where one served in the army or images of summer at the Croatian seaside. Representational space, as spaces that continue to exist in the mind irreverent of actual and current state of a physical space, is the main domain for Yugo-nostalgia, as Chapter 5 explores. The research focus section *Ephemeral Monuments* will later apply these distinct areas of LeFebvre's conceptual triad as an analytical device to explore the dynamics of place in the context of regime change and nation-building in Yugoslavia.

### 1.4 CULTURAL POLITICS AND HISTORICAL LEGITIMACY

As a major consideration in this paper, we note the capability of objects, memories and forms of culture to move in and out of legitimacy through processes of social production. As a major issue in social change that is often ignored in the field of cultural management, we note how objects can move back and forth between consecration and desecration, as they are positioned as sacred works or defamed as vulgarities. The social production of cultural objects applies not just to spaces, but to all different types of cultural works, objects, pieces and even experiences. Bourdieu recognizes process of cultural consecration as a key way that objects

move from the world of ‘culture’ to the world of Culture, through institutional rituals in modern states.<sup>16</sup> Whether in modern states or in other types of societies, through elaborated social rituals and rites, objects are socially invested with a particular status and given recognition, as these practices reaffirm certain types of meaning, value and beliefs. Though consecrating rituals take different forms in all types of societies, in modern states, they have very distinct and predictable forms in national culture, where they are become formalized and separated from the sphere of everyday life, held as objects of regard that are protected from social change and destruction.

Along with the institutional conceptions of art and culture, we can identify similar trends with culturally-*singular objects*, that are distinct from cultural *commodities*. As Igor Kopytoff has notably recognized, commodities are not a particular type or class of object, but rather, all objects (and as he examines, even people) have a potential commodity *status*, characterized by exchangeability. As he explores, objects, as well as places, and memories, we examine, move in and out of legitimacy and through changing social statuses, as they become made fit or unfit for fluid exchange and change through their social construction. For example, one would find it unacceptable to destroy a sacred art object, or take it out of the context regarded as its rightful one. At the same time, a change in social order usually involves the processes of *desecration* of esteemed objects, in which the rules and norms governing these conventions are subject to change. While certain symbolic paraphernalia, particularly cultural heritage, underwrites forms of social, historical and political legitimacy, tumultuous moments of rupture and new social order create the conditions for previously unconsecrated cultural forms to be granted new or restored legitimacy.

As cultural objects move between different social contexts and political frameworks, their symbolic content and signification becomes subject to revision as the object’s pasts, present and futures are constructed in different ways by different nations, social subjects, authors, societies, owners and observers, who maintain different forms of perception, experience, valuation and belief. Arjun Appadurai examines that objects have no fixed value, but instead circulate through varying *Regimes of Value*. Emphasizing the importance of the socio-historic context, values may be consigned by particular social-moral systems following

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<sup>16</sup> Bourdieu, Pierre. *The Market of Symbolic Goods, Field of Cultural Production*, ed. Randal Johnson. New York: Columbia University Press. 1993. 112-141

their own ideals, values and priorities and evaluative criteria.<sup>17</sup> As the example of socialist cultural heritage illustrates, one object can embody very different types of meaning, value or status in different socio-cultural environments, which is especially relevant in the context of major social-political transformation and regime change.

### 1.5 ALTERED STATES: MATERIAL MEMORY AND POLITICAL CHANGE

As states often re-image themselves to demonstrate their change of sentiments in the midst of regime change, their treatment of the material of the past becomes a statement about the present that disseminates social perspectives and moral values, as the archival aspects of the past provide the building blocks from which to construct an image of the past. But as political systems transform (while in the meanwhile often destroying archival parts of the past) societies in the future may later find themselves regretting the near wholesale destruction of entire eras of cultural history and social memory, without the possibility of their (material) resurrection. The destruction of material culture, in both mundane and officially-sanctioned ways raises critical questions and concerns: When is it acceptable to destroy culture? Is the qualifier of political association of ‘wrongdoing’ sufficient enough merit for cultural destruction?

As a number of examples from following chapters illustrate, historical moral-evaluative components and claims for present legitimacy are significant factors in decision-making regarding the material preservation or destruction of cultural heritage objects. Furthermore, such tendencies reiterate the importance of ethics and a broad historical-cultural education in the field of cultural heritage management, as various periods, peoples and works from the past are often subjected to claims of moral glorification or indictment which put their cultural perpetuity at stake.

Despite a large emphasis on the ‘protection’ of ‘culture’ in the cultural sector, history has generally shown that massive destruction or re-hauling of symbolic infrastructure typically accompanies major social changes, which does not regard newly-outmoded objects with the particular esteem and protection of the classificatory label of ‘culture’. With this in mind, the continual insistence on safe preservation of culture, widely conceived, is perhaps a misguided way to approach societies as they are in the process of redefining their needs and renegotiating their futures. Through observation and projective declarations of ‘needs,’

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<sup>17</sup> Appadurai, Arjun. “Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value.” *The Social life of things: Commodities in cultural perspective*, Arjun Appadurai, ed. Cambridge University Press, 1986.

paternalistic decision making of what ‘should be’ may not match newly adopted value and belief system, which are often in the process of negotiation for some period after social change has begun. Societal change raises concerns about the politics of protection, as the established system of laws, rules and logic becomes likewise subject to scrutiny. How do we allow for the socially conventional processes of cultural desecration under normative social change, while at the same time, safeguarding against the wholesale destruction of entire eras of the past?

The fall of the Soviet Union and more generally, state socialism was one of the largest political transformations occurring in the last decades, and poses interesting questions about the politics of destruction, oblivion and cultural change in modern nations. The post-socialist situation warrants reconsideration of the conventional ideas, attitudes and beliefs about cultural change, preservation and essential national identities, as these nations have been swept up in uproarious and unexpected changes.

## 1.6 SOCIALIST SITES IN CHANGING NATIONAL CONTEXTS:

### A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

After the fall of communism in Central and Eastern Europe, the majority of formerly socialist-countries dealt with their past in new ways, by moving the ‘present’ to the past through social, political and cultural practices. They redirected their futures towards the West, to be part of the social, economic and political entity of contemporary Europe. As of 2004 and 2007 ex-Soviet satellites entered the EU, marking the fall of the official nominal divide between ‘East’ and ‘West’. After a large post-socialist transformation, how did these new market democracies deal with their pasts from another political system, based upon different cultural values and economic logic? As we explore, there are a number of trends in treatment of the socialist past in the neoliberal present moment in terms of attitudes and values, practice and functionality, and physical treatment of sites with socialist meanings.

Changing practices of spatial memory reconstituted conceptions of nationhood in these states, by forging new connections, while dissolving and severing connections to the past. New EU member states reinterpreted their national identity largely in terms of European commonality, while deploying a politically strategic use of cultural heritage towards reframing the national past in European terms.<sup>1819</sup> While building national new national

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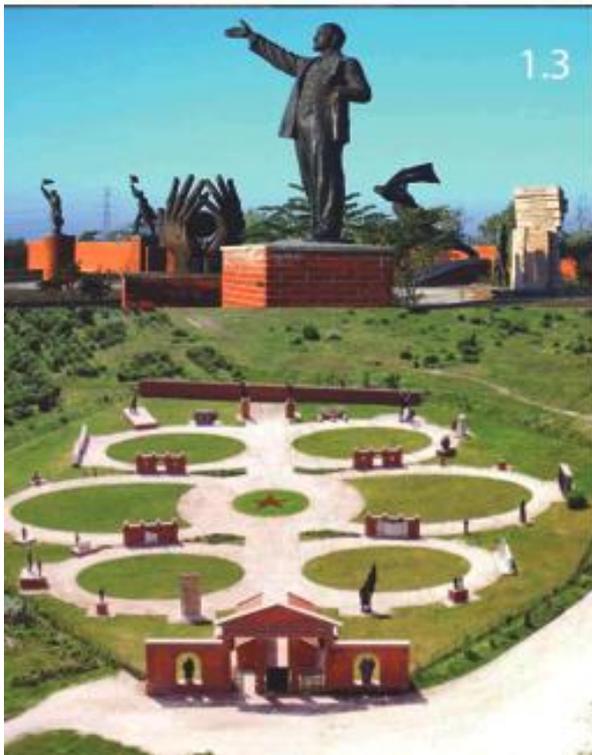
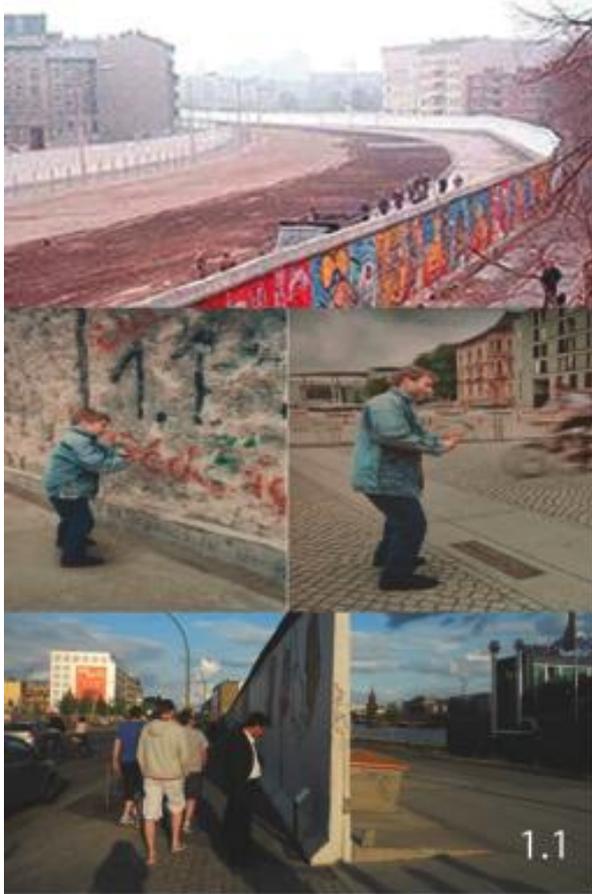
<sup>18</sup> Light, Duncan, Craig Young and Marcus Czepczynski. *Cultural Heritage and Tourism in the Developing World: A Regional Perspective*, Ch 13: Heritage tourism in Central and Eastern Europe.

identity in European terms, by focusing on ‘European’ historic sites and places, markers of the communist past were likewise subject to different treatments and social status, where they were destroyed, ignored, commercially exploited, forgotten, memorialized, desecrated or otherwise not warranted status.<sup>20</sup> However, in their path towards ‘entering Europe’ in making it through transition, post-socialist and transition states have their own distinctive trends and patterns in the way that revised socialist past with relevance to its future goals of membership and spatial belonging in the European political and cultural community. As we examine, various nations adopted their own strategies in reconstituting ‘Communist’ territorial space, national history, cultural heritage and landscapes as part of the neo-liberal and democratic ‘European’ continent.

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<sup>19</sup> Campeanu, Claudia Nicoleta. “Material desires: cultural production, post-socialist transformations and heritage tourism in a Transylvanian town.” University of Texas: Austin, 2008.

<sup>20</sup> Light and Young assert that there is overemphasis on ‘destruction’ of the socialist past, and the greater trend is the migration of memory to new places, as there has been a wide variability of treatments towards this past. Light, Duncan, Craig Young. Reconfiguring Socialist Urban Landscapes: The ‘Left-Over’ Spaces of State-Socialism in Bucharest. *Human Geographies- Journal of Studies and Research in Human Geography* (2010) 4.1 5-16.



1.1 The Berlin Wall has experienced many changes during its lifespan

1.2 Treptower Park, Berlin

1.3 Momento Park, Budapest

1.4 Enver Hoxha Museum, Tirana

## GERMANY

Germany is the most quintessential place whose very re-spatialization epitomized and has become analogous to the end of Soviet communism itself. Following German Re-unification, the Berlin Wall has attained a mythical international status, symbolizing the artificiality and brutality of the communist regime. As the most famous communist spatial marker, it has been a fundamental part in the construction of socialist memory.

### *THE BERLIN WALL (1.1)*

The wall, existing in other parts of Germany at an earlier time eventually made its way to Berlin in 1961. Interestingly, the iron curtain once considered by some to be ‘the end of the world’ has become almost all but vanished while still yet exerting an enormous influence over the politics of Germany as a type of ghost from the past with very real social and economic effects.<sup>21</sup> Over time, increasingly few and fewer pieces of the wall remained, until now, only a number of its pieces exist in their original place, the same being true all along the former wall.<sup>22</sup> A strong memorial culture developed in Berlin, with innumerable informal memorials to the wall, which have eventually become subject to government measures. In Berlin’s cityscape, an urban memorial project marks the original perimeters of the wall, traversing the city’s streets and sidewalks. The Mauer Museum has been a place where the wall and its stories have been memorialized. The Mauerpark, with some of the largest remaining parts of the wall, has become an icon of East Berlin. Still, though the wall does not exist much in its material reality, its social, economic and political effects continue to endure.

### *TREPTOWER PARK (1.2)*

Another spatial marker of communism, Treptower Park, is interesting to examine from the perspective of inter-governmentality. In the midst of nearly complete destruction of communist statues and urban markers, Treptower park, is one of the few remaining and intact Soviet sites still standing. But by symbolizing the sinister Soviet state, how was this monument park allowed to remain standing? Interestingly, this monument signifies at the

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<sup>21</sup> Berdahl, Daphne. *Where the World Ended: Re-Unification and Identity in the German Borderland*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999.

<sup>22</sup> Some German villages wished to preserve part of the wall as part of their local history, but were dis-permitted to do so by the Federal German government. Berdahl notes the importance of boundary maintenance rituals and identification, even after reunification. Berdahl, Daphne. “Borderlands” *Where the World Ended: Re-Unification and Identity in the German Borderland*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999.

same time ‘communist’ ideas but also the progressive politics of contemporary Germany, as the park includes the Soviet War Memorial to the anti-fascist resistance. The German government oversees the maintenance of the site, under the supervision and discretion of the Russian government, as the park is protected under bi-lateral agreements.<sup>23</sup> The post-socialist politics of national cultural property still continue to be at work, as particular sites such as this one are recognized and protected as Russian cultural heritage.

Decades after the fall of the wall, battles for public memory continue in Berlin. With few remaining traces of the wall, and many historically significant sites with little material trace, there have been many debates and conflicts about that status, meaning and value of socialist memorial culture. Massive urban development and gentrification in former East Berlin is socially designating the area as a destination for international travel, investment, leisure and consumption. These spatial practices demonstrate the effects of new forms economic logic and political power and have very real spatial and social effects and compromise the integrity of how particular places were designated in the previous system. As the public, visible and spatial domain of socialist memory recedes, this appears linked to the growth for the need for socialist memory, which has become mediated through texts, objects and representations<sup>24</sup>.

Perhaps the biggest unexpected consequence of German Re-unification is the well-documented phenomenon of *Ostalgie*, nostalgia for the DDR.<sup>25</sup> Through popular films, products and culture, such as *Goodbye Lenin*, and *The Lives of Others*, themed places, vintage brands, labels and insignia, the collective remembrance of the DDR has permeated media, art, culture and moved out of the space of private memories of those who experienced socialism, but to become part of the public culture of memory.<sup>26,27</sup> In Germany, front and center of post-socialist transition, the commercial potential of the communist past has been financially exploited. *Ostalgie* has also become part of a tourism phenomenon, (Brandenburg gate, checkpoint Charlie, and other crossroads of Western and Eastern blocs) where socialist

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<sup>23</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet\\_War\\_Memorial\\_\(Treptower\\_Park\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_War_Memorial_(Treptower_Park))

<sup>24</sup> Berdahl, Daphne. “On the Social Life of Post-Socialism: Memory, Consumption, Germany.”

<sup>25</sup> Berdahl, Daphne. ‘(N)Ostalgie’ for the Present: Memory, Longing and East Germany.” *Ethnos*, Routledge. Vol 64:2 1999

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> Castillo, Greg. “Ostalgie in the house: Socialist material culture finds a retirement career.” *Varieties of Post-Socialism*, UC Berkeley. 19 March 2011.

material culture is repackaged for the neoliberal paradigm, and is sold in various markets, to curious people who wish to gaze upon this era in history<sup>28</sup>. As we continue to see in different cases, the capricious economic values and social attitudes of the present influence the interpretations of the past.

## HUNGARY

While Germany's post-socialist experience is marked by a celebratory renaissance of unification, attracting the world's attention and streams of income, meanwhile profiting off of the global cultural fascination for the DDR, Hungary has approached its socialist past quite differently. In Hungary, there are few positive overtones about either the socialist past *or* the post-socialist present, as the present moment is overshadowed by dreary layers of the past.<sup>29</sup> However unlikely, these painful pasts are commemorated, objectified, and sometimes commoditized, as looking down upon the past serves to glorify the present.

### *MOMENTO PARK (1.3)*

One such place that inscribes such attitudes is Budapest's Momento Park, a cemetery to state socialism. It is filled with statues from the communist period, located as an attraction park at the fringes of the city, where it serves the functions as a sort of cultural graveyard. By removing the in-situ elements of socialist material culture from their position in everyday life, and relegating them to a type of dead space, the creation of this park participating in the collective delineation of the present from the communist past. This is not a museum, a place to revere and respect works, but a receptacle for cultural memories that must be removed from the public sphere of everyday life.

While Hungary has marked the past as a negative, dark time to be left behind, it has however, appropriated socialist heritage as a scheme for economic development and created a way of generating profit and tourism through attractions related to the grim, communist past. Tragedy tourism for such sites as concentration camps, battlefields, torture chambers, assassination sites and other sites of atrocity have been deliberately developed as a popular and profitable underserved heritage market, an economically-efficient strategy and ethically

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<sup>28</sup> Raab, Fanny. *Heritage-Tourismus in Berlin: Die Bedeutung des sozialistischen Erbes für den Berliner Incoming Tourismus, Freizeit und Tourismusgeographie*, Universität Trier 2008.

<sup>29</sup> Ratz, Tamara. "Socialist heritage in Hungarian tourism-innovation, interpretation and identity." *ERTR Review of Tourism Research*.

questionable model for the commodification of heritage<sup>30</sup> which includes public auctions for former state-owned goods.<sup>31</sup> Soviet kitsch and communist heritage tourism are established as sub-genres of various industries. The Museum of Terror, various cultural tourism offerings, and state auctions of socialist material culture, mark this era as something to keep far away, but are yet a profitable enterprise in the selling away of its history.<sup>32</sup>

## ALBANIA

In Albania, a non-Soviet example, we see that signs and historical markers of its own communist legacy are removed and replaced by new signs and symbols that mark the nation as democratic, modern and economically powerful. This approach applies to historically and architecturally significant sites as well.

### *ENVER HOXHA MUSEUM (1.4)*

In Tirana, the iconic monument, a museum in fact, to the communist leader Enver Hoxha, colloquially known as ‘Piramida,’ is scheduled for demolition by its current democratic government, with plans for a new parliament building to be built in its place in a gesture of symbolic domination. The building served as a cultural center and its place in the city and country’s cultural and social history is significant, and issue that is causing tensions between the government and the public. Thousands of citizens have taken action and written petitions to prevent its demolition.<sup>33</sup> Designed by Hoxha’s daughter, Piramida had an innovative, distinctive and iconic modernist form. The building is noteworthy for its iconic presence in the urban landscape, visionary architectural style, cultural history, and its symbolism of the communist era. Despite the UNESCO opposition to demolition plans, the petitions of leading world architects and youth activist groups who appreciate the building’s urban presence, the city’s leadership plans to destroy one of the most potent and historically-significant remaining signs of the former communist regime.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Fairclough, Gordon and Veronika Gulyas. “An Auction of Budapest’s Bourgeoisie Puts Lenin on the Communist Block: Lots of Socialist Kitsch Aid a Toxic Cleanup As Hungary Bids Adieu to an ‘Extinct Era’ . 9 December, 2010. The Wall Street Journal.

<sup>32</sup> Ratz, Tamara. “Socialst heritage in Hungarian tourism-innovation, interpretation and identity.” ERTR Review of Tourism Research.

<sup>33</sup> Koci, Jonilda. “Wrangle growing over Tirana’s pyramid” Southeast European Times. 3 Aug 2011

<sup>34</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enver\\_Hoxha\\_Museum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enver_Hoxha_Museum)

The general tendencies in remaking the place identity of Albania and its capital are notably different from former Soviet satellites, and involve little to no acknowledgement of the communist period in any sense. Strategic plans for re-branding the city places emphasis on the future, not the past, as the country seeks to attract international attention and investment. Destruction and removal of spaces of the past, rather than preservation, recognition or commodification is the general tendency. Heavy investment has gone into the re-imagining of the country's capital through urban redevelopment schemes which place a strong emphasis on new spaces and architecture. Involving both historical destruction and intensive development schemes, Tirana seeks to re-brand itself as a place that does not sympathize with the old system and is friendly towards international business community, finance and investment.

### 1.7 DIVIDING PAST AND PRESENT:

#### HISTORICAL STRATEGIES, CULTURAL HERITAGE AND POST-SOCIALISM

A number of general strategies and trends have developed as historical responses to political-social transformation caused by the end of socialism, as cultural objects entered a new social context:

##### POST-SOCIALIST ICONOCLASM

A common trend, especially towards structures such as public monuments, structures and sites of memory that cemented socialist notions of space identity, was their utter destruction. As has been widely documented, statues, insignia, and monuments celebrating communist heroes or history were rapidly, often brutally removed. These objects were blamed for political orders, and charged for their crimes as they were desecrated and removed from original contexts, typically without an open debate if these works should be respected or regarded for their historical, social, aesthetic or cultural values.

##### EUROPEANIZATION OF MEMORY

Another major response to political transformation has been the emphasis of 'European' history, which selects sites of cultural history and historical events as the focus for tourism development and solidifying national notions of identity in a logic coherent with European Integration. Sites with diverse history and multifaceted pasts have come to be

interpreted in European terms, where the ‘European’ parts of their past are emphasized.<sup>35</sup> City branding and country branding campaigns often made thorough use of this strategy, and promote ‘European’ sites to make tourists feel more safe and welcome, to overcome past stigma and to present these countries as “same” rather than “other”.<sup>36</sup> Preferences for architectural styles likewise favor particular types of styles along these lines, as architecture deriving from the Soviet era is mostly absent in public representations.

#### CRISES OF VALUE: SOCIALIST HERITAGE IN THE NEOLIBERAL ORDER

As the forces of the market take over in Central and Eastern Europe, socialist history is becoming converted into its new social and political context in a market-based democracy. While socialist material culture may not always be removed, it is collected, consolidated and reintroduced under a new regime of consumption and political vindication. If socialist cultural heritage is to be publicly presented, it is in a way that is ideologically “safe” and non-threatening, using musealization or commercialization strategies, or to make moral-declarative statements about the past.<sup>37</sup> Another general trend in theme-parking and simulation of the socialist past indicates the degree of estrangement of once-socialist reality from contemporary capitalist everyday life. From selling of Soviet badges and regalia in East Berlin, to Budapest’s Statue park and from Prague’s Museum of Communism and Sofia’s check-point Charlie-themed restaurant, the imagination of the socialist past has become a part of the experience economy within contemporary consumer societies.<sup>38</sup> The socialist past is neutralized as a threat, while it is contained and experienced as a consumer amusement in the market economy, within states that are ‘post-transition.’ Vintage brands, labels, designs, aesthetics, graphics, logos and insignia associated with communist times are also part of the

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<sup>35</sup> Light, Duncan 2001. *Heritage Tourism in Central and Eastern Europe*. *Cultural Heritage and Tourism in the Developing World: A Regional Perspective*. Ch 13: Heritage tourism in Central and Eastern Europe. New York, Routledge, 2009. Young, Craig. “The Socialist Past and Post-Socialist Urban Identity in Central and Eastern Europe: the case of Lodz, Poland.” *European Urban & Regional Studies*, Jan 2008 Vol. 15 Issue 1, p53-70. *Building a New Heritage: Tourism, Culture & Identity in the New Europe*, Routledge. G.J. Ashworth and P.J. Larkham, 1994.

