The Legitimisation of Post-Conflict Intervention: Narrative Frames of Backwardness and Progress

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INTRODUCTION

In peace and conflict research, there has been an increasing focus on the notion of spatiality and temporality[i] as platforms on which power relations are negotiated ([Anonymous, 2017]; McConnell et al, 2014). Based on this, this article claims that time is an important factor in understanding why specific geographical spaces are placed in different time zones. Powerful actors frame spaces in allegedly inferior time zones as in need of adjustment to more "progressive" time zones and, as a result, subject of practices of intervention. In dialogue with the post-structural scholarship of Lene Hansen (2006), Campbell's work on "deconstruction" (1998) as well as the concept of "Orientalism" by Edward Said (1978), I argue in this article that the narration of post-conflict societies in terms of 'backwardness' and 'chaos' provides a rationale that legitimises intervention by a set of international actors that, in turn, tend to narrate themselves as forces for progress and linearity[ii]. The article will show that this narrative frame does not just apply to the framing of the *war* in Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH) but continues to be meaningful to explain the ways in which international interveners, and specifically the European Union, narrate their *peacebuilding* mission. I will demonstrate that the binary is maintained even in a context in which the intervention project is weaved into all local and national politics and an obstacle to peace itself. Yet, the interveners' discursive disentangling of Bosnian and international agency as purportedly oppositional categories continues to legitimise heavy-handed intervention.

I will show that, not only in war, but also in post-war situations, can we observe that the implicit notions of time inherent in numerous interventions carry a quasi-colonial dynamic during the course of which understandings of time – and the associated processes and dynamics – are communicated to recipient societies. This serves the purpose of legitimising particular forms of intervention and relies on the use of time frames as a mechanism of governance.

Against this background, this article focuses on interveners' discourses to render visible those often-hidden narrations of time to unveil implicit structures and processes of domination inherent in the politics of post-war intervention. Developing a narrative frame of *backwardness/chaos vs progress/linearity*, that is, the creation of a "temporal identity" (cf. Hansen, 2006: 44), I suggest that, on the part of the interveners, there is a tendency to narrate local and national actors as chaotic and backward through a selective and often a-chronological choice of events. In contrast, there is a frame of external intervention narrated as a linear and orderly process, shaped by progress. This contrast between the assumed chaotic nature of the 'local' pre-external involvement, as opposed to a linear, progressive frame of intervention, represents a form of Orientalism, serving to justify external involvement and ascribing a quality of chaos to 'the local'. This article takes this assumption as a basis on which the narrative framing of time has been used by a set of powerful actors involved in the post-war peacebuilding process in BiH. This is despite the idea in Peace and Conflict Studies that post-war peacebuilding offers the opportunity for more emancipatory, locally-driven discourses to challenge the primacy of the externally-driven narrative (cf. Fetherston, 2000; Richmond, 2007).

METHODOLOGY

Methodologically, this article is the result of long-term engagement with the region between 2008 and 2017. Throughout this period, repeated interviews and meetings with officials from the international peacebuilding community suggested an inclination, often inadvertently, to see the 'local' as in need of adaptation to the 'international'. And whilst Hazan (2004) has identified differences and nuances between the actual policies of different international agencies, this article attempts to distil a meta-narrative from those institutional discourses that allows to comprehend the underlying and often subtle rationale paving the way for practices of intervention.

Following post-structural discourse analysis through a methodology of "deconstruction" (Campbell, 1998; Hansen, 2006), the article identifies the ways in which an Orientalist framing of BiH is discursively stabilised over time (Hansen, 2006: 37), particularly when it is "threatened with its undoing" (Devetak, 2013: 197). Given that the European Commission (EC) is currently the most active and visible international actor in BiH's post-conflict reconstruction phase, the article takes its annual (progress) reports (published annually with the exception of 2017) as a point of departure to conduct a policy-document-based "model 1 analysis" (Hansen, 2006: 57). In this, it is essential to not only understand those documents in their own right, but in relation to each other through "processes of linking and juxtaposition" (Hansen, 2006: 41) and an approach of "conceptual intertextuality" (ibid., p.51).

It is not sufficient to investigate the EC's progress reports in isolation, but instead I attempt to trace the discourse back to its historical origins through the use of secondary material, triangulated with primary texts (Hansen, 2006: 47). Against the background that the framing in question was not uniquely developed by the EC, but in dialogue with the Office of the High Representative (OHR) and the World Bank, who used to play a more important role in BiH's post-conflict reconstruction phase before 2011, the article investigates the textual interplay between those agencies to trace the origins and continuity of the EC's current

approach (cf. Devetak, 2013: 194). It embarks on a middle-way between Hansen, who suggests an emphasis on the different types of "selves" among the international community in BiH, and Campbell, who primarily observes discursive unity.

Hansen (2006: ch.5) specifically proposes, as one method, to engage in a comparison centred around a historical turning point, that is, to investigate a change in discourse before and after an assumed rupture. In the peace and conflict literature, the assumed turning point is when war ends (and with it, the top-down oriented peacekeeping and peacemaking policies) and post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding take off as allegedly more locally-driven and emancipatory stages (cf. Paffenholz, 2013; Graef, 2015). The analysis below will reflect that, despite this assumption in the literature, this transition does not come with a major discursive reframing of the host society of intervention and mirrors instead a continuation of the Orientalist framing of intervention.

Rather than providing a quantitative argument, the article will cast light on the binary framing of backwardness and progress, not only during but also after war, despite peacebuilding's emancipatory ambitions. To achieve this, it will investigate how peacebuilding agencies produce a "stable effect of homogeneity and continuity" across texts and phases (Devetak, 2013: 197). I therefore qualitatively investigate the ways in which the binary time frame of *backwardness vs progress* is being developed and used by the European Union (EU) since its increased engagement in BiH since 2010/2011, illustrated by the fusion of the European Union Special Representative and Head of the EU Delegation, and put it in dialogue with publications by the Office of the High Representative and the World Bank. Repeated engagement with officials working in BiH has indeed confirmed that international offices are in regular dialogue to fine-tune policies in mutual agreement, and staff regularly move between different international agencies (see Goetze, 2017).