<sup>36</sup> Light, Duncan 2001. *Heritage Tourism in Central and Eastern Europe*. *Cultural Heritage and Tourism in the Developing World: A Regional Perspective*. Ch 13: Heritage tourism in Central and Eastern Europe. New York, Routledge, 2009.

<sup>37</sup> Creed, Gerald W. “Strange Bedfellows: Socialist Nostalgia and Neoliberalism in Bulgaria.” *Communist Nostalgia*, ed. Maria Todorova and Zsuzsa Gille. Berghahn Books, 2010.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

emotional economy of post-socialism, that attract the likes of curious young consumers and old 'nostalgics' alike.<sup>39</sup> Branding and commodification of socialist heritage points to an even wider crisis of historical values that is particularly evident in transitional societies. The values of things that in socialist times were perhaps defined in essentialist-ideological terms, somehow 'above value,'<sup>40</sup> are now subject to fluctuating and arbitrary schemes of valuation, treatment and price.

While the broader post-socialist world presents interesting examples of historical representation, destruction and change, the question of the this change is different in the former Yugoslavia, which nonetheless raises questions about the social, political versus cultural motivations for destruction, neglect and change. From its geo-political position in the Cold War, to the way the state came to an end, Yugoslavia presents exceptions to more general 'post-socialist' tendencies. Likewise, the period of its 'transition' began a decade later than former Soviet satellites, all the while having to deal with the after-effects of war, including massive reconstruction, regional reconciliation and social unrest. Before examining post-Yugoslav transformations of cultural landscape, the next chapter examines the way that spaces were signified with national meanings during socialist Yugoslavia.

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<sup>39</sup> Holak, Susan. "Nostalgia in Post-Socialist Russia: Exploring Applications to Advertising Strategy." University of Michigan Center for Russia, East European & Eurasian Studies. 9 February 2010.

<sup>40</sup> Humphrey, Caroline. *The Unmaking of Soviet Life: Everyday Economies after Socialism*. New York: Cornell University Press, 2002. p 57.

## CH 2 YUGOSLAVIA: A PLACE IN BETWEEN

Socialist Yugoslavia presents a number of interesting qualities in reexamining the conception of essential national identity, particularly in changing and liminal states. The state of Socialist Yugoslavia was far from a timeless essential stable identity, but rather was created in light of surrounding geographic conditions and historic circumstances. In many ways, the national identity formed and forged by SFRY was a strategic response to external, extralocal and extranational historical conditions, and not created through indigenous creation. As this chapter explores, the inception of a unique Yugoslav identity was instantiated through historically, culturally and ideologically distinctive socio-political ideas and spatial practices, conceived against the wider backdrop provided by larger global historical contexts and events. Furthermore, spatial practices and representations signified and constituted space in ways that also reconstituted the social body, in the production of socialist citizens, dwelling in the spatial subjectivities of a distinct space of socialist Yugoslavia.

### 2.1 THE PRODUCTION OF SOCIALIST YUGOSLAVIA

Far before the advent of Socialist Yugoslavia, the expansive territory upon which it is grounded has come to embody different forms of contradiction, as the Balkan Peninsula is often conceived as a ‘bridge’ across cultures, situated between dominant paradigms of ‘East’ and ‘West,’ far away from the contrivance of unitary and homogenous national identities. Likewise, considering the historical and teleological locus upon which national historical knowledge and political legitimacy are produced, the multifaceted cultures of the Balkans present problems to the validity and coherence of unitary nations whose pasts must usurp distinct and varied historical societies.

Socialist Yugoslavia depended heavily upon the strategies of *internal unity* and *external balance* to maintain its stability.

### THE FEDERATED LANDSCAPE: IDENTITY STRATEGIES

In the aftermath of World War II, through Yugoslav Partisan resistance to fascist occupation, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was created through several successive changes of state. The modern Yugoslav state was founded in 1943, and rather than basing its national origins, birthright, identity and narratives upon the rich reserve of preceding civilizations and cultural influence, its foundation was drawn primarily from heroic wartime experiences and a ‘common’ recent history founded heavily on events and memories

occurring during the second world war. The pervasive binding state ideology of “brotherhood and unity” was derived in principle from different neighboring ethnicities united in a common fight, and this collective logic continued to exert unifying force over society long after the postwar period.

In several ways, socialist Yugoslavia was positioned between different types of historical, cultural, economic and political binaries. By breaking down and reconstituting different types of divides, Yugoslavia produced its own unit of social identification as a modern, socialist nation. Incorporating elements of pre-existing and surrounding diversity, Yugoslavia developed a unique, independent and distinctive model of political, social and economic in a secular multiethnic state. Official neutrality was the national strategy to maintain national, federal peace. However the full expression of ethnicity was suppressed and perhaps diluted as ethnic differences were institutionalized. Yugoslavia recognized aspects of Ottoman heritage as well as the Austro-Hungarian legacy in the creation of its own national heritage. In administrative affairs, both Latin and Cyrillic script were used, positioning it even linguistically between east and west. Though official secular communism reigned, it was accompanied private expressions of pre-existing Catholicism, Orthodox Christianity, Islam and traces of Judaism not wiped out during the war. With no official ethnic forms of preference or belonging, SFRY accepted many pre-existing types of historical diversity, while unifying it under collectivist ideology and converting it to secular modernity. This formed a national identity that was a kind of patchwork of various pasts, united into a common present as a strategy for internal unity against the currents of the ‘outside’ world.

#### BALANCING BETWEEN BINARIES

A second layer of ‘neutrality’ was added by Socialist Yugoslavia’s position during the Cold War. Taking an independent path to socialism, Yugoslavia made itself distinct from the Soviet Union, particularly after Tito split from Stalin in 1948. At this point, Yugoslavia developed a stronger relationship with the West, acting as a sort of buffer state between polar empires. Aside from its geo-political affiliations, it also a mixed system of political and economic governance, based upon its distinct and hybridized intellectual heritage. Under the guidance of Edvard Kardelj, Yugoslavia adopted the philosophy of a self-managed and decentralized workers society, as opposed to dominant communist concepts of centralized planning. It developed an economic model that was a type of market socialism, distinct from Western and Soviet models alike. This neutral and independent position became a central theme in Yugoslavia, as it also was a founding state of the Non-Aligned Movement, dedicated

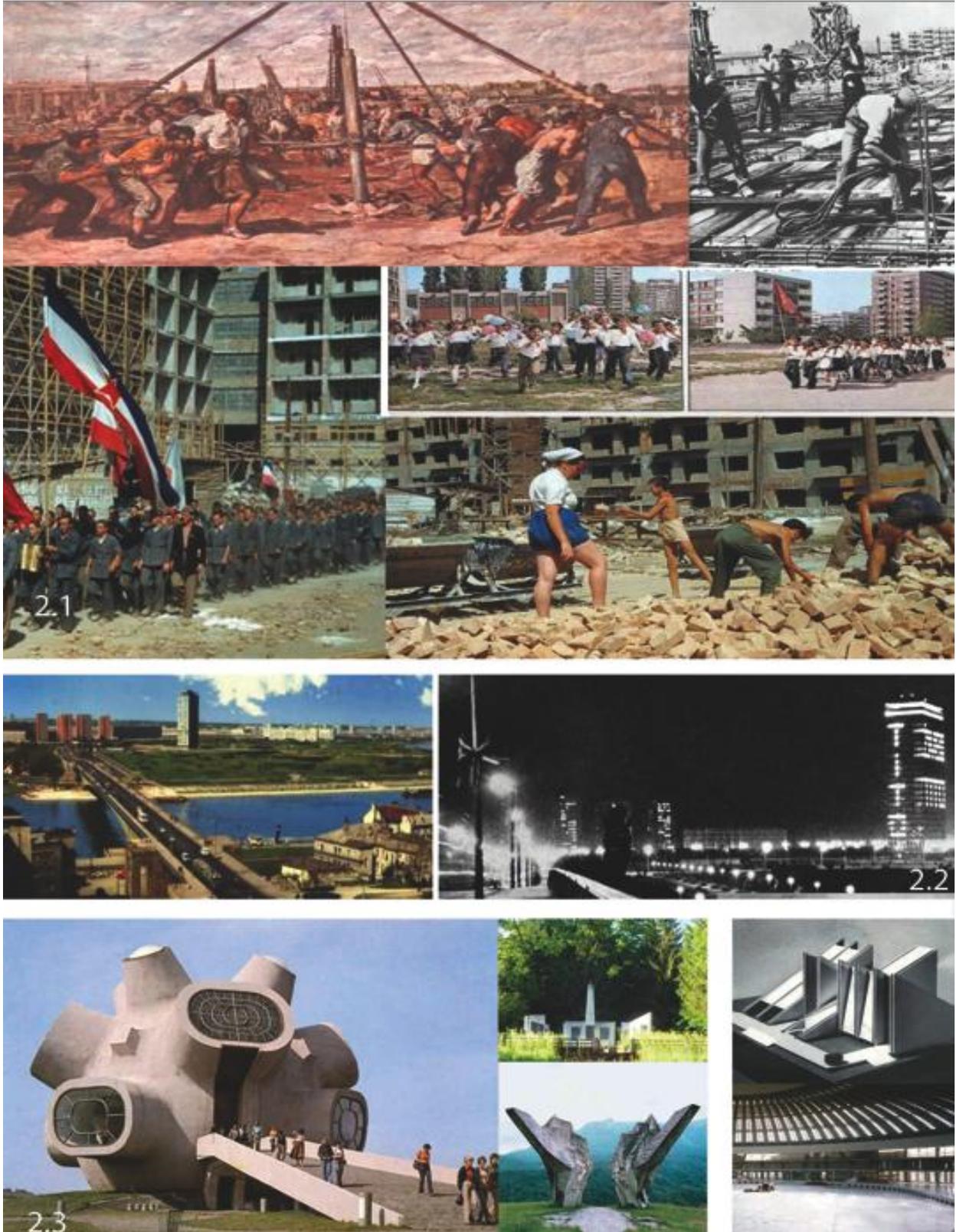
to principles of national autonomy away from supranational structures. With the first non-aligned conference held in Yugoslavia in 1961, international friendships with many newly-independent, post-colonial societies developed. In terms of alliances, friendships, shared interests and common ideals, this put Yugoslavia in a precarious and balanced position between the 'First World' 'Second World' and 'Third World'. Situated geopolitically and ideologically independent of Cold War economic, political or cultural binaries, Yugoslavia held the ambiguous position of 'non-aligned', withholding from taking sides, as the state came to develop relationship with all sides.

Yugoslavia balanced this by taking a middle ground of including all of these aspects into its identity, and creating a modern multiethnic federal republic that walked a fine line between various types of political and cultural binaries, on both republican sub-national and global supra-national levels. Balancing between contradictions and incorporating them, Yugoslavia created a distinctive national culture, with hybrid forms of ideology, culture and social organization, positioned between external balance and internal stabilization. Heavily influenced by geo-spatial identity and political strategies, the social production of space in the second Yugoslavia was influenced by internal and external symbolic politics alike.

## 2.2 YUGOSLAV SPATIAL PRACTICE AND POLITICS

The Yugoslav production of geographic, social and urban architectural space through nation-building projects were key ways that national identity took hold to become socially manifest as a coherent political and ideological program practiced in everyday life and everyday spaces. Through social processes as well as physical spaces, Socialist Yugoslav society produced its own distinctive space and dispersed its power. The combination of spatial representations, spatial practice and representational spaces were aligned to create a unity, dominance and coherence of the state that penetrated the spatial recesses of the territory as everyday sites, spaces and social life were reconfigured into the state's sphere power and social control. Social, symbolic and physical components were interlinked in the social reproduction of the Yugoslav state, in which citizens participated in the collective construction of meaning. The creation of new types of spaces were a critical part of nation-building, as newly-constructed 'public' sites and spaces served different vital symbolic, social, economic political and ideological functions in the construction and social reproduction of the Yugoslav nation. The new spaces functioned to produce a new class of socialist citizens, and furthermore, by weaving space into the activities and social life of the state, space was into a symbolic text for projecting and reading meaning in everyday life.

The initial construction of the Yugoslav state was in fact realized through the physical production and remaking of physical states, in which the new system became manifest, real and meaningful. Following World War II, Yugoslav Partisan forces dramatically remade the space of war-torn cities and shambles by reconstituting, dividing, destroying pre-existing places, repairing the shambles of war-torn cities, while also radically remaking and building its own. In addition to re-making, repairing, dividing and re-distributing spaces of cities, a central part of the socialist project was the creation of entirely 'new' cities and new models of production of an altogether new type of society, symbolically unified through the national mantra of "brotherhood and unity". This logic and ideology became spatialized through social and physical projects, which sought to destroy the old system, remake another system anew and recontextualize remaining elements of the past within a coherent symbolic and political program. Interwoven with heroic discourses about building a new society, this new logic also led to the destruction of what preceded. The post-war regeneration harnessed huge work forces and mobilized its new citizens in the social practice of building the country anew, as volunteer and worker brigades created new social bodies and formed concepts of national belonging as they also constructed many elements of cities, producing physical and social elements of national space simultaneously. A number of types of sites and spaces were critical for the social construction of Yugoslav identity and national memory.



2.1 Massive construction projects involved in building new cities entailed the direct labor of citizens, organized in new ways

2.2 Emphasis on utopian images of an ideal modern society were intertwined with new types of urbanism and architectural language

2.3 War memorials were important sites of Yugoslav memory, whose historic references were in the recent past

## NEW CITIES, NEW STATES (2.1, 2.2)

As the new Yugoslav state was intent upon physically constructing a type of a modern socialist utopia, an impossible place which was presented as possible through strategic and ideological intervention, cities were a critical component in making this vision appear a reality. Urbanization projects were a key for the social and infrastructural vision of the modern, classless state. The modernizing and intensive industrialization of the state required an urbanized productive labor force, as urbanization accomplished economic objectives and concretized the utopian visions of socialist cities. At the same time Yugoslavia, as a collective, self-managed type of workers society, needed to create places that corresponded with this idealistic model of a more decentralized governance. Throughout the federal state new cities, much like those throughout the Eastern Bloc were created with more local modifications, based on the Le Corbusier model, standardized and 'equal'. The modernist model had modifications, however, styled after self-management philosophy to allow for decentralized social functions and decision-making, in which neighborhoods were more a more autonomous unit.<sup>41</sup> The creation of new cities worked in sync with other state-building projects of industrialization and modernization, concurrent with flows of rural-to-urban migration to source the productive labor for industrializing society. Socialist Yugoslav recognized that cities and the state itself was not a *given* and rather had to be *produced*, as creating a physical utopia necessitated hard labor.

The creation of new cities, also worked in sync with other propaganda mechanisms to signify space and its construction in terms of national mythological concepts. Major urban reconstruction projects were not just about the production of a physical context for the socialist idea, but about the production of socialist citizens through their collective labor in building the state, by constructing cities and participating in major infrastructure projects. Construction of the new state was emphasized as the apex of humanity, an act both physical and meta-physical whereby builders and manual laborers became national heroes, gloriously engaged with the making the new state. Socialist progress, utopian ideals, and future-orientation were deeply enmeshed with the idea of engineering and pioneering a new space. Verbal, visual and other textual markers of the state became projected onto places, and so dispersed the presence of the national regime to specific sites and local contexts, as cities or sites took on the name of national heroes. The personality cult of Tito became the chief emplacement of national mythology, dispersed to localities throughout former Yugoslavia in

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<sup>41</sup>Differentiated Neighborhoods of New Belgrade. MSUB

images, posters, busts and statues, filling domestic spaces and public squares alike. These spatial projects served the purpose of making the national imaginary of a socialist utopia appear very real and tangible. Socialist verbal and visual insignia and symbolism overtook the names of streets and cities, reproducing these spaces within socialist terms and ideals, supporting the national credo through honoring its heroes, causes and ideas. In these ways, the mundane was remade as mystical, as state-building, place-making and style were strategically deployed to mark the presence of a distinct, modernized and modernist socialist society.

#### MODERNITY, MODERNISM AND UTOPIAN ASPIRATIONS (2.2, 2.3)

In addition to urbanization projects, the question of style contributed significantly to the construction of Yugoslav identity. Modernist purity became the visual language to embody the Yugoslav socialist project, as an architectural, artistic and stylistic mode of signifying landscape. Modernism became the official style of the state, both reflecting the distinctive Yugoslav position of affiliation and belonging in the cultural and geo-political sphere, while illustrating abstract ideological concepts.

Through these questions of external positioning and metaphoric content, the style of space became political. The official visual language of Yugoslav modernism positioned Yugoslavia within wider geo-political and cultural currents.<sup>42</sup> Though the initial foundation of Yugoslav nation-building was wrought with Stalinist imagery, narratives and themes, the Tito-Stalin split in 1948 led to a dramatic change in a different direction. As Cold War discourse directly associated aesthetic styles with political ideologies, art and architecture were critical tools in differentiating Yugoslav socialism from the Soviet Union, especially when this distancing buffer was important for its survival. Defying the traditional aesthetics of social realism, Yugoslav modernism made a clear statement in celebrating and promoting its unique type of socialism that also showed affinities for the West.<sup>43</sup> Architecture became a social and political barometer, indexing Yugoslavia's cultural affinities and by extension, political alliances, in which Internationalism had an important tool for strengthening Yugoslavia's international position. The Yugoslav appropriation of modernism in art, architecture, urban planning and the decorative arts occurred before countries in the eastern bloc, before de-Stalinization, and carried heavy implications for international relations and

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<sup>42</sup> Kulić, Vladimir. "East? West? Or Both? Foreign perceptions of architecture in Socialist Yugoslavia." *Journal of Architecture*, Feb 2009, Vol. 14 Issue 1, p129-147

<sup>43</sup> Stanković, Nevenka. "The Case of Exploited Modernism: How Yugoslav Communist used the Idea of Modern Art to Promote Political Agendas." March 2006: Routledge. *Third Text*, Vol. 20, Issue 2, p151-159

positioning, which demonstrated to the West that Yugoslavia was not like ‘the rest’ of the Communists and that Tito was ‘our Communist.’ Within the framework created by the Cold War, Yugoslavia’s architecture and symbolic spatial politics were hybrid and ambiguous, making its space unique and distinct in both the social and symbolic sense.<sup>44</sup>

The aesthetic and self-referential language of modernism became appropriated to express abstract concepts of utopian society, that was unlike anything from the past and was often void of overtly classical historical references. Modernism, though ‘born’ in the West, became the official style of the state, merging with ideological tropes of progress, and modernity, to create a society whose symbolic referents were not located in distant pasts and origins, but whose ‘essential’ birthplace was positioned in the present and recent past, accompanied by visionary images of a new, progressive and utopian life. With its distinctive brand of Yugoslav socialist progressive modernity, visual language worked in sync with the political agenda.<sup>45</sup> The Yugoslav modernist architectural signification system became predominantly self-referential, with few explicit external references to other societies or states. Pioneering efforts in creating new types of space mark the entrance of ideology into physical space and everyday life, and recursively these seemingly trivial phenomena reaffirm the social order.

#### SECULAR MYTHOLOGY AND LIEUX DE MEMOIRE:

##### BATTLE SITES, MONUMENTS AND COMMEMORATION (2.3)

The sites honoring partisan battles and battle heroes became the sacral, secular realm of the socialist cosmos, the precepts of the new nation. Yugoslav historical narratives were characterized by spatial and temporal intimacy, involving the direct participation of people, remembering events personally-witnessed in one’s lifetime. Yugoslav memory of nationalized historic space did not reach far into the past, but was rather premised heavily upon the events of Partisan resistance during World War II. The war became the object of national mythology, as battle sites and memorials were the sacred sites in the secular state, marking the bloodshed that led to its creation. Monuments were built at federal, republican and local levels through a decentralized process, in which there were actually relatively few monuments of federal significance. Like many procedures in SFRY, issues related to monument-building and

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<sup>44</sup> Kulić, Vladimir. *Land of the In-Between: Modern Architecture and the State in Socialist Yugoslavia, 1945-65*. Doctor’s Dissertation. University of Texas: Austin, 2009.

<sup>45</sup> Stanković, Nevenka. “The Case of Exploited Modernism: How Yugoslav Communist used the Idea of Modern Art to Promote Political Agendas.” March 2006: *Routledge. Third Text*, Vol. 20, Issue 2, p151-159

commemoration were governed at a local level, yet there was often a disparity in commemoration politics between local practices and federal decrees. People were largely able to transform the essence of the official war narrative, while staying within the ‘officially allowed memory space’ provided by the party.<sup>46</sup> Barely a village in former Yugoslavia existed without a war memorial,<sup>47</sup> which were created by local war veterans unions as well as everyday civilians. People developed an active, intimate and participatory relationship with these lieux de memoire as national political subjects transformed them, and also became transformed by them.<sup>48</sup> These spaces of memory created locally autonomous articulations of national memory and identity.

However, it should be noted that these sites were not free from the manipulation of ideology, and selective and utilitarian interpretations of the past. The meaning derived from these sites rested heavily on supporting the themes of brotherhood and unity, even if this led to distortion over the accuracy of history, especially when considering immensity of loss of life. As is common with nationally-favorable figures regarding loss of life, these figures are contested. Memories of war time were regarded as ‘frozen,’ which led to greater consequences as the memories became ‘thawed,’ leading to the eventual fissure of the state.<sup>49</sup> The sites of partisan battles and war memorials were important in producing national identity, and were also a part of the acculturation and socialization process in the Yugoslav state, through producing a state of socialist citizens. As Socialism, a modern, utopian-aspiring form of governance, was interested in the production of people, rather than the production of things,<sup>50</sup> site-visits, commemorations, school trips, educational and pedagogical activities affiliated with these sites produced socialist citizen-subjects, whose education and socialization incorporated this memorial culture as part of the ideology of the state.

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<sup>46</sup> Karge, Heike. “Mediated Remembrance: Local Practices of Remembering the Second World War in Tito’s Yugoslavia.” *European Review of History*, Feb 2009, Vol. 16 Issue 1, p49-62.

<sup>47</sup> Lajbenšperger, Nenad. Personal Interview. Historian-conservator. Specialties: Partisan Monuments, Yugoslav Heritage. Institute for Protection of Cultural Monuments in Serbia. 5.7.2011

<sup>48</sup> Karge, Heike. “Mediated Remembrance: Local Practices of Remembering the Second World War in Tito’s Yugoslavia.” *European Review of History*, Feb 2009, Vol. 16 Issue 1, p49-62.

<sup>49</sup> Pavlaković, Vjeran. “Red Stars, Black Shirts: Symbols, Commemorations, and Contested Histories of World War Two in Croatia.” *National Council for Eurasian and East European Research*, 2008.

<sup>50</sup> Gosden, Chris. *Anthropology of Production*. Oxford. March 18 2011.

## THE SOCIAL BODY, SPACE AND MEMORY IN STATE SOCIALISM (2.1)

In the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the public social body was a key locus of power for the production and reproduction of the state. The state systems amassed individual bodies together in the construction of social bodies that came to represent at once, the state, society and the socialist citizen, all interwoven into the same system as interdependent parts. As participants in a new kind of mass ornament, bodies were directly and intimately involved with the production of national space, forming its atoms through their disciplined labor, participation and ritual in state activities and institutions. Whether in mass ceremonies in celebration, syndicates at work, or volunteer brigades in construction, citizens were brought together and reconstituted into the social body of the socialist Yugoslav state. Through their corporeal involvement with the production of physical spaces and national social life in which bodies were institutionalized, the personal body and the public body was contrived as an imaginary whole of a national system, based on familial notions of brotherhood and unity with a sense of collective interdependence and belonging. As we have examined above, spaces indicate and express complex relationships, between people, states and 'others'. In self-managed and decentralized socialism, the participation of individual political subjects was key in the survival of the Yugoslav state, as the concern of the survival of national memory of the period continues to today as it is now only a state of mind and memory.

## 2.3 THE YUGOSLAV PAST & THE EUROPEAN FUTURE

These sites of everyday social reproduction of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and their ways of creating national memory, membership, community, meaning and belonging all but vanished in the wake of the of national collapse. The disintegration of Yugoslavia and its utter horror of war created an end of not only of the state, but also severed the relationships between territories, between bodies and the state, and between people and publics to their memorial past and lieux de memoire. Unlike other post-socialist states, Yugoslavia and its successor states endured the double shock of not only undergoing a troublesome political and economic transition to market democracy, as did other states, but the complete social disintegration and brutal destruction of the only full-scale war happening on European territory following World War II, leaving these states incapacitated to restore balance and order. The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, a territory once strong and centered was deeply shaken, and wrought with insecurity, instability and disorientation. As Yugoslavia's place in the world was defined by its balanced diversity in a divided Cold War

context, the abandonment of this pluriform and ambiguous social order required that its successor states ‘choose a direction’ in a new post-Cold War context.

Dealing with legitimacy and state-building problems, successor states looked to root their identities to ‘Europe’ as they look for new opportunities and forms of belonging. To these ends, the Yugoslav successor states looked West, to be part of the social, cultural, political and economic community of the European Union. However, the merging and convergence of this former Yugoslav territory into ‘Europe’ brings elements of these nations’ pasts into conflict with elements of their future aspirations. As future political orientations often color the interpretations of the past, the socialist, non-aligned and ‘oriental’ parts of the Yugoslav past become incommensurate with the prospect of European political belonging. Reorienting towards this future direction, the past of the territory contains both stabilizing and suspect elements that reaffirm or contest the status quo, as memory becomes a strategic field with political dimensions.

As Yugoslav successor states all struggle to define and strengthen their new national identities, and separate them from the past, this task as proved more problematic for Serbia, as its capital of Belgrade served as the administrative heart for the former state. As the Yugoslav state folded in and split off, its symbolic core of Serbia maintains an aura of ambiguous identities, as it is difficult to completely disassociate with the fallen regime. As the last existing kernel and vestige of Yugoslavia, the remainder of this paper will focus on the nation of Serbia and on the capital of both the present and previous state, Belgrade. The following section *Ephemeral Monuments* will examine the ways in which the place of Yugoslavia is reconstituted within the ethno-national, neoliberal logic of the Republic of Serbia. Analyzing how space is socially produced on a number of different layers, it will examine the relationship between the Yugoslav past and the post-socialist present in terms of LeFebvre’s triad of *lived*, *conceived* and *perceived* spaces through several case studies and examples.

In Chapter 3 *Representations of Space* we will examine the the re-building of an image of ‘Europeanized’ and pre-socialist identity as a strategy for nation building manifested in representations of national space. Chapter 4 *Spatial Practice* will discuss the shifting use and interpretations of actual spaces with particular politically-useful or problematic cultural associations in line with the social order. Finally in Chapter 5 *Representational Spaces* we will explore tendencies in the unofficial memory culture of Yugoslavia that exists on the deterritorialized space of the world wide web.

## SECTION II: RESEARCH FOCUS: *Ephemeral Monuments*

Through vision blurred with time and the fragile human faculties of memory, we examine the phenomena of Yugoslav place as, perhaps, in fact, a non-place. From a powerful reigning regime, the land of Yugoslavia has been transformed into a non-existent legend that has become subjected to charges of fraudulence, forgery, and guilt for its tragic collapse, and as well has become the mythical, often anguished object of ruptured imaginations of brighter futures, utopian dreams and longing for lost homes. Many state that Yugoslavia was a place that was, in fact, ‘fabricated or artificial’, a forced union of essentially different and incompatible bodies.<sup>51</sup> In hindsight, we see Yugoslavia as an assemblage of various identities, precipitating the fragmentation of the ‘balkanization’ process; a falling apart of space itself. Whole and legitimate at a time, it has been rendered illegitimate by the political elites of today, as the former nation-state has become only a state of mind, accessible through memory. Further, if we see Yugoslavia in different eyes, through the nostalgia of its national imaginary, we envisage the state as a visionary socialist utopia; a state that is, by definition, a non-place. Between altered states of both regime and mind, a growing chasm emerges between the place of politically-defined reality, and the psychic space of memory remaining from the extinguished experiences of actually-existing socialism. Plunging into a never-land of suddenly collapsed realities, we examine Yugoslavia’s holes, wounds and its debris; today’s evidences, traces, fragments and spaces of an apparently non-existent place.

Inverse to the considerations of legitimacy of *Yugoslavia as a place* are questions about the *place of Yugoslavia* within the larger world. At the confluence of cultures that held distinct spheres of the world together, in Yugoslavia’s absence, we explore the supranational implications of an empty place of power. Considering the unique centered and balanced position in the international sphere that Yugoslavia once held, situated between first, second and third worlds,<sup>52</sup> the geo-political space left in the wake of the former state has turned into an uncertain terrain to be usurped within a surrounding order, subject to foreign imperialism, ideological intervention and geo-political re-orientation.<sup>53</sup> In place of the reigning presence

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<sup>51</sup> Vujacić, Veljko. “Why nationalist discourse really matters: two studies of Serbian nationalism.” *Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans* 2003, Vol 5, Issue 1, 91-97.

<sup>52</sup> Yugoslavia’s ties were carefully suspended between ‘The West’ ‘The East’ and newly-independent former colonies, as members in the Non-Aligned Movement

<sup>53</sup> Dominic Boyer “From Algos to Autonomous: Nostalgic Eastern Europe as Postimperial Mania.” *Post-Communist Nostalgia*. ed, Maria Todorova and Zsuzsa Gille. Berghahn Books, 2010.

and authority of the federal state, the collapsed Yugoslavia has been reinvented, often constructed as a passive object through the ‘colonization of the imagination;’ a crumbled, conquered and defeated space in need of restoration, constructed anew through the strategic intervention of exterior force and order. In the context of a fallen post-socialist society, the question of attributing broader political belonging and ownership to a state in and of dispossession is firmly embedded in matters of place.

In the midst of changing national identities, narratives, values and politics, Section III: *Ephemeral Monuments* considers the production of Serbian political power, on the territory that was once the heart of Yugoslavia. On the terrain of the former state, this section investigates the multi-faceted ways in which the once-Yugoslav state has been reconstituted as a different, eventually virtual nation through altered, interrupted and inconsistent interpretations and significations of national space .

These concepts of place identity will be explored on the levels of *representations of space*, *spatial practice* and *representational spaces*. Following LeFebvre’s conceptual triad, this analysis will break space down into three domains to explore the spatial-memorial dimensions of political transformation and illustrate the changing ways in which place identity is constructed, and what interests and contradictions lie behind these shifts. Discrepancies between the Yugoslav past and the Serbian present will be explored through examining national place identity as framed through official representations, spatialized in social practice and perceived in informal public memory.

As the construction of Socialist Yugoslavia and its places were heavily contingent on ‘external’ factors while remaining at the same time ‘independent’, this section, *Ephemeral Monuments*, explores the framing of specific places to their surrounding national order. Monuments, places and memories alike, we discover, are malleable and temporal, and not neat clean perfect indexes recording the past, nor either pre-defined by historical determinants. We will examine the varied lives of national places as they are represented, lived and imagined in different political systems.

In these spheres, frictions between paths (intended directions) and diversions (disruption and renegotiation of a terminal orientation) emerge as spaces become used and take on new meanings in unanticipated ways.<sup>54</sup> Environmental determinism, the conception

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<sup>54</sup> Appadurai, Arjun. “Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value.” *The Social life of things: Commodities in cultural perspective*, Arjun Appadurai, ed. Cambridge University Press, 1986.

that the physical environment dictates the course of human action and social behavior; and is a grounding conception that lays behind politicians' planners' social engineers' and designers' decisions of recreating space with certain goals or ends in mind. This deterministic framework conceives human behavior as reactive against landscape. However, failing to explore the active and changing ways in which space is continually socially produced, reconceived and experienced, environmental (as well as historical) determinism becomes removed from the complexities of real life of spaces as they are actually lived and used, and the multifaceted meanings and functions they hold in the lives of people.

As we explore, national spatial memory is discontinuous in its political, physical and personal dimensions. These three areas are idiosyncratic and inevitably filled with conflicts. Indeed the lack of coherence, consensus and unity is the very issue at hand, as it questions the absolute authority and legitimacy of any single perspective that might attain a contrived authoritative and hegemonic status. LeFebvre notes it is important to make distinctions between each level of space (the physical, the mental and the social) and to understand the interrelations of how they operate, without ignoring the conflicts between and amongst them.<sup>55</sup> This multi-tiered perspective reveals a different picture than the dominant national narrative alone, as it identifies new interrelations, contradictions and elements of conflict that likewise contest the singular authority of the state and its efforts to conceal, repress or deflect contestation.

Here we explore as well the ephemeral and temporary nature of both *space* and *memory*. Recognizing that indeed, even national memories are arbitrary, selective, exclusionary, instable, preferential and indeed, change over time, the following chapters will examine the frictions between political capriciousness and personal continuity in the post-Yugoslav remaking of Serbia. Examining spaces as symbolic vessels of time, used to compose a national story and reproduce state power, the following chapters reveal the pluralistic, polysemic and conflictual nature of space, often concealed by hegemonic nationalized significations and interpretations. Considering that political legitimacy must be forged out of new memories and associations since the fall of the federal Yugoslav state, *Chapter 6: Representations of Space* will first explore the role of Serbian state memory institutions working with cultural patrimony as they consecrate and legitimate particular types of historical and cultural sites in the process of re-scripting and reframing the national past.

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<sup>55</sup> Lefebvre, Henri. *The Production of Space*. Donald Nicholson-Smith, trans. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1974.

## CHAPTER 3 REPRESENTATIONS OF SPACE

### *Case Study: The National Institute for Protection of Cultural Monuments*

#### *3.1 NATIONAL SPATIAL DISCOURSE AND THE PRODUCTION OF PLACE*

To investigate place identity as it exists on the official level through national spatial representations, it is necessary to have a look at state cultural institutions, and how they approach questions of national memory. The selections as well as the omissions made by national institutions simultaneously reveal and constitute the dominant themes, historical narratives, values, aesthetics, and cultural motifs that represent a vision of national identity constructed by the current regime.

However, we must recognize that ‘national identity’ and ‘national history’ of a territory or state does not simply exist; but rather it is the secretion of all types of institutional decision-making. Before a new nationally-produced image of a state arises, all sorts of metonymic processes are entailed which recode and reinterpret territory and constitute individual sites as within a national body of symbols that must be given meaning. The formulation of national identity is not handed over by national gods handing a golden staff conferring political legitimacy. On the contrary, sacred images of national identity are created partly as they are rationalized, strategized and engineered in a bureaucratized world of silent offices. Asserting the creation of national identity as an extensive social, and indeed technocratic process involving numerous institutions, places, procedures and activities, we will not examine the process of decision-making and national institutional behavior lying behind representations, but rather, keeping in mind the social process of its production, consider the implications of its symbolic outcomes.

#### MAP-TERRITORY RELATION: THE PRODUCTION AND DISSEMINATION OF NATIONAL IMAGES

Representing and mediating national territory entails operations of collection, depiction and social circulation of knowledge about different spaces. Physical realities are ‘flattened’ to the realm of representation, as actual spaces become mere spatial representations. In this social production of national meaning, places turn into images, images become untied from their original referents, as signifiers are connected to nationalized ideas. Public relations materials such printed literature, promotional press, schoolbooks and websites participate in the creation of a national image-making campaign. Text, rhetoric, images, graphic design, new media, and visual motifs are employed by decision-makers to poetically

frame a mediated imaginary national space, whose pieces of places are given authority speak on behalf of the national whole. To mediate national memory, culture, and values these institutions employ various communication tools to disseminate their conceptions of nationhood. As such, the public interface of national institutions is a vital sphere where the production of dominant images, meanings and interpretations occurs, expressed in various visual, textual and even spatial permutations. It is through these mediated and representational forms that particular constructions of knowledge and perceptions of place obtain political legitimacy.

#### TOWARDS NEW ORIGINS: POST-YUGOSLAV SERBIAN IDENTITY

Serbia's search for a non-Yugoslav national identity has sent it looking to the past of its place in new and peculiar ways. After Yugoslavia, which set its birthright mostly in the events of World War II, successor states remade their national narratives to those that predated Yugoslavia and also supported ethno-national types of legitimacy. These post-Yugoslav nations with pre-Yugoslav legitimacy present themselves as cleansed, purified and unadulterated by modern woes and the struggles of the recent past. With Serbia, as well as with other successor states, the mythic reemergence and resurrection of forgotten pasts made a glorious comeback, as genealogical concepts of nationhood heralded a return to forgotten supposed origins. In Serbia, as with other ethnic states, the historical perceptions grounding conceptions of nationhood were rooted in notions of indigenous creation, fundamental difference and ethnic essentialism that has gained the status as a kind of sacred, fundamental, existential truth, that is now conceived as 'always having been true' but repressed by efforts towards Yugoslav unity. These have spurred rampant nationalism, with curious symbolic outgrowths that demonstrate the contradictions of both 'democratic' and nationalist concepts in a post-socialist environment.<sup>56</sup> For modern Serbia, its ethno-national conception of national identity and narrative has become grounded in concepts that are in ways paradoxical to claims of modernity or secular culture in national marketing campaigns.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Verdery notes that emphasis on the nation is a response to reconcile and mitigate between past and present forms of governance. Verdery, Katherine. "Civil Society or Nation? "Europe" in the Symbolism of Post-socialist Politics." *What was Socialism, and What Comes Next?* Princeton University Press 2006.

<sup>57</sup> Volcic, Zala. "Former Yugoslavia on the World Wide Web: Commercialization and Branding of Nation-States." *International Communication Gazette*, Oct 2008, Vol. 70 Issue 5, p395-413

In post-Yugoslav society, the search for stability, national unity, legitimacy and sacred rights to governance prompted a return to forgotten or neglected ethnic origins, which entailed a reinvestigation of the past in both its abstract and material dimensions. Political changes have evidenced themselves in today's new national images and imagination, as the modernist architecture and the utopian orientation of Yugoslav society has been replaced by a move to towards more distant pasts and their complementary sacred spaces.

Though there are a number of state institutions from which to explore the social construction of national space, the following case study will examine the National Institute for Protection of Cultural Monuments (Republički zavod za zaštitu spomenika kulture) as it is active in the consecration of national historical representation and sites. We will examine the selection of and preference for particular sites, subjects, and identity themes by the institute, whereby specific sites, places and histories come to embody concepts of Serbian nationhood. The following case study will examine the framing of nationhood in terms of historical, place and cultural identity within institutional self-representations.

### 3.2 CASE STUDY: NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR PROTECTION OF CULTURAL MONUMENTS

#### INSTITUTIONAL ROLE

The institute is charged with the responsibility for preserving, protecting, interpreting and administering over cultural monuments. The institute has many functions, such as site protection and preservation in the territory that Serbia claims, documentation and legal measures, administration and keeping registers, research and creating publications. The institute makes and substantiates its own bodies of knowledge, collecting knowledge from the national territory, throughout which this knowledge is dispersed. Moving back and forth between the center and 'the field' the institute makes centralized decisions regarding the state's entire territory. The institute works on site in locations of exceptional importance, doing documentation and research work. It also works on restoration and preservation of selected sites, again typically those of the highest value. Its work 'in the field,' throughout national territory, is transmuted back to the central register and administrative hub for all the nation's sites, based in Belgrade. The institute relays back and forth between the 'field' and central register, both collecting and dispersing knowledge of the territory's cultural monuments.

The creation and dispersal of particular types of nationally-interested historical knowledge is a key function of the institute as well. The institute holds a library, and also creates publications and books, some for public use, and others intended for specialists. Activities of the institute work to produce a body of nationally-interested knowledge, which can be disseminated to other fields, such as education, culture, historical studies, rural tourism and development, ect. These representations of space form an arsenal of knowledge to substantiate and legitimize national values and facilitate strategic coordination. Working with other state organs, these representations of national space mutually reinforce each other with “a reciprocal circularity, a symbiosis at every level-scientific and pedagogical, theoretical and practical.”<sup>58</sup>

The institute also involves itself with the social dissemination of places recognized as nationally significant. One such permutation is a new initiative to mediate physical national spaces into virtual spaces. A substantial side project of the National Institute for Protection of Cultural Monuments in partnership with the National Institute for Digitization involves the digitization of records of cultural monuments, which is made in cooperation with UNESCO. Through such types of representational operations, the institute takes a reading of cultural heritage and knowledge of Serbia, compresses the fragments it deems notable and significant and disseminates these forms of national value-laden knowledge, to a public that, equipped with digital technologies, is perhaps even a global public. In this process of producing space, national territory is made visible and comprehensible through creation of a cumulative and totalistic image of national history. Collectively, such selected representations of sites and images comprise a ‘survey’ of cultural history on present-day Serbian territory, where the surveyor or observer can ‘see’ the entirety and totality of national space without obstruction.

Constituting a conception of nationhood, institutional representations of space often form a canon of national places deemed worthy, legitimate or representative of shared, common identities and historical experience. However, as we will see, this compressed representation, as a national construction, does not index or ‘see’ all pasts and cultures equally. Only selected and particular objects, cultural objects are national status, and of those, only selected examples are disseminated, mediated and promoted. If, as Benedict Anderson famously asserted, the nation is also an imagined community, the construction of this

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<sup>58</sup> Lefebvre, Henri. *The Production of Space*. Donald Nicholson-Smith, trans. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1974.

imagination relies upon the visual and narrative devices of sites, images, signifiers, significations, histories, myths and memories, and symbolic objects which are the building blocks for the post-Yugoslav Serbian national imaginary.<sup>59</sup>

#### BACKGROUND

The National Institute for Protection of Cultural Monuments has adapted through changes of state and has survived through many historical and institutional transformations. Before considering the activities and choices of the institute in the current moment, an examination of change of societal context is necessary to understand the present state of affairs.

With the fall of Yugoslavia and the emergence of democratic governance and emphasis on private property, the state no longer holds a virtual monopoly on national space, while the spaces that Serbia proudly claims ownership over have an increased relative significance and symbolic potency. Likewise, it is noteworthy that the Serbian National Institute for Protection of Cultural Monuments is the heir to the comparable Yugoslav organs, and absorbed the sites listed in the former Yugoslav registry as well, as we will explore later. These intergovernmental dynamics of post-Yugoslav transition are still relevant today, as a major area of contemporary concern of the international observers and non-governmental organizations is the status of cultural heritage in Kosovo. Despite Kosovo's declaration of independence, Serbia's national register still claims the sites in Kosovo, inscribed during Yugoslavia, which also include sites with Kosovar identity affiliations.<sup>60</sup> Likewise, sometimes tensions between 'local' and 'national' levels exist, because the institute also operates on more local levels, governing over cultural monuments that are not listed at a national level of importance.<sup>61</sup> In a fissuring and diverse state with increased emphasis on private property and individual ownership, the institute is charged with the difficult task of creating historical national unity and safeguarding what it declares to be the nation's cultural patrimony.

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<sup>59</sup> Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities, Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*. Verso, 1991.

<sup>60</sup> National Institute for Protection of Historical Monuments central register

<sup>61</sup> Lajbensperger, Nenad. Personal Interview. Historian-conservator. Specialties: Partisan Monuments, Yugoslav Heritage. Institute for Protection of Cultural Monuments in Serbia. 5.7.2011

### 3.3 FRAMING THE NATIONAL IMAGE: SITE SELECTION AND PLACE PROMOTION

On a territory with rich and diverse types of historical experience, the selection of sites of national significance is one key way to observe and identify Serbia's nation-building strategies. Since the list of protected sites of the Serbian Institute for Protection of Cultural Monuments includes an accumulation of many protected sites registered during Socialist Yugoslavia, the list is exhaustive and covers many various types of cultural monuments listed since the institution's establishment in 1844, which has also experienced several institutional transformations in light of changing political situations. The over 2000 protected sites on the list include everything from Armenian gravestones to castles, hamams to log cabins, avant-garde architecture to humble shelters, catholic churches to synagogues and modernist monuments to water mills. However with this incredibly wide palette with which to paint an image of national identity, only a limited range of monuments in these spatial representations are depicted as emblematic and constitutive of Serbian national identity.

Several factors influence the selection of representations of place to be both protected and socially disseminated. The politics of national representation, however, becomes a lot more complicated than just formal statuses and titles, as it is affected by the dynamics of transitional government and institutions. Economic and logistical constraints lead to a lack of smooth operation or scientific precision in the institute's work, though this may not appear to be so from the outside.<sup>62</sup> In a situation with low institutional capacities, there are many sites merely listed on paper but not afforded any attention, care and maintenance for protection. Despite their formally-listed status, many cultural monuments are in a state of disrepair, vandalized or at the point of structural collapse and social neglect. In this sense, the key role of dissemination and social legibility of sites is crucial in investing place with social value and legitimacy so that some sites, more than others, serve as representations of Serbian nationhood. This consideration of places *formally listed* and places that are *promoted* creates a distinction between representations of national space in an internal, administrative sense, and representations of space, which are promoted and disseminated to wider publics.