The relevant speech acts within the documents analysed in the post-conflict context can be subsumed under a strategic narrative (frame) in line with wider institutional goals pertaining to practices of intervention. They tell us how peacebuilding intervention continues to be constructed by the same discursive frame as the one utilised during the violent breakup of Yugoslavia.

ORIENTALISM AND CRITICAL GEOPOLITICS

It was Edward Said (1978) who first coined the term 'Orientalism'. In this seminal work, he was mainly concerned with the geographies that labelled the Orient as an exotic and barbaric region at the same time (Said, 1978). What this article suggests is that such representations, or 'imaginative geographies' (Gregory, 2006: 89) can act as powerful rhetoric tools to legitimise practices of intervention. In fact, Said himself acknowledged a time dimension to the ways in which Orientalism plays out, namely through geography (space) and history (time) (Said, 1978: 55). Not only does distance emerge from spatial othering, but as much through an imagination and representation of differences in time between the East and the West (ibid). In other words, certain spaces are deemed more backward than others.

As a result, Orientalist discourses see time as "encapsulated in given social systems" (Fabian, 2014: 41), with 'the other' situated in a distant historical and geographical location. The juxtaposition of a progressive 'self' with a backward-oriented 'other' can therefore be considered, as I argue, a form of Orientalism. Interestingly, this is not all too different from colonial contexts, as Kowal suggests:

> Western individuals are seen to inherit the cumulative cultural knowledge, acquired over centuries,
> of germ theory and responsible alcohol consumption. By contrast, Indigenous people are seen to

struggle with banking and infectious diseases because they have not had sufficient time to develop

the appropriate cultural knowledge (Kowal, 2015: 95).

Narrating the time of the 'other' as chaotic and primitive is thus a mechanism serving to establish power relations and to locate the other in the framework of the past. This is contrasted with the progressive nature of the intervening self. Chakrabarty (2000: 8f.) outlines how modern European thought has been based on assumptions of time and the hypothesis that non-European societies were 'not yet' civilised. Chakrabarty suggests that such "waiting room" notions still prevail in contemporary institutional activities (Chakrabarty 2000: 10). Indeed, when examining practices of intervention, such a form of Orientalism that suggests that the non-West is behind, or in a different (inferior) time zone, is a common narrative frame. This is certainly in line with the assumption of modernisation theories, particularly in the field of Development Studies that the 'Third World' needs to be managed and organised externally (cf. Escobar, 1991; Sharp, 2009: 146ff.).

The Balkans have been declared victims of their own version of Orientalism - not quite the same, but comparable to it - in the form of 'Balkanism' (Bakić-Hayden, 1995; Bjelić, 2002; [Anonymous, 2012]; Todorova, 2009). This has been linked to the assumption that the people from the Balkans "do not care to conform to the standards of behavior devised as normative by and for the civilized world" (Todorova, 2009: 3). Goldsworthy (1998) argues that the Balkans have tended to act as a backdrop to western imagination about what the Balkans represent, framed as the "Wild East". Along those lines, Kuus (2004) outlines the extent to which the EU's and NATO's eastern enlargement relies on an othering of East-Central Europe in terms of an assumed "lack of Europeanness" (p.473), partly in representations and expectations from the Balkans themselves (Dzihic and Wiesner, 2008). Indeed, as Daskalov (1997) argues, there is a long history in which the Balkans strived and were expected to strive for "modernisation" in the Western European sense – which is not least a result of the

centuries of colonial rule that the region underwent. With a specific focus on the relationship between intervention and statehood in BiH, Jeffrey (2016) observes this very tendency through which the transition to a Bosnian future in the EU is performed through processes of geopolitical othering.

This work shows that the relationship between discourse and geopolitics is and has long been subject to in-depth analysis in the field of critical geopolitics. Ó Tuathail and Agnew (1992), as pioneers in this field, had, as early as 1992, suggested that

> [g]eopolitics [...] should be critically re-conceptualized as a discursive practice by which intellectuals of statecraft 'spatialize' international politics in such a way as to represent it as a 'world' characterized by particular types of places, peoples and dramas. (p.192).

Specifically, through the acknowledged connection of knowledge and power, Said's Orientalism has been considered an important aspect in understanding questions of representation and power in the field of critical geopolitics (Dalby, 2010; Dodds and Sidaway, 1994: 517). Dodds (2001) has pointed to the ethical need of critical geopolitics to investigate the ways in which humanitarian and military interventions are geographically grounded in particular imaginations of the world (pp. 475-6). Geopolitical moves have thus been said to go hand-in-hand with the creation of a 'subaltern' (cf. Sharp, 2011). In critical geopolitics, 'time' has been implicitly present in the understanding of how the 'subaltern' is constituted, but rarely is it explicitly theorised in its own right.

Perhaps most explicitly addressing the factor of time as an essential category of intervention, Gregory (2006) speaks of time-zones, suggesting that the imaginative geographies of the 'other' serve to categorize them as enemies situated in an inferior time zone and to even legitimise (military) intervention (p.89). The Orientalism inherent in such imaginative geographies is not just expressed spatially, but also by the establishment of a time narrative of the Oriental 'other' as being situated in a different time-zone in which war is a normalcy.

This is in line with Soja's suggestion that "[s]patiality and temporality, human geography and human history, intersect in a complex social process" (Soja 1985: 94). The construction of this very identity of the Oriental other – here as BiH – then allows for the construction of mechanisms of governance and intervention (cf. Hansen, 2006; Campbell, 1998).