#### RESTRICTED RESOURCES

Furthermore, inconsistencies between representations of space on the abstracted level of representations and actual physical spaces are subject to complicated transitional

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<sup>62</sup> Ivanovic, Milenko. Personal Interview. Architectural conservator, specialty: ethno heritage. Institute for Protection of Cultural Monuments in Serbia. Interview. 13.7.2011

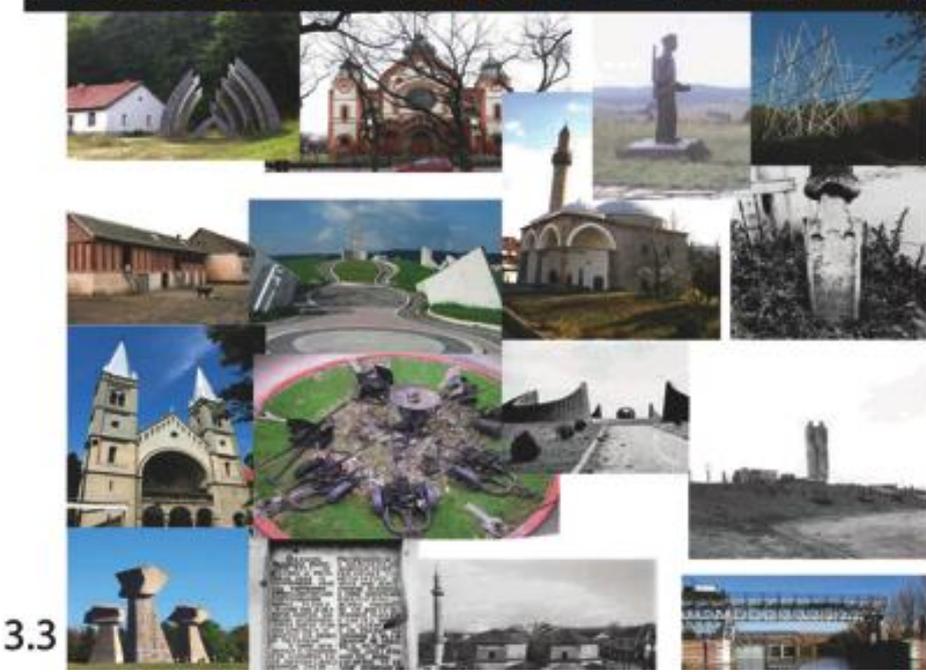
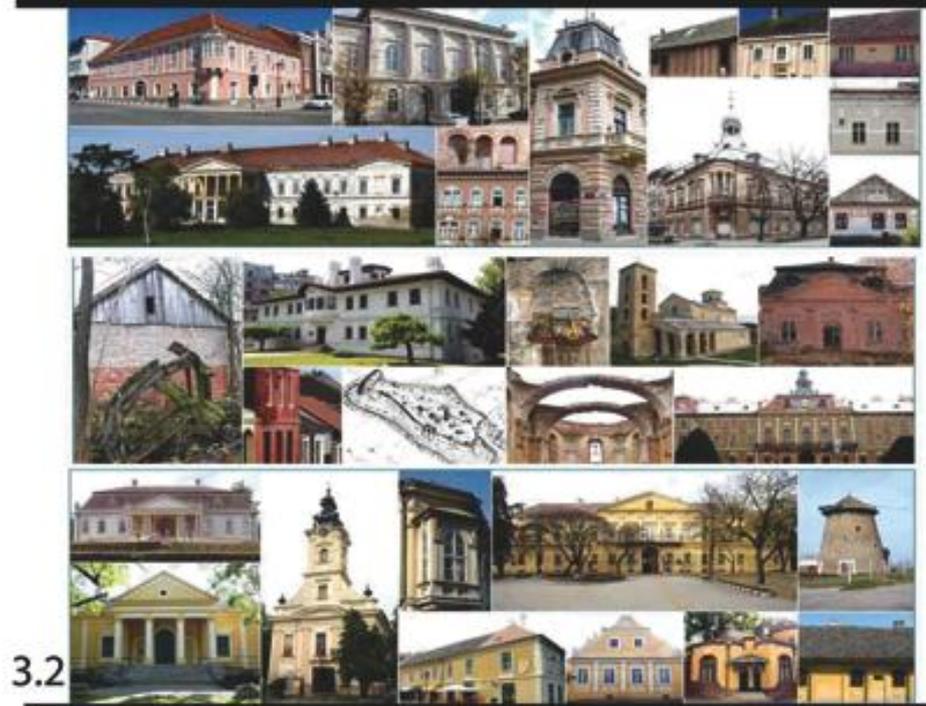
institutional dimensions of representation and protection, which creates many divergences, disparities and irregularities between ‘different’ types of sites which, technically, appear under the same register. Naturally, not all listed sites are designated the same level of importance, prominence or investment. Prioritized monuments receive investment and publicity, while many others are neglected, ignored and fall into disrepair as they receive scarce attention from the institute. Additionally, some cultural monuments on the list, particularly houses, are looked after primarily by their private custodians and maintained under their watch, making it difficult for the state to look after.<sup>63</sup> A large disparity also is evident between the levels of care provided for various types of cultural sites. Maintenance to some sites is considered superfluous, as they are (often ‘unimportant’) simple structures, whose material state is left to the elements. As the resources of the state are limited, the decision of which sites are to be considered as ‘deserving’ of national investment and meaning is a constitutive assertion of national values and identity. Such preferences for the care, protection and promotion of sites likewise reveal national priorities.

#### THE MEDIATION OF PLACE

Through the process of selection, representation and *dissemination* particular cultural monuments function as ‘parts’ that, assembled together, represent the national whole. Through this act, these images and the sites they represent shed their particular local and contextual meaning, and become invested with the national pedagogical authority to portray, personify and embody national cultural identity. By investigating the publicly-mediated permutations of national space, such as electronic communications, publications, website, newsletters and other institutional depictions, we will explore the dominant depictions of national place identity on the basis not of their listing, but as they are framed and mediated to the public.

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid.



3.1 Depictions of Serbian Cultural Monuments, appearing on the Institute's website

3.2 Montage of images on the Digitization of Cultural Monuments project website

3.3 Monuments which are protected, but which are largely absent in public depictions

### 3.4 CONSECRATING IDENTITIES:

#### CULTURAL MONUMENTS AND NATIONHOOD

A number of different themes and major motifs appear in the dominant construction of national historical identities, which bear social and political ramifications:

##### ANCIENT PASTS

In building a new national narrative, like most nations, Serbia's narration, adoption and claim of ancient pasts is an important part of political proprietorship. Archeology and remains of ancient past societies often become politicized as they become used as the basis for evidentiary claims for proprietorship and belonging for peoples far long after 'original' settlements ceased to exist. States often legitimize their hold of power by substantiating their origins in ancient, long-lost pasts, as past societies become appropriated for political gain. In the case of Serbia, this is no different.

While exploring the mediated representations and promoted sites of Serbian historical place identity created by the institute, we notice a particular emphasis drawn to ancient Roman or Byzantine ruins. The Institute for Protection of Cultural Monuments works on, protects, and promotes a selected number of archeological sites related to Roman heritage, which are given special preference.<sup>64</sup> This is particularly Gamzigrad, which is also displayed most prominently on the institute's homepage. More broadly speaking, archeological sites related to Byzantium and Roman heritage are heavily promoted throughout many venues of Serbian territorial representations, from cultural activities to promotional tourist brochures, as one of the most valuable types of past. There likewise appears to be an emphasis on and preference towards the thematic focus of Byzantine ruins over other types of archeology. Many have noted that archeology is often mired in identity politics, as changes in certain pasts have the power to bear a new status upon the present, which may feed the status quo or else disrupt it. New information on the past confers a new status about the present, which reworks the genealogical linkages of the state to new roots.

The work of institute does encompass other types of ancient pasts, but Byzantine heritage is warranted the most status and exposure, perhaps because it is the most comprehensible and familiar. Nonetheless, such actions alone are not simply 'right' or 'wrong', but are expressions of preferences, strategies, choices and value hierarchies which

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<sup>64</sup> Lajbenšperger, Nenad. Personal Interview. Historian-conservator. Specialties: Partisan Monuments, Yugoslav Heritage. Institute for Protection of Cultural Monuments in Serbia. 5.7.2011

reflect the priorities and ideals of the state, and impart real social and historiographic implications. Likewise, it appears that Serbia's ancient pasts and archeological sites have become influenced by contemporary identity politics and national legitimacy questions as well. Byzantine variants of cultural sites and historical societies appear to be of greater priority, perhaps because of their connection to a common 'European ancestry' as such trends were also evident in other nations aiming for European integration.<sup>65</sup>

Though these choices and representations may seem natural, obvious, habitual or uncontentious, we often fail to look at what perspective is missing from the dominant historical picture. In the shadow of these dominant depictions go other noteworthy sites which are not given national recognition and not imbued with the title, role or image of representing national identity or warranted due attention. For example, archeological sites such as Vinca or Lepinski Vir bear the evidence of being amongst the oldest cities in the region. However, as Neolithic societies that far predated even the first ideas of 'Europe,' and Slavic settlement, these sites are not promoted or at the very least, even mentioned by the institute. It is notable that though these sites are listed with the highest level of cultural importance, they are not used as emblems of national identity, perhaps partly due to the fact that they do not contribute to genealogical claims for European (or broader metanarrative) patrilineage. Even though these may be considered highly valuable sites by international standards for archeological study, they are relegated to secondary status an unimportant status by national institutions, which now operate within a continental conception of trans-national identity politics.

Further, we acknowledge that the guiding logics and directions behind these representations might be created with external audiences and international objectives in mind. In this sense, nationally peculiar historical references might be difficult to comprehend on the international heritage market. Byzantine heritage is socially-legible for a wide audience of people, both 'domestic' and 'foreign' and its emphasized recognition appears to be driven by interests to generate cultural tourism equally as much as it substantiates claims for a narrative of European belonging.

#### ORTHODOX AND MEDIEVAL HERITAGE

Out of all the classes of cultural monuments and heritage protected and promoted by the institute, Serbian Orthodox Heritage of the medieval 'Golden Age' is no doubt ranked as

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<sup>65</sup> Interviews reflected indeed the European orientation of the future was a factor influencing the interpretation of the past, and that themes and ideas which suited these ends were given greater preference by the institute

the highest and most important type of heritage. This category of cultural objects, places and artifacts is consistently prioritized and privileged as it also undergirds concepts of post-Yugoslav Serbian identity. In a democratic era of an ethno-national state, this class of heritage, more than any other, is the foundational ground upon which simultaneous and often contradictory material, political, ethnological and philosophical claims are based.<sup>66</sup>

The cultural image of Orthodox heritage is perhaps the most common motif in the construction of post-Yugoslav Serbian place identity, and is a vital focus of the institute's activities. This class of cultural artifacts from the 'Golden age' considers particularly churches, monasteries, icons, and other religious objects. The institute invests its efforts, resources and attention in restoration work, research, documentation and publishing, particularly on these sites, which one can infer, it views as most important.<sup>67</sup> As orthodox objects are in the most privileged position of the institute's representational scheme, undoubtedly, it is monasteries that are given the most distinguished status of cultural monuments, as a whole separate class. Monasteries are recognized within their own class of objects within the "Digitization and electronic presentation of Medieval Serbian Monasteries" Project. Likewise, these sites receive priority in restoration work, research and promotion.<sup>68</sup>

In connection to these representations of space, which the institute produces and promotes, it also creates, maintains and consecrates specific, relevant and strategic information, which serves as a pedagogical and epistemological base of Serbian historical-spatial knowledge. The institute publishes books, some of which are available for public sale. Not surprising considering its general institutional preferences, in its oeuvre, nearly every book in the collection is focused on themes of the Middle Ages, monasteries, Orthodox icons and paintings, with a considerable number also on archeological sites and Byzantine heritage. Though the National Institute for Protection of Cultural Monuments is inevitably a conservative institution, there are remarkably few examples of research and work on themes outside these areas of cultural heritage, especially those since the onset of modernity. Out of the 80 books featured in this collection, there is an astonishingly marginal portion of 2 books featuring civic or modern architecture; one on Czech influence in Serbian architecture from

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<sup>66</sup> Volčić, Zala. "Former Yugoslavia on the World Wide Web: Commercialization and Branding of Nation-States." *International Communication Gazette*, Oct 2008, Vol. 70 Issue 5, p395-413

<sup>67</sup> <sup>67</sup> Ivanovic, Milenko. Personal Interview. Architectural conservator, specialty: ethno heritage. Institute for Protection of Cultural Monuments in Serbia. Interview. 13.7.2011

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

1918-1941 and another on the Serbian modernist architect Momcilo Belobrk.<sup>69</sup> Conservative notions of heritage within the institute appear likewise based upon received and orthodox ideas of the past, without conscientiousness about how the present society actively produces its representation of the past.<sup>70</sup>

## HABSBURG HERITAGE

Another major division of place-identity motifs and themes is the cultural heritage of the Habsburg Empire. Though this architecture once connoted political annexation of the Balkans by Austro-Hungary, it is increasingly conceived in terms connoting national selfhood.

Figure 3.2 above is a compilation of the images that are displayed on the digitization project website for Cultural Monuments of Serbia. On the web, these images serve as the public interface between the entirety of “Serbian cultural heritage” on national soil and the general public. Since the entire list of national monuments of culture is much too large to be absorbed into public knowledge, these shorthand, selected images compress the particular and variegated cultural landscape into more coherent, unified, iconic and memorable forms that provide a miniscule survey of national place identity made visible ‘at a glance’. By ‘reading’ this national landscape-as-collage, one can draw a connection between the cultural and historical references deployed the places where Serbia situates itself.

In this image mediated to the public, the most common motif in national place identity is that of Austro-Hungarian architecture and Habsburg heritage. Additionally, the selection and depiction of architecture from this period is largely administrative and imperial and connotes strong state institutions and centralized authority, that convey emphasis on public rational culture, modern forms of governance and the rule of law, instead of, for example, sensual depictions and lavish details of ornate facades, experimental architecture or pastoral countryside. From this national collage, it also appears that the majority of the portrayed ‘significant’ architecture is from the province of Vojvodina, an area with more cultural credentials to Europe than other geographic regions of Serbia. Its Austro-Hungarian influence marks this region with a type of civilizational glory that celebrates northern, industrial,

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<sup>69</sup> Listing of books published by the National Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments

<sup>70</sup> Interviews with workers at the national institute reflect an attitude of the past as received and inevitable, not as a conscious series of choices occurring in the present, that they themselves are involved in. They likewise seemed surprised by the prospect of considering national identity in other terms than how it is framed now.

rational, 'European' culture, and which the national government wishes to be associated with. Such images construct 'Serbia' in terms of largely Austro-Hungarian presence and heritage. These mundane yet consequential representations of space are ways that Serbia tries to underscore its cultural and historical association with urbanized 'Europe', and by so doing, attempts to legitimate Serbia's claims to European political, cultural and territorial belonging.<sup>71</sup>

#### GROUNDING PLACE: TEMPORAL ANCHORING AND POLITICAL POSITIONING

The representations of place identity framed by the national institute mediate not just places, but concepts, and ideals of civility, nationality and historical belonging and place the nation within a larger historical framework, whereby one nation's ancestral origins and relationships to other societies are made visible. These permutations of place, origin and belonging are not necessarily historically accurate as much as they show self-identification and self-ascription and create an image of an ideal and imaginary self. By mediating ideal conceptions of place, the institute, amongst with others involved in the mediation of national pasts, transmits pedagogical concepts of value while it identifies with certain pasts while separating from others. Considering aspirations for new types of political belonging, we identify future goals as a significant aspect framing depictions of the past.

By examining the institute's official productions of national space, we see that conceptions of Serbian identity are created largely in 'European' terms and emphasize the historical connections to more 'European' cultures and empires, as opposed to 'other' historical sites and monuments, in line with the goal of European integration. These 'Other' parts may be affiliated with Ottoman, non-Christian or socialist parts of territorial or cultural history and are politically disadvantageous within the context of EU accession. Through this construction of national place identity, Serbia hopes to build a retroactive historical bridge into contemporary, democratic Europe. However, though while aspiring to EU membership, these historical references also prompt contradictory claims for European belonging that raise some problematic historical and social issues in relation to its future goals.

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<sup>71</sup> Volčić, Zala. "Belgrade vs. Serbia: Spatial Configurations of Belonging." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. July 2005. Vol. 31 No. 4, p639-658.

### 3.5 THE POLITICS OF CULTURAL PREFERENCE

By selecting particular images and voicing preferences for some identity groups over others, the state is making some symbolic statements about its identity, but also about which identities it is not:

#### *ANCIENT PASTS*

While stressing modernity and competitiveness in a global marketplace to attract international investment, Serbia recreates itself as a mythological and a-historic place. While attempting to gain historical and political legitimacy, the emphasis and depictions of such pasts subjugate national history to the level of a historical fiction that is irrelevant to contemporary culture.<sup>72</sup>

#### *ORTHODOX HERITAGE*

The continual emphasis on the Orthodox church or more generally, ethno-nationalist architecture in many aspects of public life, over per se 'civic' or modernist architecture and culture, has made some political observers uneasy about the dominance of religion in civil society. The rise of the Orthodox Church has become a major motif in post-socialist transition in Serbia, and has become an expression of ethno-nationalist particularistic identity construction. Orthodox cultural heritage has in some ways cemented ideas of democracy and Westernization to local observers, while simultaneously, worked to reproduce the Balkanist construction of Serbia as a 'half-other' to Western observers. As a strategic emphasis on the Orthodox church makes Serbia distinct from its previous comrades, it likewise serves other social functions in attributing membership and belonging to larger political, geographic and ideological systems, groups or governments, located in Slavic and other Eastern Christian traditions. From another angle, the emphasis on proclaiming Christianity, albeit Eastern, firmly positions Serbia on the Western side of an 'Oriental' divide where such a position sides with Western Europe against Islamic traditions.<sup>73</sup> Sites of Orthodox cultural heritage and

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<sup>72</sup> Volcic, Zala. "Former Yugoslavia on the World Wide Web: Commercialization and Branding of Nation-States." *International Communication Gazette*, Oct 2008, Vol. 70 Issue 5, p395-413

<sup>73</sup> Volcic, Z. & Karmen Erjavec. "'We Defend Western Civilization': Serbian Representations of a Cartoon Conflict." *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, Vol. 19, No. 3. July 2008. p305-321

memory play a role in not only galvanizing conceptions of (ethno)nationhood, but building a bridge of commonality to Christian and democratic Europe.

#### *HABSBURG EMPIRE*

Again, with the preference for Habsburg Heritage, we see the politics of taste and value operating in another type of wider civilizational discourse. Emphasis on the aesthetic beauty, righteousness, elegance and prestige of the Austro-Hungarian empire position it as the object of regard and emulation, as these evidence and affirm Serbia's secular 'European values.' At the same time, this preference towards northern areas and Habsburg influence ignores and neglects, in an act of civilizational positioning, the rich Ottoman heritage existing in many parts of the country, but more concentrated towards the South. Ottoman legacy, considered by many to be equally as 'foreign' as the Habsburg empire, does not receive the same aesthetic or cultural regard, respect or admiration, and is conventionally approached with having an inferior status.<sup>74</sup> Though it may appear banal, taste and preference, whether institutional or personal, is not politically or culturally neutral.

#### TOWARDS A EUROPEAN SERBIAN PAST

Despite its large arsenal of cultural memory and diverse listed sites, only a limited spectrum of sites are selected to represent Serbia's identity. The politics of national place-making is situated between several types of binaries, between 'Ottoman' and 'European' histories and between socialist Yugoslavia and neo-liberal Serbia. These images gird Serbian identity at the crux of a number of forms of culture, but still those within largely conceived in ethno-national and European terms.<sup>75</sup>

This focus on Europeanized history and Westward connection, which lends political credentials to Serbia's attempts to enter the European Union, places little emphasis or importance on, for example, the influence of the Soviet Union and the Ottoman empire in the area's past. The institute, as one major player in constructing Serbia's sense of historical, geographic and cultural belonging, deploys a variety of images while preferencing particular narratives and genres of cultural identity. These readings of place are a political barometer, in

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<sup>74</sup> Bakić-Hayden, Milica, R.M Hayden. "Orientalist Variations on the Theme "Balkans": Symbolic Geography in Recent Yugoslav Cultural Politics." *Slavic Review* Spring 1992, Vol. 51 Issue 1 p1-15.

<sup>75</sup> Volcic, Zala. "Former Yugoslavia on the World Wide Web: Commercialization and Branding of Nation-States." *International Communication Gazette*, Oct 2008, Vol. 70 Issue 5, p395-413

which conceptions of national space are rooted in ethno-nationalist and increasingly euro-centric terms. At the same time, these selections render other types of heritage dispensable, un-valuable and irrelevant, especially those which offer counter-messages or counter-narratives to the dominant, national ones. A look at cultures and histories excluded from the dominant depiction of national identity reveals a notion of what cultures and what pasts may be politically problematic and unfavored in the current political system.

### 3.6 NEGLECTED PASTS, DOMINANT IMAGES & REPRESSED HISTORIES

As contemporary Serbian political and cultural discourse promotes its inherently 'European' character and as contemporary European Union discourse promotes diversity, the functions of the European-aspiring institute do not in practice grant the full representation or expression of the state's cultural and historical diversity. The institute's and other national historic and spatial narratives attempt to generate an artifice of a seamless flow from 'European' identities of the past that continuously to the present, without addressing the significant historical interruptions. In such a situation Serbia is trapped in a double-bind of identity politics in the Balkans, where one cannot be simultaneously fully 'diverse' and still exclusively 'European.' While national decision makers claim to be democratic and diverse, these 'other' pasts are systematically excluded from the realm of public representation. While the European Union officially promotes values and themes of cultural diversity and tolerance, the nation building project of Serbia, as with other Yugoslav successor states, relies upon the affirmation of exclusivist and hegemonic Ethno-nationalism, fused together with Euro-orientation, leading to the repression and exclusion of certain varieties and forms of socio-cultural history and diversity.

#### THE SERBIAN STATE AND ITS OTHERS

We note the major absence of particular groups and historical themes in official representations of national cultural heritage, which are apparently problematic for the Serbian nation-building project:

#### MINORITY HERITAGE

Through the creation of ethnic-national states, the status of less prevalent ethnic and minority groups is compromised. Notably, the diversity of ethnic and religious heritage evident in different religious buildings is missing from the virtual 'map' of dominant Serbian spatial depictions. Another notable omission is the lack of Roma heritage, whose cultural landscapes are denied legitimate status, in both historic and present moments, as their

historical presence is not recognized on an institutional level. These social groups are denied cultural and social legitimacy by being denied public visibility and recognized presence on national soil.

#### YUGOSLAV HERITAGE

As a key area of historical denial, Yugoslav cultural heritage is left to official oblivion on behalf of institutional actors who fail to give recognition to the cultural history or the vast and rich modern architectural legacy left by this period. Though modernist Yugoslav urban design, monuments and architecture have been highly regarded abroad, such types of cultural monuments are rendered illegitimate by local political leaders.

#### OTTOMAN HERITAGE

The concept ‘nesting orientalisms’ is particularly relevant in a Balkan setting, as it describes the contest between countries and people to be more European than their neighbors, as they affix an inferior status to the peoples, regions or nations they declare are more ‘Oriental’ than themselves.<sup>76</sup> The concept of “nesting Orientalisms” is a phenomenon of the Balkan region, in which different communities accuse each other as being more Oriental, to emphasize their own modernity, European credentials and prestige. This process is imbued with a process of national self-othering, in which the least European identities and pasts become alienated and dispensable as they potentially problematic while they detract from claims to European modernity. These identification schemes have social implications, as these issues are enmeshed with cultural, national, ethnic and class hierarchies, which battle for a position of dominance. Despite the expressed tolerance for diversity, certain varieties of sites, cultures and histories are often excluded, and not granted access to representation within the apparently-open yet actually circumscribed bounds of ‘diversity.’ We see images easily, but the process of recognizing what types of portrayals are missing, and what cultures’ pasts are excluded from the picture is more difficult.

In this frame of mind, the national pasts of Ottoman rule and also the socialist state prove problematic to underlying a state’s European credentials. Indeed, losing connection to the Oriental, and ‘othered’ associations is one way in which many Balkan states are laying claim to their European-ness, following the logic of “Orientlos beziehungsweise

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<sup>76</sup> Bakić-Hayden, Milica, R.M Hayden. “Orientalist Variations on the Theme “Balkans”: Symbolic Geography in Recent Yugoslav Cultural Politics.” *Slavic Review* Spring 1992, Vol. 51 Issue 1 p1-15.

Orientierungslos-werden des europäischen Ich.”<sup>77</sup> The assimilation of European valuation schemes, and the internalization of an Orientalist paradigm that privilege a ‘self-confidently ‘progressive’ ‘modern’ and ‘rational’ Europe over the putatively ‘stagnant’ ‘backward ‘traditional’ and mystical societies of the Orient.<sup>78</sup>

A number of major types of monuments and heritage are absent from representations of Serbian place identity, including: *modern history, socialist heritage, architecture signifying the presence of religious and ethnic minorities, modernist architecture and monuments (which typically have Yugoslav connotations), industrial heritage, folk culture, partisan monuments, agrarian heritage, battle sites (particularly those from WWII), Ottoman heritage; fountains, hamams, mosques and other monuments with Oriental connotations,*<sup>79</sup> *pre-Slavic archaeology and rural spatial ensembles.*

### 3.7 PLURALISM AND PUBLIC CULTURE

The oblivion and neglect of parts of Serbia’s pasts has negative impacts for public culture in a society looking to support and foster diversity and understanding. The dominant constructions of national origins has in some ways a negative influence, many citizens remain unacquainted with the full spectrum of the rich and multilayered past. This also exerts a negative force on the educational system, in which pupils are only exposed to history from particular times and directions, and have a limited cultural and artistic sphere of understanding, appreciation or identification of the region’s diversity. The European Union’s emphasis on diversity and multiculturalism allows for an open and flexible interpretation of European belonging, yet however there are unspoken and contentious limits of this broad concept, that are tested and contested at the outer limits of the Balkans. Europe’s construction of its ‘Others’ is important to the creation of its self-concept, yet at the same time, Europe, or at least its political manifestation, emphasizes its liberality, diversity and accommodating

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<sup>77</sup> Pelz, Annagretz. *Reisen durch die eigene Fremde*. Cologne: Bohlau, 1993.

<sup>78</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage, 1979.

<sup>79</sup> An interesting example of the politicization of architecture and identity in this case, is the cultural heritage of Kosovo. Even though Serbia still claims protected sites in Kosovo, its claims to Orthodox heritage are part of its claim to sovereign rule. However, interestingly, though a significant portion, if not a majority, of Serbia’s listed protected sites in Kosovo are of Ottoman or Islamic heritage, these sites are completely absent in the representation of national heritage and identity through institutional self-depiction. One can only wonder the political implications if Serbia actively asserted ownership of these ‘other’ types of sites, in contested Kosovo. This would break the ethno-nationalist mold of Serbian nationhood, while it would recognize and substantiate the claims of Kosovar cultural presence, and at the same time, could be seen an imperialist offense.

sensitivity to difference, which places Serbia in a precarious position in relation to its own past. By reaching out towards past plurality over exclusionary and singular notions of the past, the construction of the present culture is granted new depth. The next chapter will explore some of this historical depth, and its inevitable contradiction, paradox and irony.

## CHAPTER 4: SPATIAL PRACTICE

### *Case Study: Ušće*

#### 4.1 THE LIMITS OF REPRESENTATION: SPATIAL PRACTICES IN TRANSITION

When examining spatial practice through textual or verbal discourse, we must acknowledge the complexity, idiosyncrasy and indeterminacy of practice and proceed with caution that here our investigation will be inevitably limited through the filter of layers of verbal representation and analytic interpretation. Spatial practices are simply *lived*, not *represented*. This is also to say that the representation of socially-embedded practices covered here will inevitably reduce the infinite complexity of ‘life as lived,’ which exceeds depiction and description. Though all life is actually ‘lived’ and carried out into reality through spatial practice only a small portion of such actions are transcribed, recorded or otherwise represented into a discourse, entailing symbolic selections, reductions and omissions. Michel De Certeau’s concept of ‘pedestrian speech acts’ recognizes the symbolic importance of the miniscule everyday, stylistic and qualitative practices in space that are untraceable and untraced yet still convey meanings that are outside of the sphere of articulation.<sup>80</sup> This sphere of activities that are ‘performed yet unread’ is difficult, indeed mysterious, to penetrate and understand, and further, is much of the source of polysemy and contradiction over landscape and its symbols considered here, as spatial practice is both the medium and interface that mediates the personal and the political. Due in part to the methodological limitations of lack of data considering informal or non-legitimate symbolic social practices and performances in space, we will focus here on social-spatial practice and performance of sites as they are enacted and manipulated by changing social and political systems. That considered, this inevitably reductionistic exploration of how spaces are practiced in light of historical and

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<sup>80</sup> Taking the common example of walking, he notes that though everyday practices, activities and actions may not be given representation, they can convey meanings and communicate through their style, and still exert a silent, yet existing influence. Acknowledging the importance of such quotidian rhythms and behaviors in the social production and practice of place, we likewise recognize the shortage of research and data about everyday acts and behavior in space.

political changes reveals that the initial intent of those who conceived the space is not always respected, and in practice spaces are acted, practiced, used and interpreted in ways that do not mould to their 'original' intentions or in line with their established or purportedly cemented pasts.

#### 4.2 SOCIAL BIOGRAPHIES OF UNSTABLE OBJECTS

Rather than reading place by how sites are defined at the current moment in time by the incumbent socio-political and ideological order, the following analysis of place will examine an ensemble of sites across time to reveal a number of their intersecting, conflicting and overlapping meanings, social functions and changing political utility. Kopytoff's idea of a 'social biography of objects' provides a longitudinal mode of analysis to understand the variable meanings, functions, interpretations, relevance and statuses of cultural objects as they shift between social and historical contexts.<sup>81</sup>

Taking this biographical approach towards the study of cultural artifacts and applying it to sites of national memory, the following case study aims to present a cross section of ideological, political and historical forces at play in the more recent chapters of Serbia's history by providing a type of 'social biography of space'. We will examine as spaces and their structures as they float from the sacrosanct to the secular, in and out of 'national' status and meanings, while re-casting the symbolic landscape of non-aligned socialist Yugoslavia in terms of Euro-oriented democratic Serbia, as these spaces are molded to reinforce legitimacy and power of the dominant order through revolving regimes. We note that though these spaces have been influenced and practiced by different orders in the past, the alteration of their signification and functionality in the present moment makes these spaces strategic instruments in reinforcing symbolic and pragmatic aspects of any form of state power or social order.

A case study of historic sites in the Ušće confluence will focus on the changing status of national memory and its objects along with its continual recreation and refashioning in and out of various modes of legitimacy. This spatial biography will examine the precarious position of sites bridging the gap between consecutive regimes, and lying between disparate, even oppositional regimes of politics, memory and value.

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<sup>81</sup> Kopytoff, Igor. The cultural biography of things: commoditization as process. *The Social life of things: Commodities in cultural perspective*, Arjun Appadurai, ed. Cambridge University Press, 1986.

#### 4.3 CASE STUDY: UŠĆE: A TOPOGRAPHIC BIOGRAPHY

As an analysis of the spatial ensemble of Ušće and its constituent parts will illustrate, the significance, intentional function and interpretation of sites of memory is situational and changes with the ruling order. Such places are transformed, activated, molded, or are practiced differently, according to the current political or social need. Shelving static notions of essential and stable identities, these changing facades of national history and selfhood reveal national identity as a fluid and performative concept.

##### UŠĆE AT A GLANCE

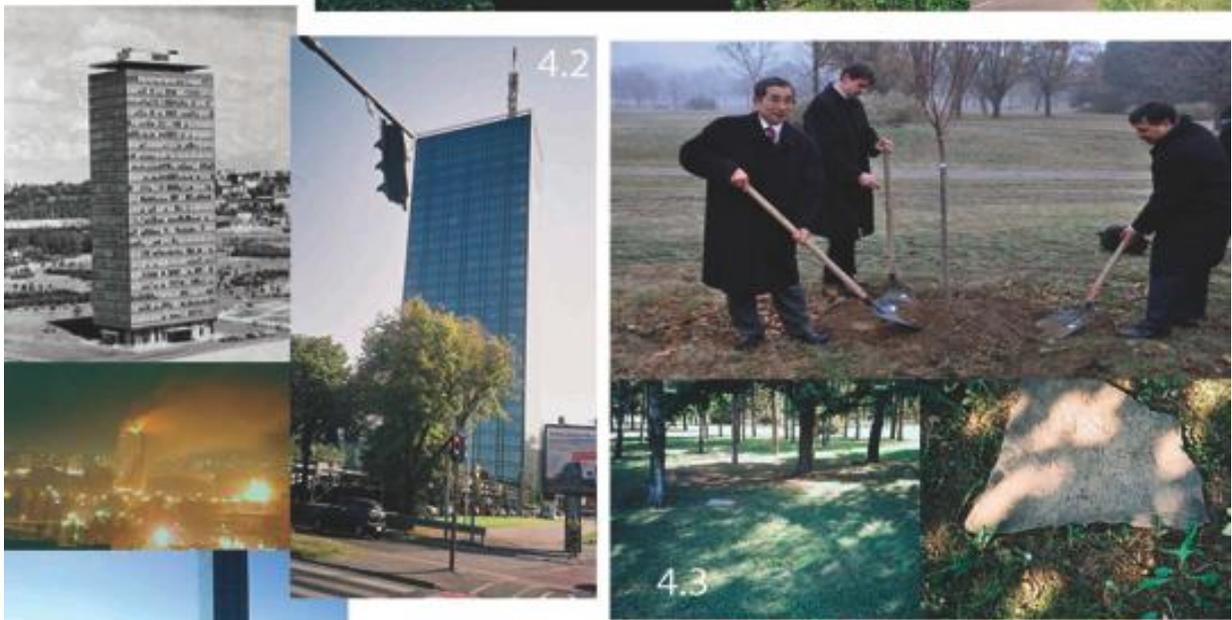
At the confluence of the Sava and Danube rivers in Belgrade lies the flat and grassy area, Ušće, which is a sort of unlikely and unofficial spatial ‘ensemble’ or assemblage. Though aesthetically and spatially dissimilar, a number of miscellaneous and interrelated sites of various national interest and consequence are connected in a common yet disjointed soil. One of the things that make this area unique is its peculiar assortment of interrelated historical, governmental, recreational, memorial and commercial spaces, which have distinct, interrelated and disharmonious politically charged associations. Embodying a historically dialectic, or perhaps better, *dialogic* landscape, these sites converse with each other in a type of ongoing spatial dialogue about the past that continues to the present moment.

Ušće represent a cross-section across Serbian history and its constant fluctuation of the political, social and economic interests. Within this area, these following spaces do not form a coherent symbolic, historic or holistic aesthetic ‘spatial ensemble’ or whole, but are rather disparate, individual architectural and historic elements, held together through their paradoxical messages and inter-referentiality to layered political regimes forming a type of heterotopia of time, in which multiple eras and times continue to coexist, as these disconnected parts from different periods tell of a convoluted and unclear national story. Furthermore, Ušće shows us interrupted meanings and memories, which have been diverted from their intended pathway. While each of the sites examined has its ‘own’ internal history, these distinct pasts are situational, contextual and connected to the other sites and pasts in the surroundings. Examined both individually and contextually, these sites construct not just a ‘layered’ history of spatial practice, but a dialogic, conversational and indeed argumentative history that is still somehow talking and provides an entry point for exploration of how Yugoslavia was produced and disassembled.

As a key area for several major state-building projects, Ušće has come to connote the presence of a strong state power. Across the Sava River, the grassy space was the first area of what was to become 'New Belgrade', at the time conceived as a type of marshy 'no-mans-land' between 'historic' Belgrade and Zemun. The past of even the land itself has become host to all forms of political expansion, triumphantalism, spectacle, destruction and complete transformation of the state. From land around the area that was resurrected from the swamps in a spirit of national glory, to utopian social engineering of the state, to the pop concerts of today, the terrain itself has been put to spectacular uses garnered for the sake of public image.<sup>82</sup>As the first development built on the other side of the Sava river, we will first examine the social biography of the Belgrade Fair: Staro Sajmište.

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<sup>82</sup> Blagojević, Liljana. Back to the Future of New Belgrade: Functional Past of the Modern City. Department of Architectural and Urban Design, Faculty of Architecture University of Belgrade.



4.1 Staro Sajmište

4.2 Ušće Tower

4.3 Friendship Park

4.4 Eternal Flame Monument

4.5 Park of Europe

## STARO SAJMIŠTE

As the first development on the other side of the Sava River, the Belgrade Fair, otherwise known as Staro Sajmište encompassed at its very beginning, the glory of the state. Staro Sajmište is a quintessential example of one place whose significance and past has many changing and complex layers, caught up in the politics of an ever-evolving present. Through a tragic turn of events, and a radically different use of space, the fairgrounds have been transformed from a spectacular place of glory, pleasure, pride and amusement into an anonymous site of mourning and pain.

Staro Sajmište was originally built as a fairgrounds for international exhibitions, built during the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in the vision of national glory and technological advancement. The fairgrounds, completed in 1938, consisted of 13 buildings and was the first Belgrade construction project on the West side of the Sava river, which would eventually make way for the construction of the utopian vision of the socialist city of New Belgrade to follow. The fairgrounds served a pivotal cultural role in the late thirties, attracting international attention and garnering respect from the wider world. It housed, amongst other things, not only the Belgrade carnival but also the first TV studio of the Balkans as it held a prestigious position internationally. However, in just a couple of years the social-cultural significance and glory of the fairgrounds changed completely, as the site became repurposed in an unexpected and deeply tragic way.<sup>83</sup>

In 1941, as German occupation swept into Belgrade, dominating and controlling the city's spaces, the fairgrounds were quickly identified as the most technically advanced building site in the vicinity with access to both water and land. Following suit, the fairgrounds were transformed into a 'collection centre,' a euphemism for a prison, and eventually, a Nazi concentration camp aimed at exterminating Jews, dubbed "Judenlager Semlin". The camp housed and executed mostly women and children until 1942, when it was declared "Jew free" and transformed into a work camp. It was the biggest work camp in Southeast Europe. It is estimated that approximately 100,000 prisoners passed through Staro Sajmište, of whom, around 48,000 died. However, documentation and detailed historical evidence from these events are scarce, due partly to ideological reasons, but mostly to circumstantial factors, as national technocratic apparatuses do not function as they normally do during foreign occupation. Indeed the lack of recognition for these memories and legitimacy of this horrendous chapter of history immediately in its aftermath has only exacerbated the questions

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<sup>83</sup> <http://www.open.ac.uk/socialsciences/semlin/sr/sajmiste-logor.php>

and uncertainties of today, as there is still widespread uncertainty about the actual events that occurred there.<sup>84</sup>

Following WWII, the site entered a new chapter in its history, in the regime of socialist Yugoslavia. Interestingly, despite the enormous tragedy at the hands of German occupiers, the new Communist regime never made an effort to memorialize or confer a special status on the site.<sup>85</sup> It was largely ignored, and its traumatic history was marginalized in favor a narrative of portraying Partisan glory. The site remained vacant and unused, until 1948, when about half of the fairgrounds were destroyed to make way for the first constructions of the socialist New Belgrade under the banners of progress and modernity, which neglected the painful past of the site. The fair that was originally produced to display the greatness of the state and that suffered immense tragedies as the victims of foreign occupation, was again co-opted into a project to portray and demonstrate the state's glory.

Over time, the site of Sajmište became socially repurposed in more and more diversified ways, as it was converted for a great sphere of activities and functionalities. The value of pragmatic function and ideological gain of the space was determined to outweigh the site's symbolic or historical value as a site of remembrance. Thus, spaces on the former concentration camp were repurposed as ateliers for a number of local painters and artists, while other buildings became converted to businesses and residences. Especially with the more glamorous construction of New Belgrade surrounding it, this historical value seemed negligible and the dark past of Staro Sajmište was eventually pushed into anonymity.

Changing types of value and function surround Staro Sajmište, putting it at the center of debate, and making it a locus for social negotiation. Now the site is positioned between a singularized and commoditized 'exchangeable' place, after decades of being a usable and living space. Because these historic events had little political value or ideological function, they were regarded as socially and politically invaluable for the Socialist regime, as the space became practiced not as a frozen and quiet *lieux de memoire* for contemplation and national mourning, but a space for functional use. Especially by the late 1980s, Serbia's death camps had become particularly neglected. After having been officially ignored and forgotten by the Yugoslav government for many years, only recently is attention gradually being drawn back

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<sup>84</sup> Shortly Afterwards, we heard the gas van. Survivor Testimony and the Writing of History in Socialist Yugoslavia

<sup>85</sup> Srjan Radović. "Politics of Space and Memory in Serbia or: How One Learns to Stop Worrying about the Camp and Love the Mall"

to these neglected parts of national history.<sup>86</sup> Following the collapse of Yugoslavia, there has been a renewed debate about the possibilities for commemorating the site. Following the new dominant neoliberal logic of democratic Serbia, in some of the plans for commemoration, it is clear that the way the space is to be produced should follow the times. Some of the suggestions for re-making the site as a place for commemoration wish to recreate the space as an info-tainment complex structured around consumption and led by private property developers.<sup>87</sup> Cultural-historical memories can be a highly profitable enterprise, some have realized, as the commercialization of history and heritage they regard as a lucrative way to deal with unsettled historical issues. However, because the site has been restructured over the spans of political regimes and their corresponding eras of spatial practice to encompass private residence, business, artistic production and commemoration, the ambiguity of the site and its use makes commemorative prospects complicated, as the site is anything but singularized or preserved, as it is in continual modification every day through the work and lives of people.<sup>88</sup>

As different types of value and function battle for supremacy, the site is suspended between physical use and partial commemoration, wide public neglect, national historical significance and potential opportunity for private profit, as it is straddled amongst regimes of value and memory. The change of the political system and its changes of value also re-contextualize the site. It now appears that the historic significance of the site is not just valuable out of its historic value, but also in terms of its economic, political and social merit of this commemoration. The site has been re-approached as a potential source of other kinds of economic value and also promoting social values of peace, tolerance and respect for diversity.

Staro Sajmište is an example of what happens when nations choose to forget, and how spaces that may have national significance are reduced to banal elements, forgotten in the everyday chaos of the urban environment. While concentration camps and other sites of mass tragedy are usually regarded as sacred places for contemplation and remembrance not to be

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<sup>86</sup> Shortly Afterwards, we heard the gas van. Survivor Testimony and the Writing of History in Socialist Yugoslavia

<sup>87</sup> Srdjan Radovic. "Politics of Space and Memory in Serbia or: How One Learns to Stop Worrying about the Camp and Love the Mall"

<sup>88</sup> Lajbenšperger, Nenad. Personal Interview. Historian-conservator. Specialties: Partisan Monuments, Yugoslav Heritage. Institute for Protection of Cultural Monuments in Serbia. 5.7.2011

disturbed by the influence of commercialization, in the case of Staro Sajmište, this is eventually exactly what happened.<sup>89</sup>

## UŠĆE TOWER

The Ušće Tower is a dramatic example of how changes in political power and social practice can reconfigure the meaning and functionality of a given place, moving it in and out of a sacred, protected status.

Built as a symbol of the power of Yugoslavia, the Ušće tower was originally built with this idea in both the tower's striking image and vital function. The tower was built in 1964 and was designed by Serbian architect Mihailo Jankovic, who garnered much of his fame during Tito's regime by creating and participating in designing some of the era's most prominent buildings such as Partizan Stadium, SIV building and the 25th of May Museum.

The tower, a soaring, governmental skyscraper was built as a symbol for communist pride as it served as the headquarters for the Central Committee of the League of Communists in the former Yugoslavia until 1990. The tower was built to demonstrate the state's power, modernity and strength, showcasing Yugoslavia to the world.<sup>90</sup> It was also iconic and groundbreaking, as it broke with conventions of administrative architecture, that typically adopt neoclassical and not modern architectural motifs. This modernism defined and embodied Yugoslavia's utopian ideological project, political vision, as well as its diplomatic positioning. The building had a federal significance, symbolizing the unity of the Yugoslav state as the site where Tito would meet with various republican leaders. The building became a physical embodiment of federal socialist Yugoslav power, conveying a penetrating sense of the state's vision, authority and modernity to all of Yugoslavia.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Near Daschau, plans for a nearby shopping mall were overturned in respect of the sensitivity for the spirit of place. This has not been the case near Sajmiste, where the building of a nearby shopping mall did not much as resonate as being an ethical concern. Radovic, Srdjan. "Politics of Space and Memory in Serbia or: How One Learns to Stop Worrying about the Camp and Love the Mall"

<sup>90</sup> These qualities evidenced themselves through the building's eventual attack during the 1999 NATO bombing, when the tower was hit by 12 Tomahawk missiles and 3 bombings and did not collapse under global media attention. The building's ability to withstand attack surely influenced how it was perceived, as not falling to foreign attack.

<sup>91</sup> Kulić, Vladimir. *Land of the In-Between: Modern Architecture and the State in Socialist Yugoslavia, 1945-65*. Doctor's Dissertation. University of Texas: Austin, 2009.

However this federal and state-controlled symbolic purity of the space became interrupted and polluted with more secular meanings through political change. When Milosevic came to power in 1990, the Socialist Party of Serbia unlawfully took over the tower, making the symbolic heart of the Federal Yugoslavia something increasingly Serbian and sending strong signals of Serbian takeover throughout Yugoslavia. During the 1990s the Socialist Party also slowly began to privatize portions of the formerly exclusively government-owned building. Milosevic agreed to lease a number of floors of the tower to companies for commercial and financial gain. The space's functionality and significance had changed, as these changes converted the tower from a site exclusively for the production of political power, to an increasingly commercial entity and financial power. The sacred space of the nation was remade as something more vernacular and even profane.

This also constituted a change of values and an orientation to new incentives, where symbolic values of status and dignity become replaced with economic ones of monetary profit. The once prominent, remarkable and highly-symbolic state building was slowly turning into an office building, with expendable companies, while it gradually lost its original identity and gained a new one as an office building housing a number of TV stations and media outlets such as Pink TV. In many ways, this transformation process has been representative of a broader post-Socialist societal situation where once-historical spaces become subject to and recovered by private commercial entities. Over time, the tower which functioned as a stronghold of communist power has been reproduced as a de-sanctified space, and eventually, in a later phase of its life, as a place entirely consistent with the social practice and logic of the global market.

As the headquarters of the communist party, the tower embodied the spirit and legacy of Yugoslav communism, a dangerous symbol which eventually led to its demise, through acts of symbolic violence against the political regime itself. Perhaps the most critical juncture in the site's biography was its bombardment by NATO forces in 1999, which also imbued the building with new types of geopolitical signification. Positioned as a symbolic threat by NATO forces, the tower came to take on a significance of foreign attack by Serbians. While the attack on the building had no casualties, it enraged the passions of those living in Belgrade who felt this aggressive attack was without reason, purpose or justification. The building was attacked for the idea of what it stood for, and the bombing cleansed the tower of its official association with communism, which made it ready to give way to a new state of affairs. From its inception as the Tower for the Central Committee of Communists, the tower became the

new national center for international finance and commerce as the country entered a new political period.

After it was virtually destroyed in 1999, reconstruction started in 2003, as the former state building was passed into private hands. The majority of the funding behind the reconstruction was in the hands of MPC Properties. MPC started out as a company wanting to rebuild former Yugoslavia with the glory they had come to love from the "glory years". Sooner rather than later, they changed to adopt the strategy of making profit from creating new buildings, while erasing the history of the ones previously there instead of rebuilding iconic and historically significant buildings to their prime. As of 2008 American investment bank Merrill Lynch has become a co-owner of MPC Properties, thereby also becoming one of the primary investors of prime real-estate in former Yugoslavia willing to invest \$600 million. Roger Barris, the European Head of Merrill Lynch's Global Principal Investment, indicates the wider expansion of the private sector in Serbia, saying "The partnership of Merrill Lynch and MPC Properties is significant for Serbia, because it is a good indicator that trust exists from foreign investors for investment and the further development of the Serbian market". This market indeed developed, as the surrounding site of the tower became an international marketplace of a large shopping mall, dominated mainly by global franchises. Concurrently, the current commercial management of the Ušće tower does not acknowledge its important Yugoslav past, as it presents the building's history without reference to its vital preceding political function:

*"Refurbished in the year 2005, Ušće Tower is the highest building in Belgrade and highest office property in the Balkans. Ušće Tower is located at the confluence of the Sava and Danube River, in the heart of the CBD and within five minutes reach of the Old City. Ušće Tower is conveniently located with quick access by car to the E-75 highway (5min) and Belgrade Airport – Nikola Tesla (20min). The adjacent Ušće Shopping Center is the largest shopping mall in Serbia and provides for a unique blend of work and leisure environment."*<sup>92</sup>

The national history in the building's past is all but lost awash in a sea of consumer spectacle, since 2009, when the Ušće shopping mall opened. It has become one of the largest social hubs in Belgrade, attracting visitors with global brands, amusements and entertainment. Its function as a center for social activity, leisure and consumption, rather than as a former governmental site, is how it appears on the social map.