THE POLITICS OF FRAMING

If we agree that the positioning of particular spaces in different time zones matter, this process also determines how policy discourses translate into concrete action, through the "narrativizing of reality" (cf. Campbell, 1998: 34) or the "narrativization of real events" (cf. White, 1981). Framing is a process through which power is exercised by those who are actively engaged in public discourse (cf. Entman, 2004). Entman (1993) argues that to "frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described" (p.52). Framing thus enhances "the salience of an interpretation and evaluation of particular aspects of reality" (Entman 2004: 26). Of course, the framing of time is a way of shaping a discourse that situates political actors and events on a timeline and thus contributes to an emergent discursive order. This in turn has a profound influence on the ways in which societies perceive each other.

It is therefore particularly interesting to note that, despite this complex appearance of connected time across societies through networks of trade, capitalism, migration, political networks and so forth, non-Western societies are often *framed* as backwards, situated in the past, and less progressive than the West. Where does this binary come from? How can this framing of time, or time-making, not only account for colonial and war-related discourses, but for the social and historical processes of peacebuilding?

These questions are related to the ways in which imagined pasts and futures are weaved together through narration to form an imagined world based on this diachronic jigsaw (cf. Andrews, 2014). If we consider time as a narrated phenomenon in the sense of controlling the framing of intervention, it can be seen as a key indicator of power. Not only can narrated time suggest when activities of intervention should happen, but also when the respective conflict started and, therefore, whose 'fault' it was. McLeod (2013) refers to such framings as "temporal discontinuities", that is, the narrative configuration as to when an event is deemed to have started and ended. Through this framing, a logic can be established that blames certain actors, events and structures as root causes, whilst absolving others. If a war is designated to have started after a local or national actor's action, then this actor is deemed responsible for the outbreak of the war. In contrast, if there is a focus on the long-term conditions that led to the war, there is a higher chance that wider (possibly global) structural factors that have contributed to the emergence of a particular crisis are taken into consideration. In that vein, narrative framings of time are not only relevant to the past, but also to the future. They decide at what spatial scale the root cause of the problem is located and at which level it should best be solved. Weigert suggests that narratives realise and control futures, with 'future' signifying "a meaning projected via relevance systems of prophecy or prediction" (Weigert, 2014: 320). Therefore, the identification of the 'root' causes of war often leads to particular types and scales of intervention due to an identified cause and the attempt to eradicate the latter.

The narrative projection of future scenarios to enable spatial governance is by no means a new phenomenon. Lilja et al (2015: 413) even suggest that, in colonial times, colonisers told the colonised that equality would happen eventually, if they just had enough patience to wait for it. Through the projection of equality as a *future* scenario, this frame, partly successfully, inhibited resistance against colonial domination. At the same time, Lilja et al (2015: 419)

remind us that not only can the projection of future scenarios be a form of oppression, but also of resistance against power – for instance through the creation of public awareness of a problem to be in the future. In that vein, the narration of societies in particular time zones, or time stages, is linked to the use of specific policy tools. With this in mind, the following section will turn to explain the significance of the 'turning point' between the time zone of 'conflict' and that of 'post-conflict'.

FRAMING THE TURNING POINT

The 'field' as a container of power relations is not only a phenomenon of spatial containment, as Richmond et al (2015) suggest, but equally one of time categorisation. A 'field' of conflict is therefore not only defined by a particular locale or political community, but also by a time frame. When does conflict end and when does post-conflict start? This is a consideration bearing heavy policy implications, as traditionally, during conflict, a different set of policy toolkits are used than in post-conflict situations. Therefore, the narrative division of conflict situations into 'conflict' and 'post-conflict' is a historical reference point (Browne, 2014: 110) through which a specific political narration of time legitimises different forms of intervention. In this sense, the narration of time in such binary ways of 'conflict' vs 'post-conflict' establishes notions of 'self' and 'other' that are constructed through binary narrations of difference (cf. Behr, 2014).

While peacemaking (diplomatic efforts at political elite levels) and peacekeeping (military approaches) tend to be deployed during conflict, post-conflict peacebuilding is, at least conceptually, shaped by multidimensional approaches (Richmond, 2005), with a predominantly civilian component and more emancipatory ambitions. This is why Boutros-

Ghali (1992) had specifically denoted peacebuilding as a post-conflict operation, suggesting that

> [w]hen conflict breaks out, mutually reinforcing efforts at peacemaking and peace-keeping come into play. […] Preventive diplomacy is to avoid a crisis; post-conflict peace-building is to prevent a recurrence.

Peacebuilding, then, in Fetherston's analysis (2000) is about the restoration and rebuilding of relationships that have *previously* broken down (p.201), the focus on grassroots activities (p.206), the emancipation from old, conflictive structures (p.208) as well as "counter-(local) hegemonic projects" (p.210). If we take this conceptualisation for granted, all suggests that the assumption of a turning point or rupture after the end of direct violence and war will be accompanied by a rupture in framings as they pertain to international intervention. In that, a discursive move from a hypothesis of chaos during war could be expected to be replaced with discursive frames that locate agency with local and national actors, assuming that grassroots-based and locally-driven approaches will be captured in this new framing. However, in the following, I will show that the framing of BiH as chaotic during the war is neatly continued into the post-war phase, which, despite Boutros-Ghali's conceptualisation, represents a continuity, rather than a rupture, of practices of intervention.

THE LEGITIMISATION OF IN-CONFLICT INTERVENTION THROUGH THE FRAMING OF TIME – BEFORE THE TURNING POINT

Intervention before, in, or after conflict is a political choice that the interveners normatively and rhetorically legitimise in different ways (cf. Tadjbakhsh, 2010). The work of Campbell (1998) and Hansen (2006) has confirmed the tendency of the international community to

narrate BiH as backwards or 'different' during the war of 1992 and 1995, as a way of paving the way for the design and implementation of its policies of intervention.