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<sup>92</sup> <http://www.uscetower.com/page/About-USCE-Tower>

The significance of the building is today recognized by its current consumptive practices, international commerce and global economy and it is scarcely recognized that this now commercial space once served a fundamental governmental function, and as an icon of the socialist Yugoslav state whose connections now have been effectively severed and left to oblivion. From an austere and intimidating site of national power, representation and penetration, the born-again, privately-owned Ušće is now the largest center for consumption in the Balkans. In the course of only ten years, the Ušće tower went from a sacred, iconic and important national building emanating the dignified and immense power of the state, to a sacrilegious building serving mostly foreign private commercial interests. As with many buildings, the fate of unprotected historic sites now lies at the discretion of the rising real estate development industry, rather than at the hence of public interests. From the shakiness of shifting political systems, now historic infrastructure is placed in the unpredictable hands of the market.

The Ušće tower also relates to and conveys messages with its surrounding sites: Though the site is in the same vicinity of the Sajmište concentration camp, the developers did not face any objections to building on the grounds of disrespecting the spirit of the site.<sup>93</sup> While most official memory of the Ušće tower's governmental function has been to systematic oblivion, there remains one interesting exception. The nearby Eternal Flame Monument was built to commemorate the bombing that led to the official communist end of the Ušće Tower. However, considering the shopping center a consumerist celebration of global cosmopolitanism in the wake of the tower's bombing, we will first have a look at the irony of an adjacent park dedicated to international friendship and peace of the socialist variety.

#### FRIENDSHIP PARK

Also situated in the plain along the confluence of rivers is the 'Friendship Park,' inaugurated in 1961. The Friendship Park was the first site built before the nearby Eternal Flame monument, and the new Park of Europe. Though both of these newer additions have great symbolic implications for international politics, the Friendship Park was built in a spirit of universal friendship and non-alignment, in an era of Yugoslavia's international prominence

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<sup>93</sup> Srdjan Radovic. "Politics of Space and Memory in Serbia or: How One Learns to Stop Worrying about the Camp and Love the Mall."

and peace. This park is a tribute to non-alignment, and concurrently, it symbolizes values of political independence, autonomy and worldwide international friendship.

The historical context of this park's founding made it a political statement and symbol of a Yugoslav era characterized by international diplomacy, prominence and power. The park was built in the spirit of non-alignment, mutual non-aggression and peaceful international diplomacy. This movement cultivated friendship and good relations with foreign dignitaries from all around the world, particularly newly-independent nations, looking for a new beginning after years anti-colonial struggle.

To inaugurate the first meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement in Belgrade in 1961, a momentous international occasion, Tito inaugurated the opening of friendship park, where international dignitaries visiting the city each planted a tree into the ground in a symbolic gesture of peace, solidarity and growth. Through subsequent visits to Yugoslavia over many years, this tradition continued as notable figures and international leaders planted trees while meeting with Tito. As a result, this park of trees represents a diverse constellation of wide-reaching and positive international diplomacy with countries from all around the world, rooted in a common idea. Each tree is marked by the name of the dignitary who planted it, and though there are many trees planted by leaders of countries who may have been enemies with each other, they were all planted into the common ground of a shared symbolic friendship with Tito's Yugoslavia. The park reaffirms Yugoslavia's status as a cultural, economic and political common ground between many societies at a point of global conflict. This park represents a glory time of international prominence, when in many ways Yugoslavia held an interstitial position of global affairs, betwixt Cold War binaries as well as between imperial forces and their newly decolonized lands. However, since these times and their geopolitical tensions have passed, the park's significance has less relevance and has crumbled into virtual anonymity as the site has been re-contextualized through surrounding historical and social changes.

After the fall of Yugoslavia, sanctions and the end of thriving international diplomacy, the park had little significance and became abandoned and irrelevant. Over time, the once-prominent friendship park has fallen curbside, as it looks like an ordinary park and is not a popular park for leisure activity, as it is not well-maintained. Its relative invisibility in terms of its promotion or social currency has rendered it unpopular or unknown as a tourist or leisure site. The legitimacy of the site has become submerged as its stones, hidden in soil, worn away by the elements and obscuring the once-prominent names and statuses once visible and prominent. Once representative of national and international glory, peace and

friendship, the park is now reduced to an unremarkable and insignificant place that is seldom noted as a site of interest in Belgrade, partially due to its heavy associations with socialist Yugoslavia.

This park, once representing Yugoslavia's path towards independent socialism and non-alignment has been resituated through spatial practices of social degradation and negligence, has changed to suit the times. Friendship Park in a new political context now physically stands amongst and against newer and conflicting architectural and spatial signs and interpretations, which memorialize and embody evidences of international violence, aggression and hostility, as well as the prospect of geo-political alignment. Surrounding sites and symbols index a breach of international peace, and in response to the collapse of balanced non-alignment, indicate a new supra-national political orientation. These include the nearby Ušće tower, attacked by NATO; the Eternal flame monument, which then condemned each NATO nation by name. Most recent in this negation of the friendship park's original vision is the Park of Europe, which signifies a change of heart since Yugoslavia's days of political non-alignment and opposition to supranational forms of government. Thus, as the parks' significance of international friendship and non-alignment are now oddly juxtaposed with spaces signifying international conflict and violence, as well as Euro-Atlantic integration, the site has fallen off the radar of social and historic significance. As with other spaces with strong Yugoslav associations and significance, the meaning and vision of the site's architects and ideologues have been subject to changes in spatial practice and social order.

#### ETERNAL FLAME MONUMENT

The Eternal Flame monument is situated between the complex of the once Federal Government of Yugoslavia and the bombed Ušće Tower of the former Central Committee. As the only monument created by the Milosevic government, the Eternal Flame Monument has over time, become a symbol for many ambiguous, confused and often-troubled meanings. Created in the wake of the 1999 NATO bombings, most notably, that of the adjacent Ušće Tower, this monument has experienced its share of controversy, though has eventually acquired a marginal and negligible status in the Belgrade symbolic landscape.<sup>94</sup>

Mirjana Markovic, the wife of the late former president Slobodan Milosevic initiated the construction of the monument called "Vecna Vatra," or 'eternal flame.' The monument is

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a tall pillar with a flame on top. It was originally built to commemorate the casualties of the NATO bombing (and notably, destruction of the Ušće tower) and to revere and glorify the strength of the country to with stand it. The text originally written by Markovic for the monument was the following:

*“The fire may burn forever in memory of the war that the 19 NATO countries - the United States, Canada, UK, France, Germany, Holland, Italy, Greece, Turkey, Denmark, Belgium, Spain, Portugal, Iceland, Norway, Luxembourg, Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic - lead against Serbia on 24 March to 10 June 1999. Let the memory burn eternally of the heroic defense of Serbia, in which all people were involved. Let the flame burn eternally and to the whole world. To be free, the world must find in itself the courage and strength with which we fought and defended in the spring and summer 1999.”<sup>95</sup>*

However noble its appearance, the construction of the monument assuredly had other political objectives in mind, as it was a symbolic demonstration of temporary power used by the Milosevic regime. The original height of the structure was supposed to be 78 meters tall to symbolize the 78-day duration of the bombing, but due to budget and speed constraints it was capped to only 27 meters. The monument was built in just 10 days in the spring of 2000, leaving a rushed impression. It was appropriately placed only 300 meters from the Ušće Tower, former headquarters of the Milosevic's Communist Party Central Committee.<sup>96</sup>

The monument was used as a political ploy in channeling uproarious national sentiments. During the monument's official opening ceremony in June of 2000, Milosevic was repeatedly referred to as a hero of Serbia and its people as gigantic crowds filled Ušće's grassy plains. The opening ceremony also was the official lighting of the eternal flame on top of the monument. Milosevic moved the elections forward to September of that year to try to hang on to the popularity he once enjoyed. The DOS easily won the elections on September 24<sup>th</sup> and after only eleven days in parliament, the new government shut off the gas supply to the "eternal" monument thereby extinguishing its actually temporary flame. The official reason was that the cost was too high to maintain, in any case, symbolically defacing and delegitimizing the monument as a public embarrassment, and marking a new status quo with the fall of Milosevic.<sup>97</sup>

Likewise, following the new democratic regime's interest in Euro-Atlantic integration, the text on the monuments incriminating NATO for the bombing was also to be removed, and replaced with texts more neutral which make only obscure references to the bombing.

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<sup>95</sup> Vasić, Biljana. “Postavljanje spomen-obeliska u Beogradu” Vreme nr. 493. 17 June 2000.

<sup>96</sup> <http://arhiva.kurir-info.rs/Arhiva/2006/novembar/01/B-01-01112006.shtml>

<sup>97</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slobodan\\_Milošević](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slobodan_Milošević)

However, despite the monument's use by political players, the space is subject to changing social practices.

Still, in the vicinity of the monument there are alternative reminders calling upon NATO's role in the bombing, as much as legitimate authorities have tried to remove the Markovic's text and its threat to peaceful Euro-Atlantic relations. Large scale graffiti around the area reminds now calls upon NATO as violent aggressors; fascists, to be precise. Such un-officiated spatial practices attempt to challenge the official meanings of space, and are illustrations of ways that spatial practice is not only politically, but also socially produced. On a wider scale, graffiti and posters have become a major channel of communication for dissident or nationalist speech, as social and symbolic acts attempt to project new interpretations onto dominant spatial narratives.<sup>98</sup> This site, as with other contested or charged political sites, has been subject to social acts and the interpretation of the social imagination. However, this is not the only incidence of alteration of the monument's official textual display, as the site has become subject to further social-spatial activities. In the years following 2000, the monument started to deteriorate rapidly. At first it became the home to skaters and other youth cultures. The monument was quickly transformed into a graffiti-engulfed hangout spot. Someone had painted the letter 'u' in the monument's title, which changed the name to mean eternally *on* fire. Some people saw it as a referral to the amount of marijuana smoked in the vicinity of the monument, while others saw it as a political statement. The marijuana slowly gave way to harder drugs and drugs addicts. Vecna Vatra had been transformed by spatial practices from a site intended for national mourning, to a popular hangout spot for drug addicts sleeping on its park benches.<sup>99</sup> What was once built as a rushed and haphazard sign of strength and the resilience of the Serbian people had turned into an obsolete and insignificant monument from another era.

The new governments since its building have regarded the monument as an embarrassment and aberration, leaving it aside in any restoration or maintenance project.<sup>100</sup> Despite the attempts of the monument to honor the victims of the NATO bombing, many local citizens regard this monument as merely an embodiment of the cultural memory of the

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<sup>98</sup> Andrei Simic. Serbia, Betwixt and Between: Culture, Politics and Images of the West. *Anthropology of East Europe Review* 2008 Vol 27, No 1 88-98

<sup>99</sup> <http://www.politika.rs/ilustro/2201/7.htm>

<sup>100</sup> Dragičević Šesic, Milena. "Memory Policies and Monument Building in Southeastern Europe." *Memory of the City*. Belgrade: Kulturklammer Centre for Cultural Interactions. 2012.

Milosevic regime. The Eternal Flame, situated oddly within the 'Friendship Park,' now incites moods of hostility towards Milosevic more than it commemorates the bombing or arouses public sympathy. Similarly, it and the bombing it was built to commemorate, conflict with the values of mutual peace and friendship intended in the park where it is located.

With political transformation, we see that the new government strategically fights to change the meaning and interpretation of the monument's original text, intention and signification while spatial practices of unofficial social forces remake, react and reinterpret this site, giving it more plastic significance. Despite the force of political authorities to create and legitimate monuments that reinforce their power, the reception and interpretation of sites can be subject to the practices, wills, behaviors and actions of the public.

#### THE PARK OF EUROPE

The Park of Europe is a relatively new addition to the hotbed of political symbolism along the Ušće confluence, which is also considered to be a part of the Friendship Park. The park was inaugurated in 2010 for the "Days of Europe" Festival by the Youth Coalition Against Violence. The park is symbol of a "safe place to live" where people can "cultivate European values" like "tolerance, diversity and non-violence."<sup>101</sup>

The park consists of a circular pathway, along which 12 yellow star-shaped planters with vegetation are situated, making it a large-scale environmental projection of the European Union logo. The park was made to symbolize "Serbia's connection to Europe." Still despite this symbolic insertion of European presence into the often symbolic and tumultuous political symbolism of the Ušće area, the park remains relatively unknown and insignificant. However, though not granted social significance, it is notable that such an insertion supra-national political presence and belonging might be allowed on such a place so firmly dedicated to the principles of political non-alignment as the Friendship Park. The past meanings and intentions of the park have been altered and realigned by moves in the present moment and new political ambitions.

The presence of the park of Europe, in addition to the Eternal Flame Monument, within the Friendship Park creates a sort of tension and questioning of international positioning across time and political systems, which both implicate questions of historic and present geo-political orientation. The Eternal Flame Monument and the Park of Europe have virtually diametric attitudes and positions towards the international community, and are both

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<sup>101</sup> "Otvoren "Park Evrope" na Novom Beogradu" Tanjug, 9 May 2010.  
<http://www.blic.rs/Vesti/Beograd/188571/Otvoren-Park-Evrope-na-Novom-Beogradu>

rooted in the ground of the Friendship park, which respects international peace. Similarly, a range of different attitudes and values are expressed in these sites: peace, diplomacy, tolerance, anger, diversity, revenge, mimicry, nationalism, anti-imperialism, honor, pride and humility. Considering the Friendship Park, we see yet another way that Yugoslav space is reproduced within Westward-looking terms, as the Yugoslav legacy of non-alignment has given way to advancing the idea of membership in the supra-national body of the European Union as society's values may be at a point of revision.

#### 4.4 DIALOGIC LANDSCAPES

The 'ensemble' of Ušće illustrates the changing tides of continual political and cultural struggles of space across different forms of social order. As this spatial biography illustrates, sites do not have a fixed stable identity, functionality or 'true spirit', but that the identity, function and interpretation of a place is in continual flux. Furthermore, these sites' pasts are informed not locally and directly by the site and its immediate surroundings, but from forces far and wide, as broader social, economic, militaristic, political processes from 'abroad' change spaces. The meaning, functionality, and referential orientation of sites is constantly renegotiated as society's values, beliefs, guiding logic and motivations also change.

As these examples from Ušće illustrate, the memory and meaning of one particular place does not remain constant, but changes with the politics and social processes of the moment. At the same time, not all of a place's pasts are regarded in the same way, and some vanish into complete oblivion. The spatial ensemble of Ušće presents many juxtaposed and contradictory political and social messages, and brings into conflict memories related to the Yugoslav past with the Serbian political present. With a multi-layered past and personal 'biography,' these spaces do not have just one 'correct' or official interpretation; but rather to people who experienced these concurrently physical and social changes, they hold a multiplicity of possible meanings, relevance and significance.

Neither do these spaces stand alone in peace or unanimity. They talk back and forth with one another, sometimes arguing, and yelling for dominance and attention, at other times whispering subtle and silent messages to passers by. These plastic places are urban texts in social and political history, and are double mirrors situated between the past and future, between which we try to position ourselves.

## NATIONAL MEMORY IN PRACTICE

As each regime creates physical embodiments of their own power, the incumbent social system also render the sites of past powers politically and strategically useful or obsolete. When examining this spatial ensemble, we see the spatial practices of official memory are typically selective and strategic, as certain pasts are conveniently forgotten or side stepped. The continuity between and tensions amongst these sites, from the Yugoslav kingdom to German occupation, from socialist Yugoslavia to NATO intervention, and from the Milosevic regime to Euro-oriented democratic Serbia evidences the inconsistencies of political regimes in their claiming of memory and re-fashioning of space. As these sites implicate the state's temporal anchoring, international position and social mode of production, we observe the ways in which the non-aligned socialist Yugoslavia is being transformed through official spatial practice into a Euro-oriented, neoliberal, consumer society, through its signification and functioning.

Overall, these sites of conflicting memories are increasingly converted to a transitional paradigm through their signification or through their functioning, where the socialist past is remade as an officially 'democratic' present moment, ruled by neoliberal logic. Though elements of this spatial ensemble may bear the memory of regimes past, it is the way the spaces are performed, signified and practiced in the present which makes them a productive force of the current social order, as their meaning and use may have been converted to socially reproduce the current order. By examining spatial practices of sites of national memory, we see that the 'essential' interpretation and purpose of space is subject to change, leading to the instability and contentiousness of any one single historical narrative or claim.

## SEMIOTIC PRACTICES

- The Park of Europe directly references Serbia's tightening relationship with the West. It is one of the symbols that signifies Europe's domestication on Serbian territory, by which 'there' comes 'here', and also *becomes* 'here'. This space is a 'friendly' yet direct incursion of a space historically dedicated to the principles of political non-alignment and independence.
- The original sign on the Eternal Flame monument, which expressed hostility towards the NATO countries was changed to one that was more neutral and accommodating towards Euro-Atlantic Integration

- The emblem of the Central Committee for Communism, has been reconstituted as an icon for globalization and consumption

#### OPERATIONAL PRACTICES

- Staro Sajmište has been the subject of renewed interest, equally as a commercial opportunity for an info-tainment attraction, as also an attempt of restoring historic justice and commemorating genocide.
- The former Ušće tower that served vital government functions, now operates as a commercially-owned tower with a shopping mall, serving foreign business interests
- The area of Ušće, loaded with potent national meanings is used to signify, embody and constitute the current state of affairs. This extends to the meanings and use of the grassy area between these various sites, which have likewise changed in functionality and meaning. The space was annexed with national associations that have changed over time, from original expansionist glory, to the austere and powerful center of the federation, and now as a place ‘for the people’. The meetings of Milosevic created this space in an a nationalistic sense, while the several large rock concerts, for mostly Western music, served as evidential proof that Serbia is ‘becoming part of the world’<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Andrei Simic notes the importance of the Rolling Stones concert on July 14, 2007, as putting Serbia back into a stream of global cultural currents” Serbia, Betwixt and Between: Culture, Politics and Images of the West.” Anthropology of East Europe Review 2008 Vol 27, No 1 88-98

## CH 5

### REPRESENTATIONAL SPACES

#### *Case Study: Open Source Memory and Virtual Yugoslavia*

##### 5.1 REPRESENTATIONAL SPACE AND THE WORLD WIDE WEB

In this chapter, we explore the phenomena of national memory occurring in the representational space of the world wide web. As Henri LeFebvre conceptualizes them, representational spaces are spaces as they are perceived through the body, interpreted and internalized through symbolism. Representational spaces are reactive and passive, as they are formulated as psychic responses to physical environments, making symbolic use of its objects. They are loaded with symbolism, meanings, emotions and imagery and other types of signification that may not be exchanged verbally, but only experienced directly and interpreted by the mind.

Henri LeFebvre explains that representational spaces are private, subjective spaces that are not present in discourse, but are perhaps expressed through the arts and other symbol-laden works. Henri LeFebvre wrote his concept of representational spaces decades before the dawn of the internet and could have scarcely imagined the virtual world of the world wide web as a phenomena that is at once both subjective and global. Now we may consider the internet as a type of interactive, interpersonal and intercultural representational space, where private, subjective symbols, feelings and expressions are given a medium and also a social currency. These virtual representational spaces create collages out of bundled associations, images, texts, places, people, images, events, sounds and linked connections filled with personal and social symbolism. Conveying both private and culturally-legible meanings, the world wide web can function as a personal venue for symbolism and expression which may or may not be comprehensible to others, which gives it the capacity to convey the tangled and convoluted symbolic content of representational spaces. As a private and social space, the internet can likewise be considered an inter-subjective representational space.

The internet allows for not just a reflective experience of one's past, but through synthesis and active engagement, combines separate elements to make 'old' contents new and different through their mediation and collaboration with others. The internet is an external storage device for the sharing and dissemination of thoughts, feelings, experiences, memories, images, emotions, and knowledge which enables forms of participation and experience that may normally not have a medium. Private memory and collective knowledge becomes shared

online that may otherwise be held to oneself or else forgotten. The internet also provides an outlet for the outpouring of personal emotion and feelings and provides a context where local practices and wider cultural codes merge and a broader picture of an interlinked geo-political and cultural field emerges, often in unconventional and unanticipated ways.

The web allows likewise a creative possibility to create one's distinct virtual world made in the image of one's mental world, without requesting agreement or consensus. While only a small elite manage to sidestep the passivity of 'users' in real space,<sup>103</sup> in the virtual representational space of the internet, the 'users' of space are now enabled with agency to recreate and transform space and its meanings. These virtual spaces are carved out through an accumulation of miniscule symbolic actions and selections, which also enable the ability to recreate the meaning of 'real' existing spaces, which then become plastic and fluid. In this way, the virtual template of the world wide web allows 'users' the particular agency of self-expression, creativity and signification that does not simply accept and adopt socially received representations but acts as the generative source for new meanings, which carve out representations of one's own distinct sense of place. These representations may not be 'correct' or institutionally valid but yet convey a certain integrity with one's personal world of perspectives, meanings, symbols and experience.

While both virtual and official forms of memory are socially-constructed and fictional to a degree, a fundamental difference can be noticed between the processes of their modes of production. Virtual memories are often formed collectively, collaboratively and often idiosyncratically through a broad base of independent or even unrelated participants, rather than through exclusionary, systematic, expert or national organs coordinating representations aimed towards specific strategic objectives. At the same time, while official histories are often contrived to achieve specific ends, and engineer certain perceptions, informal memory practice seems driven by largely different factors and motivations, which seek to hold, see, hear and re-experience memory in its visceral dimensions, musing in a continuously flowing and transformative sensorial fugue state. The mediated memory practices of the world wide web, with audio, images, poetics, visual space, and virtual flows produce fundamentally different perceptions of historical memory than the analytical, intellectual, reasoned kind produced by state institutions, filtered by analytic rationality. LeFebvre thus appears correct in his assertion that *representations of space* often serve political functions, while these virtual

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<sup>103</sup> Henri LeFebvre *The Production of Space*. Donald Nicholson-Smith, trans. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1974. p 232, 233

spaces of memory in *representational spaces* serve private, imaginative functions. Though perhaps rendered illegitimate, these private memorial functions do satisfy and serve needs of people, who use the web to see new sides of life and reframe their personal experience in a new light.

By examining the unofficial space of the world wide web we can identify types of cultural memory that are excluded from official spatial discourse. Exploring the symbolic and expressive universe of the internet we see that representational spaces reveal and identify micro-spaces of conflict and contestation that might otherwise be invisible within normative and legitimate discourse. Exploring national memory on the world wide web will allow us to explore the contents of representational spaces of former Yugoslavs as they have been left behind by the change of state, made visible as symbolic shards of a once-existing place. Through the representational spaces of the world wide web, we can examine this mental dimension of space, to see how people remember their past and interpret space and national memory differently than national institutions do. In doing this, new concepts of community and belonging are formed, based not upon exclusionary notions of national identity, but more about shared pasts, symbols, meanings and experiences. Through virtual spaces of the world wide web, we examine how people remember the past and channel national memories differently than newly-officiated regimes of memory, as online communities form a virtual territory of Yugoslavia.