Interestingly, a number of analyses frame the breakup of Yugoslavia as an internal / civil war rather than an internationally triggered war (Božić Roberson, 2004; MacDonald, 2002; Oberschall, 2000; Kaplan, 1993; Sekulić et al., 2006; Slack, 2001; Turton, 1997: 89). Indeed, it seems that such studies pay limited attention to the international dimensions that may have led to the Balkans crisis in the long-run (Ramet, 2005). This is by no means a natural choice: choosing a longer time-span of analysis would highlight the effects and contributions of the EU's, World Bank's and International Monetary Fund's (IMF) privatisation policies that had set on a few years before violence erupted. The tendency to not include those dynamics absolves those actors from the responsibility and need to account for their own contributions to the growing instability in the former Yugoslavia.

There is thus an assumption that the war in BiH was a localised one and, therefore, shaped by chaos and backwardness. In this context, Chenoy (1996) suggests that after Tito's death, "Yugoslavia went into a cycle of political and economic crises" (p.443). The notion of Yugoslavia breaking into chaos was one largely supported by the major international organisations. The World Bank, for instance, claimed that "[f]ollowing President Tito's death in 1980, the SFRY experienced progressive deterioration in both economic and political stability, finally breaking apart in 1991" (World Bank, 2004: 1). Ó Tuathail quotes Lord Carrington, who, on 7 May 1992, directly referred to of "centuries-old bitterness and rivalries" and the main guilt lying with the Serbs, in his analysis of the situation (Carrington, 1992, quoted in Ó Tuathail, 2002: p.614). This explanation can be considered part of the ancient ethnic rivalries hypothesis or the elite manipulation hypothesis (Ó Tuathail, 2002: 615). The former accounts for a very long-term framing of the past, whilst the elite manipulation hypothesis accounts for the very short-term. This is certainly relevant in that the

mid-term explanation (hence the effects of privatisation and democratisation) remains unaccounted for. This absence frames the period of the war as a period of instability caused exclusively by domestic factors. Indeed, the EU's failed proposal, the 'Carrington-Cutileiro peace plan', was co-designed by Lord Carrington himself and reflected a commitment to the notion of an ethnic conflict and thus resorted to a clear language of ethno-nationalism. Maull (1995: 116) suggests that "[t]he Yugoslav crisis challenged this German obsession with stability" and can be considered an expression of chaos in the midst of alleged stability and linearity in the rest of Europe – here Germany is used as reference point. Similarly, the UK parliament's select committee refers to the breakup of Yugoslavia as a rather chaotic event and uses terms like "failure", "disintegration" and "collapse" to describe the latter (UK Parliament, 2002). All of those terms refer to the notion of disaster and chaos, aspects that are narrated as concentrated in this imaginary of the breakup. At the same time, the sanctions and bombings on the part of international actors – perhaps most notably NATO - during the war are rarely considered part of the chaos narrative. In fact, when it comes to narrations about Srebrenica, it seems all the more convenient to direct attention away from the role of the peacekeepers. It was only much later that the international judicial system opened up the Pandora's Box of the peacekeepers' potential complicity (cf. Nollkaemper, 2011).

This is met with double standards whenever the narrow framing of time is extended to strengthen this narrative of 'ancient hatreds'. For instance, Serb identity has often been described as shaped by the Battle of Kosovo, resistance against the Ottomans as well as the two world wars (Majstorović, 1997: 174). The time extension of the narrative works to reinforce it, but at the same time brushes over the international factors that mattered in the decade before the outbreak of the war – in a context where scholars have demonstrated in sufficient depth the extent to which the breakup of Yugoslavia was not just down to ethno-national tensions, but also to international dynamics (Andreas, 2008; Campbell; 1998;

Ridgeway and Udovicki, 2000). And indeed, in the context of the Balkans, we can detect similar tendencies to narrate the war in Kosovo in 1999.

One prominent example, where intervention is grounded in a geographically-constructed imagination of backwardness, is the 1999 speech of the then German foreign minister Joschka Fischer who, despite facing considerable resistance from within his own party, the Greens, strongly defended the need for military intervention by NATO in Kosovo. To do so, he projected a scenario of what *would* happen in the future if this intervention did not take place. He constructed a reference to the past (the Holocaust as one of the most deadly and violent events in European history) and used this to support his call to stop Milošević by military means. This is an analogy that Campbell (1998) similarly identifies during the war in BiH, through the presence of a comparable time frame of backwardness and associated references to the Holocaust (pp.8, 9). In the Kosovo case, the connection between the regressive past (the Holocaust associated with the locality of the Balkans) and the future (the scenario of Milošević killing Kosovo Albanians in a comparable way) is by no means a self-evident one, but instead a narrative construction, contested even within Fischer's own party, to serve the political goals of intervention. His narration implies that intervention should not only be used to react to violence that has already happened, but already as a tool for prevention, that is, chronologically *before* violence happens (cf. Fischer, 2015). From a theoretical angle, Koselleck (1981) suggests that prognoses are based on the assumption that history is repetitive and lessons from the past can inform the future. He suggests that "[t]he prognosis implies a diagnosis which introduces the past into the future" (Koselleck, 1981: 179). In that sense, Fischer's prognosis can be seen as informed by a particular reading and instrumentalisation of the past (the Holocaust) and a narrative that implies the possible, or perhaps even necessary, repeatability of it in a different geographical context, namely the Balkans. Fischer's prognostic framing of events illustrates this narrative through which the

past of Europe is transposed onto the future of Kosovo. Waever (1998) has indeed argued that Europe's other is Europe's past and Diez (2004) refers to Europe's approach as one of creating a "temporal other" for its own geopolitics. This is in line with Prozorov's idea that Europe's othering is, like any othering process, spatial and temporal at the same time (Prozorov, 2011).

The use of 'sequencing' techniques is an inherent part of such narrations (if A happens, B will happen as well). This approach is by no means new in the discipline of International Relations, or indeed Peace and Conflict Studies. Tilly, for instance, argued that "*[w]hen* things happen within a sequence affects *how* they happen" (Tilly, 1984, p.14, cited in Pierson, p.54). What is more, there is often an argument made along the lines of 'peace needs time' and it 'needs patience' to happen. The argument is certainly rarely made by the suffering waiting for relief and reflects the extent to which we live in multiple time horizons (Lilja et al, 2015: 413). It is war realities that create those different time frames, and the latter impact upon the political choices available to a community of interveners. A binary narration of time, however, reduces this complexity to a simplified idea of backwards vs progressive, with those in violent conflict being usually considered as less progressive than those outside the immediate span of violence. In a situation of war, the positioning of international actors in a more advanced time zone allows for claims to legitimacy when it comes to intervention. Yet I will now show that this is equally the case *after* the war in BiH ended, and that, therefore, the assumed turning point between peacekeeping/peacemaking (during war) and peacebuilding (after war) does not represent a genuine turning point when it comes to the discourses of the international interveners, and the EU more specifically.

THE POST-CONFLICT PEACEBUILDING INTERVENTION IN BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA – CONTINUITY AFTER THE TURNING POINT

I will now show how binary time narrations are used as a frame to legitimise intervention, not only when it comes to intervention at the very peak of violence, but also in post-conflict settings where, at least in theory, peacebuilding ambitions suggest the necessity of a more locally-driven approach. This is important to acknowledge, given the strong focus of critical geopolitics and intervention studies on in-war intervention, whilst, particularly Peace and Conflict Studies have sought to highlight the emancipatory potential of post-war peacebuilding, coupled with the assumption that peacebuilding itself would allow for a more bottom-up focused approach and a less heavy-handed outside interference (Leonardsson & Rudd, 2015). Specifically, with respect to BiH, scholarship has paid only limited attention to the Orientalism inherent in post-conflict discourses (cf. Ó Tuathail, 2010) and instead more attention to the geopolitical framing of the country during the war (cf. Dodds, 1998). Yet, interestingly, international actors, and, most notably the EU as primary actor, seem to have strengthened their statements on the need for intervention in the post-conflict phase. This corresponds to what Hughes and Pupavac (2005) have termed the "pathologisation" of the post-Yugoslav states, as a means of undermining the legitimacy of self-government; or the international actors' tendency to frame BiH as a country in perpetual transition (Jeffrey, 2007). It ties in with a discourse of "ungovernability" of certain countries and regions, which paves the ground for specific forms of intervention (Marei et al, 2018). This case study will therefore show that the binary representation of time not only works to justify intervention during, but also after, war. In the case of BiH, this has contributed to the ongoing presence of international agencies and trusteeship-style of international intervention more than 20 years after the end of the immediate war, putting some doubts on the extent to which a commitment to a locally designed and owned peace is a genuine one.

The following section will therefore deconstruct the corresponding discourses of intervention in some more detail to account for the extent to which interveners have framed 'local' actors as backwards, while the international peacebuilding intervention continues to see itself as progressive.

<u>The Chaotic Nature of Local Time</u>

With the 'local' considered chaotic and backwards, Hutchings argues that we often think of the non-Western 'other' as living in our own past (Hutchings, 2011: 190). This has long been addressed in Anthropology, notably through the work of Fabian. As Kowal argues, "Fabian and others have demonstrated the ways that 'anthropological time' produced a secularised, naturalised and spatialised temporality of the 'primitive' who by definition has no future (Fabian 1983; Wolfe 1999)" (cited in Kowal, 2015: 95). In fact, in his more recent work Fabian further problematizes the notion that the 'anthropological other' lives in a different temporality than the researcher or anthropologist (Fabian, 2014). This differentiation inherently degrades the 'anthropological other' and contrasts primitive cyclical time with Western, progressive time (Fabian, 2014: 41). There is then a constructed time difference, two different time-worlds, in which the researcher and the 'other' are framed.

It is noteworthy to see how the above-outlined speech acts of Balkanism continue to serve as rhetoric frames in the policy world to justify the need to intervene in order to restore 'normalcy' to an allegedly 'deviant' region (cf. Jeffrey, 2016). At the same time, as I will show below, the frame of linearity as a result of (conflict) transformation, often associated with the Europeanisation agenda, is not exlusively a product of the latter, but emerges in the textual web between the different intervening organisations, including the World Bank and the Office of the High Representative (OHR). It is therefore no coincidence that even an

OSCE source suggested that, due to their closer proximity to the EU, Croatia and Serbia were becoming more progressive than BiH (personal meeting, confidential source, OSCE, Sarajevo, 05 September 2013).

These dynamics are evident with the European Commission (EC)'s progress and enlargement reports, all aiming to measure BiH according to the benchmarks that the EC itself has developed. In sum, all the EC's annual (progress) reports since 2011 unambiguously promote this framing. The 2015 enlargement report is particularly illustrative of this, in its tendency to critique local and national actors in cases where linear progress has not worked. To quote directly from the report, it suggests that "[t]he lack of country-wide medium-term policy planning is a serious obstacle to **public scrutiny of government work** [emphasis in original]" (EU Commission, 2015: 11).