## 5.2 CASE STUDY: OPEN SOURCE MEMORY AND VIRTUAL YUGOSLAVIA

In reaction to restrictive regimes of national memory, one of the largest emerging phenomena following the dissolution of Yugoslavia has been the archive of virtual memory of the former state that has been collaboratively produced across national borders on the world wide web. Competing against dominant national discourses the emerging ethnographic sub-genre of socially constructed history has found its mediation in a new terrain. With the imposition of new dominant historical logics, ‘other pasts’ have been relegated to the vernacular realm of ‘memory.’ Popping up across the internet in recent years have been a growing number of websites, forums and blogs dedicated to the preservation, mediation and discussion of Yugoslav memory and experience. Nourished through personal uploads and contributions from online users from around the world, these sites serve as an alternative repository for public memory of the former Yugoslavia.



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5.2



5.3

5.1 Websites for Yugoslav online communities often aim to repair and reexamine old bonds

5.2 Virtual Yugoslav visual culture blogs reexamine the past in a contemporary context and find new inspiration

5.3 Online collections are rich sources of content, media, memorabilia and other information from the old state

The following are a selection of websites that serve as virtual portals for national, cultural and personal memories of the former state. As these websites are filled with enormous amounts of content, information, images and forms of interpersonal dialogue, specific activities from websites will not be analyzed here. Instead the following websites present a general overview of this type of social phenomena, which extends far past the websites listed here. As each blog and site has its own type of memory culture and community, we will only have a look at selected examples of the many varieties of outlets for virtual Yugoslav memory:

#### *NATIONAL MEMORY AND STATE MEMORABILIA*

*YUGOSLAVIAN VIRTUAL MUSEUM*: Run by a lover of Yugoslav History in New York City, this site displays an incredible collection of Yugoslav memorabilia: currency, badges, books, tickets, postcards, television programs, vintage tags, marketing campaigns, identity cards, stamps, photographs, fliers and press reports related to events in Yugoslav life.<sup>104</sup>

*YUGONOSTALGIA*: contribution-based site with a collection of personal postcards, vintage road atlases, maps, videos of sites in different ex-Yugoslav cities, miscellaneous, material culture and artifacts, stamps, money and personal memorabilia.<sup>105</sup>

#### *COMMUNITY*

*CYBER YUGOSLAVIA*: Virtual Nation of Yugoslavia, Cyber-Yugoslavia, was created by Zoran Bacic, a Belgrade playwright. This famous website was the first of its kind, and created a literal online country, in which users register as citizens, and function as ministers for the cause of their choice, in anything from Bad film to Cockta to Pink Floyd and build community on common interests in a playful space.<sup>106</sup> This website sought to use the internet as a way to foster friendly, normal, peaceful relations in the midst of civil war and unrest,<sup>107</sup> and has been an interesting object of analysis for a number of scholars working in the field of Yugoslav virtual memory.

*NASA ZEMLJA*: online open discussion forum for conversations of Yugoslav memory. Topics include: Traveling throughout Yugoslavia, state holidays and celebrations

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<sup>104</sup> <http://yugoslavian.blogspot.com/?view=magazine>

<sup>105</sup> <http://pirancafe.com/category/yugonostalgia/>

<sup>106</sup> Mikula, Maja. "Cyber Yugoslavia" Virtual Landscapes of Memory. University of Technology, Sydney.

<sup>107</sup> [www.juga.com](http://www.juga.com)

today, humanism, social democracy yesterday, today and tomorrow, Tito, historical events and periods, “learning from life”, diaspora life abroad, and so on.<sup>108</sup>

*UDRUŽENJE NAŠA JUGOSLAVIJA*: texts, traditions, songs and documents related to Yugoslavia, with online newsletters created by contributors.<sup>109</sup>

### *VISUAL AND POPULAR CULTURE*

*ONCE UPON A TIME IN YUGOSLAVIA*: “Once upon a Time in Yugoslavia is blog dedicated to cultural events in Ex Yugoslavia, mostly covering the period from creation of Federal Yugoslavia in 1943 to her scission in 1991. From design, typography and architecture to cinema, music, various books and magazines, it’s a journey through little known or very popular cultural events that shaped pop culture of a time.”<sup>110</sup>

Online collection: Visual Culture, Historic Events, Graphic Design, popular culture, Architecture, Illustration, Cinema, magazines, Design, posters, music, ect.

*RETRO ZABAVNIK*: “Archaeology of (non)popular (non)culture” Online collection: vintage print culture, sports events, advertisements, cultural history, dance, press clippings of miscellaneous historic events and tourism<sup>111</sup>

*KILE100*

Yugoslav popular press and print culture, advertisement, illustrations and comics<sup>112</sup>

*YUGODROM*: Yugoslav Visual culture, graphic, music and print culture<sup>113</sup>

### *MUSIC CULTURE*

*JUGOZVUK* “A guide across the world of sound in the old Yugoslavia, including theatre, politics, literature, propaganda, advertisements, and other sounds.”<sup>114</sup> Also includes television broadcasts, music festivals, underground popular and traditional music, talks by Tito, and visual culture related to these sound related clips and events.

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<sup>108</sup> <http://nasa-zemlja.com/forum/phpBB2/>

<sup>109</sup> <http://www.nasa-jugoslavija.org/>

<sup>110</sup> <http://igoyugo.tumblr.com/about>, <http://igoyugo.tumblr.com/>

<sup>111</sup> <http://retrozabavnik.blogspot.com/>

<sup>112</sup> <http://kile100.tumblr.com/>

<sup>113</sup> <http://yugodrom.tumblr.com/>

<sup>114</sup> <http://jugozvuk.blogspot.com/>

*EX-YU VINYL*: online archives of old vinyl, with entire albums available for listening and visual components of albums and music culture included<sup>115</sup>

*STARI GRAMOFON*: online audio archives of Yugoslav music, from classics to eccentric genres<sup>116</sup>

*JUGO SVIRKE*: historical archive of musical concerts, including their details, dates, locations, ect. Collection includes ads, clips and posters of music performances in Yugoslavia, ranging from classical music in the 1920s to 80s rock<sup>117</sup>

### *PHOTO ARCHIVES*

*UNKOOL*: Photographs of 'Old Belgrade'<sup>118</sup>

*STARE SLIKE NOVOG BEOGRADA*<sup>119</sup>: facebook group with wide base of contributors sharing personal and public 'old images of New Belgrade'.

## 5.3 VIRTUAL MEMORY CULTURE

There are a number of interesting characteristics that set this virtual memorial culture apart from institutionalized, official memory practice. These characteristics make it interesting to examine from a non-national or even post-national framework, in which the state is not an actor in constructing public memory.

### MENTAL PROJECTION OF A VIRTUAL LAND

As former Yugoslavia already maintained a certain kind of virtual, non-existent status, it has now become a very real virtual space created through the internet as an mental projection of an online nation-state. This memory of the state is not so much about the physical terrain, but the symbolic objects that produced the feelings and experiences of Yugoslav nationhood and citizenship. Through the exchange, relay, and dissemination of cultural memories, stories, personal reflections and collective histories, the symbolic secretions of former Yugoslavia reunite again, as the state is socially and symbolically reintegrated in a de-territorialized space. Such moves both restore new forms of social

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<sup>115</sup> <http://xyuvinyl.blogspot.com/>

<sup>116</sup> <http://starigramofon.wordpress.com/>

<sup>117</sup> <http://jugosvirke.wordpress.com/>

<sup>118</sup> [Unkool.wordpress.com](http://Unkool.wordpress.com)

<sup>119</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Stare-slike-Novog-Beograda/265072550942?ref=ts&fref=ts>

integration and lead to dialogue and discussion about the lasting meanings and impressions left by the former state.

#### VIRTUAL SPACE, INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITIES AND GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

Another remarkable and fascinating aspect of virtual Yugoslavia is that it is sustained by an online and deterritorialized community that is not tied to fixed nations or state organs. Contributors span from around the globe, and are typically Yugoslav diaspora, many who left during the war.<sup>120</sup><sup>121</sup> For them, this online Yugoslavia is a source of identification and comfort for the idea of returning back to their home country, whose territory, but not spirit, has been lost. Users from across former Yugoslav republics participate from their new countries, scattered across the globe, as online forums sustain memories and offer reassurances for those coping with uncertainties, instabilities and feelings of loss. Likewise children of Yugoslav diaspora, inheriting their parents legacy from their former state and growing up in another country join in to learn about and hear stories from their parents' deceased homeland. Notions of 'citizenship' or membership to these online virtual communities are open, flexible and participatory, with participants from across the globe. This disperse virtual space is a global Yugo-sphere, a cultural space of Yugoslavia that supercedes, exceeds and rises above the territorial borders established during the war.<sup>122</sup> This phenomena provides an interesting vantage point from which to consider the future of cultural identity politics and national divisions in a post-national world.

#### CREATIVE DIALOGUE

It is important to note that the private functions of memory are not pedagogical or corrective, oriented around aims, but are rather driven by general interest, curiosity and passions to explore the past, exchange experience or rebuild lost connections. Virtual Yugoslavia, fed by this creative reflection and curiosity, is a socially vibrant space, involving active contribution, commentary and discussion of the past. Furthermore, these activities are intrinsically motivated out of personal desire rather than by obligation, duty or expectation. It

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<sup>120</sup> Mikula, Maja. "Virtual Landscapes of Memory." University of Technology, Sydney.

<sup>121</sup> Kaldor-Robinson, Joshua. "The Virtual and the Imaginary: The Role of Diasporic New Media in the Construction of National Identity during the Break-up of Yugoslavia. *Oxford Development Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 2, 2002.

<sup>122</sup> However, some note the creation of online nationalist hate-groups. While these groups do exist, they appear not to be involved with the creative process of memory mediation and transmission, as do 'Yugo-nostalgic' sites which appear to serve more personal needs, rather than political agendas.

appears the social process of sharing provides motivation and perhaps healing potential, as ex-citizens gather together once again to share, transmit, educate, tell, explain, narrate, illustrate, preserve, promote, understand, listen, learn, and examine a cultural history that has been obviated by new successor states, who appear to only speak and disseminate, while failing in the critical activities of listening, facilitating or engaging. The socially-engaged formats of the web serve the need of responding to these personal and historical demands in ways that national institutions apparently have not. Likewise, driven by personal ambition, they also lead to new forms of commitment to memory culture in ways that professional or expert practice does not. Without paid salaries, economic benefit or significant resources at one's disposable, the quality, rigor and depth of these websites nurtured alone through the active involvement and continued commitment of their contributors who are driven primarily by passion and interest is remarkable, as people are driven to share, discuss and nourish memory for its own social good.

#### SENSE-MEMORY, SPATIAL PERCEPTION AND SENSORY-LEARNING

Though these images, or rather, *experiences*, which are created and curated are not 'correct,' official, authoritative or necessarily accurate, they are testimony to the lived experience of sensual perception of memory, to tell the personal and shared past in creative and fluid ways that the 'objective,' observational official discourse of the state cannot. These web experiences engage user's senses, humor and visual-spatial imagination as they convey meaning through directly visualizing, demonstrating and illustrating content, rather than make abstracted declarations. Such a format of media communication could lead to very different ways of learning, as applied in educational settings. On another level, these websites' interactive layouts convey complex spatial subjectivities, which are made more comprehensible through entering another's digital world.<sup>123</sup> Indeed, it also appears that through their design and spatial interface these websites "shape conceptions of place and to provide competing visions of the events that have transpired in the former Yugoslavia [...] and communicate information about geographical entities," which expand understanding of "perceptions of place."<sup>124</sup> It appears such sensual and inhabited modes of historic perception also open up new types of understanding and comprehension that are difficult to access via the conventional modern rationalist historical observational approaches. Concepts of the past

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<sup>123</sup> Michele H. Jackson, Darren Purcell. "Politics and Media Richness in World Wide Web Representations of the Former Yugoslavia." *Geographical Review*. Vol 87 Issue 2, 1997.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*

mediated through such sites are not pedagogical, but demonstrative through the associative fabric formed by binding concepts, images, sounds, sensations and stories outside the strictures of a verbal semantic framework. By engaging in the media-rich environment, users may be brought into a space of sense-memory, outside of the dominant knowledge-power relations, moving into what lays beyond the sphere of articulation.

#### CULTURAL CURATION OUTSIDE THE NATIONAL SPHERE

Creating a more inclusive and flexible framework for the collection and mediation of cultural heritage, these websites also act as the informal custodians of parts of cultural history which are customarily overlooked. In addition to the time periods of the recent Yugoslav past they focus on, they also furnish content from genres which are out of the reach of conventional national culture. These genres may be more vernacular, neglected and informal forms of memory and social life. Contents of websites include images, personal texts, background related to Yugoslav popular culture, rock and popular music, print culture, design, films, photographs, visual culture, architecture, urban plans and everyday environments, which have been largely ignored by and avoided by conservative national institutions. The themes and focus of their work also pump fresh blood into memorial culture by including contemporary works that are relevant and arise the curiosity of current generations. It should also be noted that these sites often have high visual standards, and are appealing and aesthetically attractive, coherent, unified and conceptualized in a way that is impressive compared with national professionals who often place a low priority on the aesthetic dimension of visual and sensorial communication. Without these informal custodians of culture, excavating dusty cultural memories out of their attics and shoeboxes, the diversity and breadth of recent history might be lost, as independent actors are filling the holes of the duties and areas neglected by state memory complexes. Socially-produced with loose organization and no physical center or locus, this memory practice is the ironic political counterpart of nationally-sentimental anarchism. Involving a different flow of non-hierarchical decision making, nourished through a sense of personal duty engaged in reciprocal exchange of knowledge, ideas, experience and insight, this unsystematic-looking memory mechanism also has its strengths in its resistance to authoritarian memory.

#### MEDIATED MEMORIES

The social interfaces generated by collaborative and public contribution create *mediated memories*, which Jose van Dijck conceives as “magnifiers of the intersections

between personal and collective, past and future [that] involve individuals carving out their places in history, defining personal remembrance in the face of larger cultural frameworks.”

<sup>125</sup> The open-source concept in the formation of national identity and memory enables a number of functions and features that would be unthinkable and impossible in official national memory cultures. These websites have functionalities that allow users to upload their own personal content into an online memory archive and engage in direct participation and feedback. They are highly variable and like most contemporary blog formats, invite guests to make contributions to the social patchwork, turning memory into a reflective, dialogic and participatory activity. In this sphere, memory becomes a *social process*, not just a ‘historic’ object or fact to be learned. Through its temporality and transformative power, ‘memory’ does not necessarily present a subversive force within greater knowledge-power relations, but provides a context for enunciation in which subterranean forms of experience can be apprehended and open to further investigation and elaboration.

#### MEMORY OF THE PUBLIC BODY

Since the fall of Yugoslavia, the social body of political subjects and their subjectivities have been reconstituted within (and without) new national frameworks. While the virtual public bodies of the Yugoslav self-management memory culture keep the national past engaged and performed, one can recognize that these social memories and testaments to lived experience would be silenced, repressed or otherwise ignored in official national public cultures of memory. As new states do not recognize the political and historical subjectivity of their citizenry, the ‘public’ of political and historical subjects becomes estranged from ‘public’ national historic institutions. In the post-Yugoslav context, the construction of national memory betrays the lived experience of everyday people, citizens and communities and their ability to speak about their varied and multilayered pasts. As the virtual state of Yugoslavia demonstrates, digital and distanced memorial practices reconstitute new transnational public bodies, through the use of new techniques towards gathering and broadcasting memory which allow people to participate in a culture of creative, vibrant and imaginative intersubjectivity and engagement irrespective of territorial borders.

The components of participation, inhabitation and immediacy are some of the key functions sustained by virtual memory that were once served to a greater degree in Yugoslav memorial culture. Yugoslav memory culture was focused on the immediacy of events

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<sup>125</sup> Van Dijck 2007, 25. *Cyberspaces of Memory* p 7.

experienced within the scope of one's lifetime, creating cultural memory in which embodiment played a vital role. Furthermore, this memory culture enjoyed a type of local immediacy, on some levels, in which localities could engage in (limited) autonomous decision-making in their interpretation of the past.<sup>126</sup> And importantly, socialist Yugoslavia involved the direct involvement of social bodies, both in the production of their political subjects, and in the social constitution of historical moments and public activities. This lack of primary and personal experience lived through the body is indeed one of the major shortcomings in the post-Yugoslav politics of national memory, as a restrictive public culture allows little opportunity for individuals to freely reflect on, voice, write in or contribute their personal experience, knowledge, or opinions to overarching national stories. The chasm between lived experience and new national metanarratives has grown wide, as new nations have alienated private Yugoslav memories from the official memorial culture.

#### 5.4 VIRTUAL YUGO-NOSTALGIA AS 'COUNTER-CULTURE'

##### COUNTER-MEMORY AND COUNTER-DISOURSE

Virtual memory of Yugoslavia presents a challenge to successor states' regimes of memory, presenting unacceptable contents and unacceptable forms against the grain of dominant national historical-cultural discourse. Virtual Yugoslavia is often rooted clandestine experience of a subaltern status, which is no longer visible to the eye in public discourse, but only to the objects of the mind, as nostalgia cannot be expressed openly, but something to be shared in private with those held in common trust. Expressions of Yugoslav memory are unsystematic, and serve as a type of counter-discourse that crosses the thresholds of respectable, formalized or professional memory practice.

The this social sphere of virtual and mental representational space of former citizens of Yugoslavia has become the 'new home' of Yugo-nostalgia, of citizens faced with the loss of a real home, which has migrated and continues to dwell in consciousness. Though Yugo-nostalgic feelings, memories and consciousness are officially stigmatized and viewed as political threats by new leaders, Yugo-nostalgia remain a large, yet mostly invisible and privately experienced phenomenon,<sup>127</sup><sup>128</sup><sup>129</sup> making it a type of counter-memory that silently exists against the backdrop of dominant national narratives.

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<sup>126</sup> This is seen to the greatest extent in the highly-localized memory culture of Partisan war memorials

<sup>127</sup> Palmberger, Monika. "Nostalgia Matters: Nostalgia for Yugoslavia as Potential Vision for a Better Future." *Sociologija*, 2008, Vol L, issue 4.

New leadership have stigmatized sympathies with the Yugoslav state as being anti-patriotic and questioning national values. Leaders feel threatened by these expressions, which are taken as a form of political critique of the present moment, and questioning the current government's performance. Yugo-nostalgia may be an honest emotional response to feelings of loss to the disembodied state and the loss of ways of life, in ways that are often belittled by political leaders who downplay real social and cultural needs for stability, belonging and understanding. Nostalgia is a psychic imprinting of a lost home, that has been transformed and alienated, and often scarred by pain and confusion. However, it appears these honest reactions, feelings and experiences of people to political change are not acceptable to be honestly and openly expressed in the public domain. Thus, they are sublimated to the virtual sphere, where they can be voiced, processed, understood, articulated and interpreted. The domain of virtual, unofficial memory provides a resting place for the counter-memories and counter-narratives that are not welcomed or permitted on real national territory, and which continue to dwell and hover above states.

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<sup>128</sup> Buric, Fedja. "Dwelling on the Ruins of Socialist Yugoslavia: Being Bosnian by Remembering Tito." *Communist Nostalgia*, ed. Maria Todorova and Zsuzsa Gille. Berghahn Books, 2010.

<sup>129</sup> Petrović, Tanja. "Nostalgia for the JNA? Remembering the Army in the Former Yugoslavia." *Post-Communist Nostalgia*, ed. Maria Todorova and Zsuzsa Gille. Berghahn Books, 2010.

## CH 6 CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

*“The social transformation of memory to history, that in the domain of official representations, has required every social group to refine its identity through revitalization of its own history. The task of remembering makes everyone his own historian.”*<sup>130</sup> - Pierre Nora

In the situation of national collapse and social reconstitution, we are placed in a new position not only in a new relationship to our surroundings, but in a new relation to ourselves. Shifts in the surrounding context require us to navigate new terrain and clarify our position, as we renegotiate our pasts and the intentions of our future. This study of moving space hopes to illuminate how stable and essential moulds of spaces are indeed plastic and fluid concepts, mediated by signification processes and the use of selective perceptual apparatuses which frame chosen memories.

A number of conclusions can be made from this examination, which have different points of relevance in both a post-Yugoslav setting and in a wider, global sphere. The effects of precarious treatments of the past raise questions about representational practices, cultural-historical history and governance, and make new demands only not from managerial decision-makers, but call for creative responses from social communities. Moving past a purely pedagogical and instructional framework, we see that states and public social bodies alike are in need of historic resolution and understanding that deal with the ambiguity of competing stories of the past. After recognizing the tendencies and concerns of cultural and national

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<sup>130</sup> Pierre Nora. “Between History and Memory: Les Lieux De Memoire.” *Representations*, 26, 1989. University of California. p15

identity politics of former post-Yugoslavia, we will explore the creative ways that new approaches towards history can lead to intercultural and intergovernmental understanding and dialogue.

The treatment of cultural landscape and public memory in the Post-Yugoslav environment includes a number of divergent yet interrelated trends. One such major trend is the official oblivion of Socialist Yugoslavia and lack of regard for works from this period as objects of ‘culture,’ as the heritage from this period is frequently treated with a diminished sense of value and importance, as if it is unworthy of recognition or ‘cultural’ status. Concurrently, the unofficial, invisible yet omnipresent existence of the Socialist Yugoslav state abounds in private memory. Thus, memory and the tangible heritage of Yugoslavia is kept alive and nourished by not professionalized bodies of national cultural workers, but by informal memorial practices of private individuals and informally-organized groups. To these ends, the internet has provided a creative means for the cultural, national and popular heritage of this period to be expressed in a way that is would not be possible via state institutions.

At the same time, the past of Yugoslav spaces and sites is being retold and remade in ways that fit with other newly nationalized beliefs, values and politics both in formal and informal ways. Architecture associated with this period, particularly Yugoslav modernism, is often denigrated, and held guilty on moral charges, while other types of spaces are celebrated and emphasized as illustrative of society’s new ideals, such as Orthodox churches and Austro-Hungarian buildings. Similarly, not only interpretations of particular sites of memory are changing, but also their functionality, as historic sites are now being remade as sites of consumption and leisure. The identity of spaces are being increasingly framed in ‘European’ terms and driven often by financial motivations, as sites of cultural memory are being converted to new political and economic value systems. The primary consistent observation through these various socio-political milieus is that places do not have a pure, essential or stable identity, but change relative to their surrounding contexts, in which the political system often has a large influence in how places are interpreted, framed and used.

Overall, we see that memories of cultural landscapes are told in *national* terms, as opposed to being explored primarily in *social* terms. The means and ways by which historical knowledge is produced and broadcasted (everything from education to television programs to cultural programs) contributes to the *nationalization of public memory*, which has the potential to exacerbate international and inter-ethnic tensions relating to discrepancies over

the past, as indeed there is a need for ‘joint histories.’<sup>131</sup> In modern states, the past as generated by technocratic, intuitional means are typically conferred more legitimacy than informal memory practice, yet interestingly, in the context of former Yugoslavia, the situation is quite the reverse. In this domain where national institutions are disrupted, sporadic and neglectful (for strategic reasons as well as from logistical ones), the continuity of memory of people is sometimes more reliable, and perhaps more honest, than the erratic memory of nations guided by their own interests or opportunity for gain. However, in this process of celebrating, bolstering and glorifying only national memory practice, great opportunities for new dimensions of cultural-historical learning and experience are lost from the public social body. Though national memory policy is typically triumphant about its own causes, rarely are its limits or shortfalls officially recognized.