However, this is not the only example as the report is full of hints of the shortcomings of national action *only*, that is, international complicity with any post-conflict issues are erased from the picture. Instead, the EC refers to international standards as benchmarks without problematising them at all. The report refers to EU conditionality as a key benchmark, but also, importantly, the Sejdić Finci ruling of the European Court of Human Rights (EU Commission, 2015). Based on the law suit of a Bosnian Roma and a Bosnian Jew who, because they did not belong to one of the majority ethnic groups, could not stand for election in the House of Peoples, this ruling basically pledged that the constitution of BiH as it stands is exclusive of minorities that do not identify themselves with one of the majority ethnic groups. Ironically, this is a result of the internationally devised Dayton Peace Agreement of 1995, which includes the country's constitution and was promoted and endorsed by the representations of American, European and Russian governments at the time, based on the assumption that the war was largely ethno-nationalist in nature (cf. Campbell, 1998; Chandler, 1999). However, the enlargement report itself only reports on the chaotic nature of

Bosnian implementation as the main issue, not only in relation to the Sejdić Finci ruling, but also in more general terms:

> The legal framework is fairly well developed, but legal loopholes and lack of implementation limit its efficiency. The country's four Criminal Codes are largely in line with the *acquis*, although the penalties imposed are not enough of a deterrent (EU Commission, 2015: 19).

Very similarly, the report, which came at a crucial time when Bosnian society was mobilising around an anti-corruption agenda, downplays this protest movement which became publicly visible in 2014 and eventually produced 'citizens' plenums' through which citizens' concerns could be heard and politically channelled (cf. Belloni et al, 2016). Despite the democratic potential of this movement and the fact that it led to the resignation of a number of politicians on its basis, the report states that

> [s]ome civil society organisations strived to increase their capacity to monitor the EU integration process and enter into dialogue on the Reform Agenda with the EU and the authorities across the country. However, civil society organisations continue to have limited capacity at grassroots level to participate in policy dialogue" (EU Commission, 2015: 9).

This statement frames local agency as backward and lacking substance, although, on the other hand, one could argue that local actors have, at least in parts, instigated a process of democratisation that international organisations can only dream of (cf. Belloni et al, 2016). The EU's response to the protest movement, which was clearly destabilising the frame of a backward local in the protestors' attempts to engage in democratic politics, is a powerful indicator of the ways in which a dominant discourse is able to stabilise itself by downplaying the resistance it encounters.

The representation of Bosnian society in the enlargement report can be read as local conditions being not up to speed with EU standards. This comes with an implicit reference to the framing of time in that it assumes that Bosnian society has a long way to go until they

have reached these standards. This is all the more explicit in the section of the report that deals with freedom of expression and suggests that "the country has been backsliding in this area" (EU Commission, 2015: 22). Comparably, the 2018 progress report suggests that there has been "no progress" with respect to policy coordination (EU Commission, 2018: 6) – although the fragmentation of decision-making is not least a result of the internationally-devised Dayton Peace Agreement. This represents a constant from the earlier 2011 progress report, which had also critiqued the fragmented political landscape that had emerged from the BiH constitution, yet without any reference to the fact that it was not domestically designed (EU Commission, 2011: 7). This issue had already been articulated in a meeting with the EU Commission in Sarajevo in 2010 (confidential source, EU Commission, Sarajevo, 15 March 2010), and is to be understood in relation to the above-mentioned 2009 Sejdić Finci ruling.

With a broader view to how this discursive frame has developed in the long run, it has to be related to the discourses of the OHR, the international agency supervising the country's compliance with the Dayton Peace Accords, as well as a range of other international organisations active in the country. At least since 2010, there has been a clear tendency of the OHR to shift responsibilities to the EU, with a long-term view to the former's eventual closure. This institutional shift has indeed seen the continuation of a discourse, which assumes that BiH continues to need international supervision, conditionality and mentoring and can thus be seen as continued in the EU's annual progress reports.

In fact, already in their 2001 joint report on BiH's progress towards accession to the Council of Europe, a number of international agencies had constructed the categories of "satisfied", "partially satisfied" and "not satisfied" (OHR et al, 2001), all implying that there was a certain directionality to the process that BiH needed to go through if they hoped to be successful in their period of transition. This was confirmed through five personal meetings by the author with senior staff of the OHR between 2009 and 2016, all of which were focused on

the need of the Bosnian politicians and population to respond to conditions set and to embark on a route of progress should they wish for the OHR to be ceasing its trusteeship-style activities. In this light, the closure of the OHR (in itself a precondition for EU membership) has been postponed multiple times since 2005. Closure has meanwhile been tied to the so-called 'Agenda 5+2', that is, a series of conditions BiH has to fulfil and to which the OHR has commented that "[w]hile progress has been made in some areas, chronic disagreement among the main political parties has produced gridlock that has prevented the full implementation of the agenda" (OHR, not dated). This statement concurs with the outlined narrative of backwardness of domestic political progress and justifies the continued presence of the OHR which, with its 'Bonn Powers'[iii] is able to interfere deeply into the domestic political arena.

The continuation of this approach in EU policy is, most recently, evident in the EC's 2018 progress report, which, amongst others, states that "Bosnia and Herzegovina's alignment with EU Common Foreign and Security Policy has yet to be improved (EU Commission, 2018: 3). However, despite its strong focus on the issue of corruption, the report does not mention the citizen's plenums of 2014 that had brought this issue to the forefront of public debate.

The Linear Time of Intervention

In more general terms, in Western political thought, there is a tendency to resort to a linear conception of time, a notion of improvement and progress (cf. Galtung, 2016). Browne suggests that the directionality of history is a key characteristic of Enlightenment thinking (Browne, 2014: 7). In this context, Gell suggests that "Kant understood time to be absolutely directional with respect to before and after" (Gell, 1996: 10).[iv] This is linked to an understanding of liberal peacebuilding as quasi-timeless, in terms of its assumed universal

validity in both space and time. The 'blueprint' is therefore considered transferrable across different cases, with only minimal modifications and adaptations made from case to case. As a result, peacebuilding agency is associated with the West, and thus a 'modern' phenomenon. We therefore always need to bear in mind that the imposition of time narratives of whatever kind can be considered a form of power (Mac Ginty, 2015: 4) as well as the denial of agency to particular parts of the population. Historical knowledge is often seen as separate from political knowledge, and policy actors rarely use material produced by historians in their day-to-day work. Instead, they tend view their working zone, the post-conflict environment, as an insulated field (Richmond et al, 2015), disrupted from the past and self-contained. There is thus an implicit assumption within policy circles that there is a clear cut-off point where history ends and the respective conflict begins. Indeed, academics and practitioners alike often frame conflicts with a neat and clear start and end date, as if developments before and after could be considered in isolation. It is the assumed rupture before and after war that allows international agencies to defend intervention during war. Yet, we see heavy-handed intervention continue after the end of the war. The intervening actors keep narrating the now over 20 year-long international presence in BiH with a view to the continuing need to establish linearity and progress. In this context, Moore suggests that the label of 'post-conflict' on the part of the World Bank legitimises the implementation of a "shock therapy to create the market cure for war" (Moore, 2000: 13) and thus makes neo-liberal intervention possible in the first place.

With respect to BiH, the notion of 'progress' was inherent in the Dayton Peace Agreement itself in its attempt to set out a clear roadmap of advancement, including processes such as the withdrawal of troops, the deployment of IFOR, and further steps to be taken to reinforce the newly born state. And it is this very agreement that is often referred to as a major rupture from chaos to linearity and therefore used as a key benchmark according to which BiH's

'progress' is measured. It also has to be read in the light of a wider structural adjustment agenda of the international financial institutions, which was at its peak when the Dayton Peace Agreement was designed and widely implemented at least until the early 2000s. In this vein, a World Bank policy paper, for instance, suggests that "Bosnia and Herzegovina has achieved significant progress in economic reconstruction and recovery since the 1995 Dayton Peace Agreement, supported by substantial volumes of international financial assistance" (Tiongson and Yemtsov, 2008: 2). Whilst speaking of "uneven progress", the latter paper endorses the notion of progress as an inherent feature of post-conflict international intervention and assistance (ibid.). This attitude is particularly interesting against the background that the figures cited in the report suggest no progress at all – a decline in actual fact, especially with respect to unemployment and the informal sector. However, such deviation from the assumption of the expected progress is primarily attributed to domestic (rather than international) dynamics (Tiongson and Yemtsov 2008: 19). Hence, the idea is that intervention sets out a linear trajectory, and whenever there is a deviation from this trajectory, it is likely a result of deviant national or local politics. An earlier World Bank report had already made this explicit:

> the transition process in BiH, and the Bank's efforts to support transition, had to confront the complex government structure and the unique characteristics of the SFRY system—social ownership and worker self-management (World Bank, 2004: 6).

The delay in (linear) progress is thus justified by dynamics external to the actual project of intervention and, rather than considering the degree to which intervention failed to connect to these pre-existing conditions, it attributes the responsibility for the delay in progress to those very conditions.

The World Bank even goes on to say that "[i]t is clear that the donor community as a whole has achieved notable success in contributing to the physical reconstruction of BiH" (World

Bank, 2004: 32), again pointing to the notion of progress innate in the politics of intervention in BiH. The report strongly commends international efforts to move the country forward in different policy areas. For instance, whilst BiH is criticised for having had problems with the delivery of health care even before the war, the World Bank praises itself for having successfully introduced a new health care model (World Bank, 2004: 14-5). This statement might be considered problematic given that the current health system remains largely inaccessible and inefficient to its users. The assumption of progress therefore casts light on the narrative of linearity and progress that the World Bank helps perpetuate in its very selection of what is referred to as success and failure. The dichotomisation of agency and the assumed linearity of progress (that can only be seen as interrupted by local and national dynamics) is therefore summarised in this statement:

> [T]he successful reconstruction effort in BiH can be credited to the joint efforts of the country and the donor community, while the lagging reform efforts and the disappointing economic performance since 2000 must be largely attributed to the reluctance or inability of the political leadership in BiH to implement effectively the reform agenda (World Bank 2004: 33).

The use of a similar frame in the EU's discourses in BiH is not surprising if considering that the EU's policy tools are closely comparable to the World Bank's. This is most notably due to the EU's 2008 "Interim Stabilization and Association Agreement" with BiH, which taps into World Bank territory, specifically addressing issues of free trade and the liberalisation of agriculture (cf. World Bank Group, 2017), and was complemented with an Adaptation Protocol in 2017.

I would go as far as to argue that the World Bank's earlier policy papers had introduced the language that the EU later continued to use almost uncritically in its own documents. The EC, too, has long been clear about its roadmap and the reforms it deems necessary to achieve those. In that sense, any assumed progress is rhetorically linked to compliance with EU

standards (European Commission, 2004: 7) as the ultimate set of benchmarks against which this is being measured. It therefore comes as no surprise that the Commission Staff Working Paper Bosnia and Herzegovina / Stabilisation and Association Report of 2004 on 20 pages mentions the word "progress" 45 times (European Commission, 2004). This points to a clear directionality of development that is assumed to represent the default point in the imaginary that the EU holds for the future of BiH. The use of this frame can similarly be detected in the EU's annual progress reports since 2011. For instance, the first sentence of the EU's progress report of 2014 states that

> [t]he country remains at a standstill in the European integration process. There remains a lack
> of collective political will on the part of the political leaders to address the reforms necessary
> for progress on the EU path (European Commission, 2014: 1).