Despite successor states’ professed interest in regional reconciliation, neglect of the shared Yugoslav past and emphasis on national and ethnic difference has only exacerbated regional tensions. Yugoslav successor states continue to stress their uniqueness and dissimilarity and reinforce social-conceptual boundaries on the basis of essential and irreconcilable difference from neighboring nations. The emphasis on religious-ethnic terms of background and difference, sometimes assisted through the means of the international community in, for example, the restoration of certain types of religious monuments, has perhaps ‘helped’ state-building efforts of new states, but at the same time, has often aggravated the tensions between states or ethnicities. On the other hand, there have been efforts to create other referential points of commonality and common interest, which may satisfy the needs of public authorities to create a positive public image more than the representing the self-declared needs of citizens.<sup>132</sup> Furthermore, efforts towards rebuilding a contrived type of symbolic unity in the urban environment, sometimes engineered at a supranational level, does not necessarily create changes on the ground.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> Dragičević Šesic, Milena. “Memory Policies and Monument Building in Southeastern Europe.” *Memory of the City*. Belgrade: Kulturklammer Centre for Cultural Interactions. 2012. p 93

<sup>132</sup> Interesting examples of the ‘social glue’ strategy are evident in Bosnia’s Mostar Bridge Reconstruction and Bruce Lee monument projects.

<sup>133</sup> Calame, Jon and Amir Pasic. “Post-conflict reconstruction in Mostar: The Cart before the Horse.” *Divided Cities/Contested States*. Working Paper No. 7, 2009. *Conflict in Cities and the Divided State: Everyday life and the possibilities for transformation in Belfast, Jerusalem and other divided cities*. UK Economic and Social Research Council

In Serbia, and former Yugoslavia more generally, the selection of icons, signs, symbols, monuments and architecture to represent modern, democratic nations is likewise troubling for a number of reasons. Not only does it often incite inflammatory responses from regional neighbors and get in the way of establishing peaceful coexistence, but often conceives the state in religious terms that compromise the secular sanctity of the public sphere. In the post-socialist world, religion has become the new arbiter of ‘moral capital’ and social legitimacy, with costly effects for both the tradition and future of secular, civic governance.

Fortunately, though new national motifs are being celebrated, memories and experiences from the past have not miraculously evaporated. Instead, the space of private memories that are not expressible in the public sphere creates a disenfranchisement of memory, and devalues personal knowledge and experience as irrelevant or unworthy in the current moment which does not validate the pasts from the Yugoslav era. This validation of lived experience of political-historical subjects as witness to moments of time is important in the transitional healing process, and its repression or neglect have the potential to evidence themselves in wide social unrest. This idea of validated memories may have been easier to achieve in Yugoslav settings, where the temporal anchoring of society was based in one’s own lifetime and personal recollection, and feelings of public duty and responsibility alone led people to construct entire cities in the name, vision and belief of the state. Such a remarkable and compelling sense of future purpose and historical belonging is absent from today’s governance. Reigniting the recognition, duty, responsibility and importance of people’s work and life experience into overall social life could lead to a more vibrant civic life, something which could be accomplished with different attitudes towards and production of historical knowledge.<sup>134</sup> The current status of public memory culture invalidates individuals and experiences of living generations to a point where they have become often apathetic, ambivalent or cynical. Rather than permitting and allowing social decay, innovative approaches towards mediating socio-cultural history could shed a different light on and invigorate past experience in a way that educates, enlivens and motivates constructive action.

By repositioning, perhaps reconstituting publics, we can look at the dissonant past with new possibility. Several types of cultural neglect at the national level create not only a

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<sup>134</sup> Palmberger, Monika. “Nostalgia Matters: Nostalgia for Yugoslavia as Potential Vision for a Better Future.” *Sociologija*, 2008, Vol L, issue 4.

type of historical dissonance, thus creating a dissonant heritage, but also overlook the potential opportunities that lie in the recognizing, investigating and exploring the traces of the past. The emphasis on certain themes and motifs (for example, in Serbia, the Orthodox church) has resulted in the diminished status of ‘other’ types of culture and historical spaces. Notably, the entire vibrant tradition of Yugoslav modernism is led into oblivion, unless otherwise nurtured by the individual and private efforts of informal actors, driven by passion to be self-elected cultural custodians and to cherish, protect and disseminate the knowledge of these places of memory that are not recognized by formal institutions. At the same time, the lack of recognition and protection for certain types of historical infrastructure compromises the posterity of these spaces, as they come up for grabs in the market economy. Structures and sites without formal recognition are demolished and destroyed for new development on an everyday basis. These forms of destruction may not be by major commercial developers, but by otherwise ordinary individuals with the right to reconstruct a given place, not being aware of its past. However, without a public conversation about the historic importance, meanings and events that lie in otherwise everyday, vernacular spaces, the potential for destruction of valuable parts of cultural memory remains a constant and continual threat.

Not only does neglectful memory policy affect the socio-cultural sphere, but it also creates negative effects for new goals of city-imaging, tourism and national branding. The insistence on and continual repetition of certain images of place creates the impression of a static, homogenous and even boring place, not to mention that this place appears to belong in a dusty vitrine from centuries ago. Emphasis on former Yugoslavia’s modern cultural heritage resonates with new nations’ self-assertions of modernity. Ironically, in Serbia, the international imaging of the country pairs claims of modernity with medieval imagery, which creates a disharmonious message to confused external audiences, and also surely dissuades certain types of tourists from visiting. Creating new spatial symbols and icons to represent Serbia, and more broadly, Former Yugoslav could substantiate national claims of diversity that mix both ‘East and West,’ ancient *and* modern. The permitted decay of both the ‘East’ evident in the ambivalent attitudes towards Ottoman heritage, and modern heritage has become customary, as the social, economic and cultural-historical learning potential of these genres of the past are overlooked in favor of apparently immediate economic gain and political incentives. Exploration and stronger connection to these ‘other’ types of past, could open up new, tolerant and fluid concepts of nationhood and intercultural understanding, which

could benefit the future generations of citizens in a world where cultural flows come increasingly from both directions, both East and West.<sup>135</sup>

Another failure of the current politic of memory is the lack of interest in the restorative and healing power of interpreting and reinterpreting the past. Regarding the traumas of the past wars, as with any trauma, memory must be processed in order to heal. In these societies that still have a torn social fabric, emotional wounds and physical destruction deriving from the Yugoslav Wars, the therapeutic force of opening up and having discussions about memory is in dire need. The movement and release of private memories to the public domain is one of the key ways that people have the potential to heal and nations can be stitched together. These conversations about the past are rarely comfortable or easy, but for the long term development, security and stability of the society, they are necessary.

Furthermore, dialogue about misunderstandings about the past may be necessary in identifying or alleviating original sources of conflict. The historical perception of people raised in different time periods also greatly varies, so conversations about different perspectives and fundamentally different ways of perceiving could be enriching to both the young and the old, who may have dramatically divergent frames of reference around the same events. Forms of historical mediation which involve the direct participation and dialogue of people from different generations leads to a very different type of historical understanding than pasts that are institutionally derived or mediated. Intergenerational learning and historical understanding involving collaborative social participation and non-hierarchical exchange should be a foundational step in developing an intercultural and cross-generational approach towards exploring, not the parameters, but the *possibilities* of the past.

As some historians recognize that the dissolution of Yugoslavia may have been partially attributed to the ‘thawing’ of WWII memories that had been frozen and neglected for many years, the adequate treatment, processing and healing of painful memories from the last is both a precautionary and necessary step in avoiding the eruption of future turmoil. The best thing we can do is not to avoid, ignore, nor obsess over painful memories, but to be equipped with the types of conceptual, intellectual, social and critical tools and skills that will enable us to weigh different types of judgment, foster tolerance, develop perspective and facilitate critical yet empathetic understanding. To promote and engender a more nuanced and non-

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<sup>135</sup> The rise of the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) show to be an increasing influence in global affairs. In this sense, Serbia’s marginal position in ‘Europe’ and historic relationship with Brazil, Russia and China endow it with the potential as being a type of central cultural interlocutor between the BRICS blok and ‘Europe.’

nationalized historical understanding, a number of conceptual and pragmatic approaches to the cultural past may be adopted.

## MANAGING MEMORY: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HISTORIC DIALOGUE

### TOWARDS AN INTERCULTURAL PAST: PARTICIPATORY MEMORY CULTURE

Revealing the potential for conflict that lies in matters of the past, a participatory, open society that accommodates diversity, free speech and dissent allows for renegotiation and direct action. However, as a cross-cultural and historically-informed perspective reveals, it is rare that all interpretations about a particular past to occur within a single system of signification, as they are rather *permutations*. In informal ways, the past is expressed, shared and explored in ways that break from official boundaries, as the potential *for cultural dialogue and expression across systems of signification* is unfortunately often ignored.

The past of the modern West is seen in largely pedagogical and objective terms, where its contents are presented as *historic facts*, not *creative conversations*. Spaces of uncertainty or ambiguity are not addressed, or are ruminated over with continual worry. As historical knowledge in this rational techno-scientific form produces a type of political legitimacy, state and professional actors are afraid to admit failure and because of the large professional, institutional, political and even economic stakes at hand, they color the past in certain advantageous ways. Non-technocratic and non-professionalized modes of historic perception and exploration, on the other hand, illuminate the creativity in uncertainty and can use doubt as a place to explore possibility and open up one's perspective. Acknowledging these differences with the social relations of knowledge production, I recommend a number of different approaches towards exploring the past in ways that combine a series of adjustments in attitudes towards the past with constructive action.

### THE CULTURAL PAST IN THE CONTEMPORARY MOMENT

#### *Attitude*

As has been noted in recent years, exclusively conservatorial approaches to the past have their limit. The cultural past has often become irrelevant to contemporary generations and ways of life unless it is mediated in meaningful and relevant ways. New efforts towards the re-contextualization and playful reinterpretation of the past can illuminate new understandings and new pasts that were obscured by conventional and objectified ways of mediation which typically favor 'originality' over interpretation. Moving against purist, strict,

conservative and irrelevant approaches to historical mediation is necessary for the past to be made comprehensible to generations of today. The idea of freezing cultural objects and landmarks, as objects not for use, but instead for regard, investigation and contemplation has come to be seen in a positive and even humanistic light. However the formalization of memory in such ways has certain limiting effects and implications, as heritage is often separated from life itself as material objects become removed from the social fabric in which they exist, and turn into ‘dead’ historical matter, as *objects* become *objectified*. By enlivening heritage and uncovering its many unexplored aspects and making it relevant, useful and interesting to the present, we can open up the possibility of the rich variety of different moments, different lives and different meanings that any one place or object actually encompasses.

#### *Action*

Funding and support for historical research to uncover new topics, dimensions, aspects and angles of ‘already-known’ places and things and interpret them in unexplored ways; research and development of mediation techniques; targeted culture and age-specific programs and mediation aimed at presenting a ‘general’ content in specific and relevant ways, to create personalized and unique connections to the past.

### FROM OBJECTIVISM AND OBJECTIVITY TO PHENOMENOLOGICAL DIALOGUE

#### *Attitude*

By abandoning the modernist rationalist approach to historical knowledge, based upon objectivity and empiricism, an entirely different type of knowledge emerges, which engenders the possibility for intercultural communication. Modern rational focus on objects alone has limited exploration of other ways of knowing, and does a disservice to intercultural understanding. Though objective modes of inquiry may be sufficient for the hard sciences, for the social sciences new frames for methodological exploration need to be explored, in ways that do not presuppose the meanings or intentions of objects and behaviors. Phenomenology and phenomenological approaches towards history can develop not one ‘correct’ or dominant frame, but a variety of different lenses from which to understand the world of culture. Modern nations, as outgrowths of modern philosophy are similarly trapped in a type of epistemological and sensorial regime that closes off the potential of alternative dimensions, new depths and expanded perception that comes through a fundamentally different way of

approaching the question of knowledge.<sup>136</sup> In an increasingly interacting globe, it is necessary to open up our scope of cultural perception to be able to go beyond simply ‘seeing’ and ‘observing’ objects but to be capable of adopting dramatically different *approaches towards seeing* objects, understanding the ways in which they mean and mechanisms through which their meaning is produced.

#### *Action*

Supporting academic and creative collaborations and intercultural projects between the arts, social communities and social scientists; supporting research in visual and cultural anthropology and ethnography to explore the meanings of ‘things’ that lay beyond the surface; establishing forums of exchange and debate around which perspectives about specific forms of cultural heritage can be shared, discussed and deliberated over; research and support for exhibitions and educational activities that are based upon the collection of and dialogue about meaning and symbolism rather than its dissemination; support for post-pedagogical projects based upon social collaboration and research.

#### PLACE-BASED MEMORY WORK AND CREATIVE RESEARCH *Attitude*

Place-based memory work, in the fields of activism, the arts and creative research lead to new dimensions of exploring place as an emotional, corporeal field. While the preference for verbal analyses on history has excluded the body from its way of knowing, putting the body back into the picture of creating historical knowledge, creative expression or social understanding is fundamental. Work on the history of place that is outside of the agendas and parameters of nation states and governmental systems, but interpretive, fluid and interpersonal leads to a creative exploration of pasts of place and their irrational, idiosyncratic, emotional, qualitative dimensions that are outside of governmental logic. Likewise, such a conception of place would be premised not on ownership and enforcement, but on interaction and reflection. Rather than approaching places as having distinct identities that belong only under the control of one group, it is useful to think of Deleuze’s recognition of ‘assemblages’ as a way in which we can perceive the past of space in ways that respect and illuminate their full complexity. By re-conceiving of spaces as seams that stitch together ‘different’ pieces, we can examine them as spaces not only formed by past interactions, but use this framework of actions, interactions, and processes to guide our understandings today in ways that invite collaboration and

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<sup>136</sup> Alpers, Svetlana “The Museum as a way of seeing,” 25-32. Karp, Ivan, ed.

coexistence. By examining how the composition of social-historical objects is not unitary, but is indeed a variegated patchwork, spaces can function as interstitial zones for co-creation, interaction and a medium of mutual understanding. Taking the past not as already-scripted formula, but as an interpretive canvas, we can renegotiate and augment our historic perceptions. The domain of creative and artistic practice is the best medium for such historical expression, allowing people to voice what remains beyond the scope of articulation.<sup>137</sup>

#### *Action*

Funding, research and development in organizations of independent projects that work in the field of intercultural mediation of place; establishing forums and organization to systematize the research, creation and presentation of place-based memory work.

### SOCIAL HISTORY AND PARTICIPATORY HISTORIOGRAPHY

#### *Attitude*

Rather than the conventionalized approach to memory, a bureaucratic domain, furnished by professionals exploring elite histories, a move towards social history would provide a radically different picture of society, that apportions representation to divergent social groups, pasts and particular histories while resisting the myths of national meta-narratives. Furthermore, the cultural formulation of this memory through participatory ways (for example via new-media or urban-based practice) engages social subjects in the liberating and therapeutic process of authoring their own stories, in ways that are not necessarily representative of national identities or other concepts of essential homogenized identity, but articulate other associations, experience, belonging and subjectivity. The concept of cultural custodianship and historical authorship as an individual responsibility to society is a surprising resonance that connects many of the world's traditional societies to today's micro-blogging generation. As the diminished role of the state in past couple decades is placing more responsibilities on individuals, one may not be surprised if also in the future, these responsibilities include duties to collect, interpret or mediate certain types of knowledge in the situation of absence of the state activity in this area.

#### *Action*

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<sup>137</sup> Bhabha, Homi. "On Global Memory: Thoughts on the Barbaric Transmission of Culture" Lecture, Townsend Center for the Humanities Forum for the Humanities and the Public World. UC Berkeley.

Establishing an organizational infrastructure for gathering of social history through independent outlets and activities, thoroughly invested in the effort of building an active cultural democracy; investing in web technologies and open-source formats which enable a usable interface itself as a creative medium for expression, in aesthetic and sensorial dimensions; projects organized in national and independent institutions which engage in carefully designed activities and projects that collect and instigate social history; funding for research in the area of mediation and collection of social history; initiating multilateral cooperation for large-scale memory projects in this field.

#### INDEPENDENT MEMORIAL CULTURE

##### *Attitude*

As the recent years have shown the changing role of state power, with a stronger role played by independent non-state actors, and independent, supranational frames of social reference, one might consider the creation of an independent memory culture, based through linking together non-nationalized memory institutions. Though private museums play some role in contemporary society, they are not engaged with the creation of historical-cultural work on a scale similar to the state. State memory institutions have become a fundamental part of the modern world, but as globalization becomes evermore rapid and national boundaries blur, social historical exploration in the area of trans-national or intergovernmental histories lags behind, as the history of ‘peoples’ is often told in essentialized national terms.

##### *Action*

Funding and establishment of non-governmental organizations and institutions for cultural memory; cooperation on sub-national and supra-national scales on memorial reserves and historical discourse that is not constructed along national lines.

#### SEMIOTIC PLURALISM

##### *Attitude*

Semiotic pluralism is the coexistence of other, different systems of signification. Moving from a position whereby all cultures are often treated as objects, within one perspective, we can attempt to move towards a view which examines cultures through their systems of signification. Though these bridges of signification practices will often not be bridged, true regard for cultural systems recognizes the dignity of symbolic systems and ways of producing meaning. This involves the possibility of understanding the perceptive modes of other systems of meaning, creating a cultural intra-subjectivity of participants, who develop

alternative modes of perception, sense and memory that are outside of one's conventional expressive language.

#### *Action*

Creating forums, activities and creative research programs that allow for different modes of signification in a non-nationalized framework; research and development in the mediation and education of semiotics, linguistics, cultural practice, anthropology aimed towards develop methodologies towards which these perspectives can coexist in a context that must be especially developed for plural forms of understanding; reforming educational system in ways that will allow for greater cultural fluency and comprehension; initiating projects on cultural differences in semiotic practices, aimed at facilitating intercultural communication across systems of signification.

#### CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

#### *Attitude*

Lastly, the most applicable sphere for the use of these intercultural historiographic concepts is in the pedagogical sphere, a sphere dominant in the production of individuals, as citizen-subjects of state power. As this thesis examines the production of nationally-contentious knowledge, we examine the dissemination of national knowledge as a key area where national ideas can develop critical mass and strong force. The education system can easily be abused for national ends in the social production of citizens who are not critical receivers of the system's knowledge. Critical pedagogy works to develop engaged, informed and well-rounded perspectives from students who also have the capacity to critique the knowledge being disseminated by national systems. Recognizing the importance of social agency and developing creative solutions, critical pedagogy is an effort committed to developing "consciousness of freedom," the capacity to "recognize authoritarian tendencies, and connect knowledge to power and the ability to take constructive action."<sup>138</sup> An educational system that embraces critique accommodates likewise a plurality of knowledge. Such an approach also confronts challenges with openness and perspective and leads to well-informed yet creative and insightful visions of the past.

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<sup>138</sup> Giroux, Henry. (October 27, 2010) "Lessons From Paulo Freire", Chronicle of Higher Education.

### *Action*

Introducing critical debate and skill development in the education system which emphasize critical thinking, creative responses and communication skills; supporting open dialogue and discussion in the classroom; research in new forms of educational methodologies; debate and reform of the school curriculum and classroom policies, where school texts and educational programs are the source of pedagogical dialogue in which students, teachers, political decision-makers, parents and society at large can participate; multilateral cooperation and intercultural collaboration in the design and creation of pedagogical activities, texts and programs.

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## **Appendix A**

Interviews: Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of Serbia

### **A. Institutional Operations**

What types of activities are you involved with? How are these activities coordinated with other activities at the institute?

How is the work of the institute structured throughout the country? What is the management structure of the institute? How are decisions balanced between local and national levels?

How does decision-making about cultural monuments function within zavod? What is the process and structure for decision-making regarding the listing or funding of cultural monuments?

What does it mean when a site is listed? Can you explain the different categories of listing? How are these differences put into practice?

How have political changes affected the institute and its activities?

How have these changed in the long term?

Upon what conceptions of national identity does the institute determine its priorities for the funding, research and protection of cultural monuments?

What is the process like for enlisting a new cultural monument?

What are the criteria for determining if a cultural monument is worthy of being listed and representing national values?

### **B. Political Change, National Identity and Image**

What major themes, images or symbols serve as the construction of national Serbian place identity?

How have they been influenced by political changes? How have the Milosevic years changed the activities at the institute? What changes emerge in recent times? Who or what forces are driving this agenda?

How did changes in the way national place identity was structured relate to ideological changes? How did it relate to changes in concepts of Serbian ethno-national identity? What were the dominant shifts in terms of dominant symbols of national identity in these years?

What types of identity themes and historical periods are most important to the institute at the current moment?

What places and sites are the highest priorities at the institute? How have these priorities changed over time, and what factors were driving the changes?

What is the relationship between the privileged sites and the formation of a national narrative?

### **C. Dissonant Heritage**

What is the role of cultural heritage from Socialist Yugoslavia in today's political and cultural climate?

What is the position of cultural monuments from this period within the activities, priorities and agenda at the institute? How are they treated in relation to other types of heritage?

What is the dominant type of treatment of this heritage: glorification, stigmatization or oblivion? Is there an official stance towards this time period and class of cultural heritage objects?

Has the retelling of the Yugoslav past influenced the current cultural and political moment? How does the institute view its role in society by transmitting the cultural past to the present generation? What kind of emphasis is placed on mediation and transmission of heritage to the current generation, and how much is based upon conservation and preservation?

It appears the institute largely focuses on older and more traditional conceptions of heritage; how large of a priority or concern is modernist heritage? How does the institute view its role in this area?

How have recent political changes and future agendas, particularly the goal of European Integration, influenced the interpretation of the national past?

What is the status of cultural heritage of ethnic minorities? What kinds of efforts does the institute make to recognize or protect this heritage?

What do you view are the shortcomings and limitations of the institute? How can these be compensated for?

What is the role and responsibility of people and citizens, in caring for the diversity of cultural heritage of Serbia? Historically, what has been the role of everyday citizens in the custodianship of culture, and how has that role changed today in light of the socio-economic and political situation? How have political changes made new demands for personal responsibility on behalf of independent and non-governmental agents?

## VITA OF THE AUTHOR

(b. 1986, Rhineland-Palatinate) Emily Radosavljević received her BA from the University of Minnesota Twin Cities, USA in 2009, graduating from an individually-designed interdisciplinary program in Material Culture Studies, examining the contemporary cultural dynamics of globalization and mass consumption. She minored in Dutch Language and Literature and Studio Arts, with an emphasis on reproducible media and has participated in a number of group exhibitions. Her participation in the graduate seminar *The Theoretical Constructions of Space* in the Cultural Studies and Comparative Literature Department University of Minnesota propelled her to continue exploring the social dimensions of space and design.

In 2007 she relocated to Amsterdam to study design at the Gerrit Rietveld Academy. In 2009 she received a travel grant to research innovation and cultural policy in the Netherlands. With a continued interest in the sociology, politics and design of space, she completed an internship in architecture, participated in an architectural restoration camp, and several urban design seminars. Relocating to Belgrade, she began her MA studies at the UNESCO Chair in Cultural Policy and Management at the University of Arts in 2010. She has worked and volunteered for organizations and events such as the Minnesota Center for Photography, the Soap Factory, Minnesota Citizens for the Arts, Mikser Festival, AIR Belgrade, and the Museum of Yugoslav History and has been involved with several documentary film projects. She has an advanced command in Dutch language and a basic command in German and Serbian.