In this, the EU's engagement implies a certain degree of linearity. After all, the mission statement of the EU Delegation in BiH suggests the "irreversibly on track towards EU membership" (EUBiH, 2014). This was confirmed by a Political Advisor of the European Commission who pointed out that the aspiration towards EU membership, for BiH, would mean a brighter future for the country (personal meeting, Sarajevo, 18 April 2016). They further suggested that there was a need to keep credible the hope for a better future in the light of a negative past (ibid.). Their perspective broadly mirrors the early view of the OHR, where intervention through the "Bonn Powers" was considered as conducive to progress (personal meeting, anonymous, OHR, Sarajevo, 10 March 2009). All in all, it points to an approach that takes time as the (linear) driver of change for *the better* and thus constructs a linear approach to post-conflict intervention.

Therefore, if we take the linearity of intervention for granted, then all deviation from this linearity must be framed as emerging from outside the project of intervention, hence – as outlined above – the local and national sphere. It is against this background that the European

Commission suggests that "[t]he political leadership owes it to Bosnia and Herzegovina's citizens to provide the country with a clear direction." (European Commission, 2014: 1).

This framing of time often includes the implicit notion of the possibility of improvement as long as the relevant lessons are learnt (cf. Rodt and Wolff, 2012). The intervention as political project is thus assumed to be progressive ('successful') as long as it strives to improve within its own logic. Given that the post-conflict situation in BiH has become more and more tense and, in the words of Pugh (2004), the "neo-liberal economic model has rubbed salt into war wounds" (p.54), with "more democratisation but less democracy" (Chandler, 1999: 155), and some people are now talking about an atmosphere that is comparable to before the war, this framing is surprising at best.

CONCLUSION

This article has argued for the need to consider time-framing as a mechanism of intervention, governance, and the legitimisation thereof. I have suggested that we need to understand how Western time considers itself privileged over 'local' time and thus fails to take into account time plurality (cf. Hutchings, 2007: 83), whilst establishing a binary framing of time that is then merged with the idea of international superiority. The article has shown how such frames can lead to an Orientalist representation of 'the local' or 'the national', who is perceived as backward, chaotic and contrasted with a progressive 'international'. Intervening actors in BiH tend to blame domestic political and social structures for deviating from an assumed progressive script of intervention.

It is as if intervention took place in a more advanced time zone than the war and was therefore immune to chaos. The narrow framing of war focuses on localised root causes, thus absolves international actors from responsibility and ascribes the failure to achieve progress to local and national actors. In the case of BiH, this framing excludes the complicity of the

West in the economic instability in the region and creates a fertile ground on which intervention appears as an almost automatic and progressive option. Crucially, this binarisation of *backwardness vs progress* continues in the post-conflict phase, maintaining a narrative of the need of international intervention to adjust the domestic time zone to the international one. The framing is situated in a process in which the EU has positioned itself at the forefront of a transformation agenda. Yet the article has provided evidence that, despite post-war peacebuilding's rhetorical commitment to locally-driven processes, there is no indication of a discursive turning point of international discourses referring to BiH *during* the war on the one hand, and to BiH *after* war on the other hand. This suggests that peacebuilding intervention may in quality be only marginally different from intervention during war.

Peacebuilding seems to restrict the extent to which Bosnian citizens are trusted to build their own society and state – something which much of the initial international scepticism vis-à-vis the domestic protests and alternative governance fora in 2014 evidenced. The continued pathologisation of domestic actors as not capable of creating "progress" independent of international support thus maintains a political sphere in which crucial decisions on citizens' everyday lives are taken in power centres outside their electoral control (cf. Chandler, 1999). As long as external trusteeship-style actors take decisions, the latter are not subject to domestic scrutiny and remain largely immune to challenge and transformation. This is certainly not to suggest that there is no complicity with or resistance against such framings of time on the part of those being framed – much to the contrary [cf. Anonymous, 2014]. The EU can certainly not be said to be the only force shaping contemporary BiH, and has never been. However, it is to point to an Orientalist institutional discourse that has proven rather resilient over the course of 20 years and across international agencies *despite* the ethical and pragmatic issues it has raised in the face of socio-political resistance. It is this discourse that

locates the agency to bring about progress and positive transformation at the international level, thus reinforcing a discourse in which the 'local' is deemed unfit as a progressive political force.

This is not to romanticise local actors or shift all blame to the scale of the international (cf. [Anonymous, 2015a]) – and indeed binary discourses can be found on local, national and international levels alike - but instead to argue that a binary narrative of progress and backwardness serves as little more than a rhetoric tool to defend the continued need for external intervention.

We, therefore, need to ask who creates the time narratives needed to legitimise intervention and to frame the latter as a success. There needs to be closer attention to the ways in which certain policies are discursively legitimised (through their framing as progressive) and de-legitimised (through their framing as backward and obstructive to progress). An Orientalist or Balkanist representation of 'the other' through their labelling as backward is a highly politicised narrative tool in this process and prevents peacebuilding from being as emancipatory as it claims to be. It will be of future scholarly interest to investigate the permanence of this Orientalist discursive frame across the more recent turbulences in the Balkans, including the so-called 'migration crisis', or the EU's concerns about further secessionist tendencies of Republika Srpska.

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[i] In this context, some existing scholarship tends to conflate between 'time' (universal time) and temporality (perceived time rooted in human existence), see Couzens Hoy (2009). In this article, I focus on the process of time-framing and acknowledge that in much existing scholarship, this is subsumed under the notion of 'temporality'. I use 'time-framing' unless citing another scholar who explicitly uses 'temporality' to denote the same.

[ii] In the sense of 'restoring order'.

[iii] The Bonn Powers were devised in 1997 to give the OHR the power to interfere into legislative affairs of BiH to ensure legal compliance with the Dayton Peace Agreement. They also included the possibility of dismissing public officials if they were considered as acting against the agreement.

[iv] A substantive analysis of a thus-framed critique of the liberal peacebuilding paradigm can be found in Behr (2014).