

Rejected bodies, disowned cultures: Race and nation in Bosnia and Chile

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Early draft note: please do not distribute, at the moment various references are missing

In spring of 2013, a recording of an educational tv show *Perspektiva* (eng. Perspective) in the Technical High School in Mostar would lead to a public outrage in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Such reaction ensued after a commentary made by a pupil Ante, who declared that Bosnian Muslims have darker skin tone than Bosnian Croats. Ante made the racial commentary after mentioning his personal fear of not being welcomed in Sarajevo – country's capital with Muslim majority where he aspired to continue his university studies. Here, he intended to explain his fear of being recognized and having a body that doesn't fit by referring back to the situation in his hometown. Thus, he stated: „Like I just said, I am afraid to cross to the left (Muslim) side of the town. That is why I have never visited the Old Bridge. Imagine this, the whole world knows Mostar for its Old Bridge and me, a Mostarian, have never been on it. This is because I do not dare... I do not know why but it is probably because of national tensions. A certain fear exists. I am afraid that if I go *there someone will recognize that I am Croat*, there will be trouble, everything can happen.”

The sincerity of the young man was such that he went even further and underlined: „This can happen because *I can also recognize Muslims when they come to the (Croat) west-side of the town or those who live here (on the west side) according to the color of their skin*, their speech, their movements, their ways of dressing ... or I dont know what. *I am not sure, but it is probably that face texture or the darker skin color that is referred to Bosniaks.*”

Contrary to the prevalent academic understandings of Bosnia and the Balkans, it is clear to anyone from BiH that Ante's racial profiling of ethnicity, even if not something that is discussed openly in the public space, is far from being an unknown social practice. Besides, despite not being historically novel, racialization of ethnicity has been particularly enforced in BiH after the transition from socialism. Here, differentiation of distinct Bosnian peoples had to be made at any costs due to internal national projects that developed alongside the collapse of Socialist Yugoslavia. Within this novel context of post-socialism, the fear of being recognized in the „wrong” parts of the city or country became very real. In this sense, I, just like Ante, have also believed for a long time that there are specific racial qualities that distinguish Bosnian Croats, Serbs, and Muslims. In this sense, if we want to understand the unfortunate incident that marked Ante's first public appearance we need to read it through the experience of a person whose worldview was forged within the spaces of divided education, divided city, and, in the end, divided country.

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With this in mind, Ante's statement is novel only in a sense that it has openly imparted „social and symbolic meaning to perceived phenotypical differences“ (quote) upon a relationship that was essentially understood as ethno-religious one. Therefore, by employing oppositional binaries of whiteness and darkness for a depiction of Croat-Bosniak, or Catholic-Muslim, relational split within Bosnian social space, Ante has classified such relationship in a way in which it was not usually classified. In this sense, while inscribing himself, his ethnicity, and his ethnic others into a global hierarchy of race, Ante pointed towards the impossibility of either thinking Southeast Europe as an 'unraced region' (Baker 2019) or considering Bosnian ethno-religious communities as something that exists beyond the larger 'global racial formations' (Collins 2011: 167; see Omi and Winant 1994).

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On the 2nd of May 2019, just five months before the initiation of the biggest wave of mobilization in Chilean history, a racial encounter not too dissimilar to the one that occurred in Mostar would be produced within the spaces of the most famous mall of Chilean capital of Santiago - Costanera Centre. The mall is located in the municipality of Providencia, which belongs to what is colloquially known as 'the upper town' - the richest part of both this city and the entire country. Still, since Providencia borders 'the lower town', which is positioned to its south, Costanera Centre is a place of social mixing of different races and classes in Chile. Thus, on that fall day two students coming from the 'lower town', with visibly darker skin tone, would face an uncomfortable racial experience while they were studying in Starbucks coffeeshop of Costanera Centre. Here, the blue-eyed women with a foreign sounding surname and a skin tone that in Chile can be considered as white, verbally attacked them by saying that they - the 'broken pieces of shit' – should take their 'indigenous-looking faces' back to their part of the city.

While bringing one of the students to break in tears, the woman identified herself as a resident of Vitacura – the richest commune of 'the upper town'. In this sense, and similar to what we have witnessed in Mostar, the racial profiling was applied in conjunction with a specific spatial logic to that separation. That is, while in Mostar the boulevard serves as a separation point between "darker" Muslim-Bosniaks and "whiter" Catholic-Croats, in Santiago the Plaza Italia serves as the dividing line where, as almost every citizen of this city will tell you, "Chile is divided into two, into the country of those who are up and the country of those who are down".

During one of first meetings that I had with Gonzalo, a high school student from the 'lower' part of the city who would even in Chile face serious difficulties in trying to identify himself as white, I brought the Starbucks incident up for discussion. Here, during the most difficult and uncomfortable conversation I have had up to date he explained the situation to me with a certain disappointment in his eyes and discomfort in his body with following words: „The same thing has happened to me on various occasions. Many times people call me an Indian, broken piece of shit, or even an ugly black. This is something that happens mainly when I go to the other part of the

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city. Today there exists that type of derogatory treatment of the people, especially when someone rich is treating someone poor.”

In this sense, the specific racial encounter, which in Chile always remains imbued with the idea of class, while underlining the distinction between the ‘upper’ and ‘lower’, richer and poorer, whiter and darker Chile, communicates with the events witnessed in Mostar since it, at least tentatively, reveals how the issue of race problematizes the notion of a common imagined political community and its nation-state in both Southeast Europe and Southern America while presenting, as Gonzalo himself put it, “the kind of thinking that is destructive of this society”.

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In line with the wider novelty of this monograph, the chapter builds upon 'thinking between the posts' conversation and examines Bosnian racial question alongside the Chilean one. In this sense, I continue reading these two historical social configurations within the larger framework of globally entangled histories (Mark and Slobodian 2018). Here, I contribute to the ongoing postcolonial/decolonial discussion by arguing that the construction of national subjectivities in both Southeast Europe and Southern America remains imbued with racial projects. In this sense, I build upon recent critique of Baker (2019), and argue that the ethnicity and nationhood conversations existing in Chile and Bosnia cannot be understood as something that takes place outside of race nor that these nation-states should ever be taken as cultural constructs untouched by the question of race. Rather, taking racialization as an integral part of the nation-state body-politic, I demonstrate how racial profiling has impacted the configuration of imagined communities in Bosnia and Chile and the possibilities of their integrations or fracturing.

With this in mind, I claim that both of the encounters described above remain similar in a sense that each of them is deeply embedded within the modern colonial project and therefore a global history of coloniality. Thus, I address the question of race in SEE and SA by engaging with the tradition of decolonial studies and critical race theory (Mills 1997; Mignolo 2000). Both of these traditions position global history of racial formation within the occidental-eurocentric project of political modernity. In this sense, I take racialized domination, eurocentrism and witnesses as part of a worldwide project, one that is not limited only to formal colonial states but which reaches every corner of the planet that forms part of the modern world-system and its geohistorical configuration (Mills 1997; Mignolo 2000). In this sense, I read the question of race in its larger culturalist category of classification that is imbued with symbolic power of Europeanness and occidental modernity. Thus, I explore how the spaces of both Southeast Europe and Southern America have had their modern political subjectivities defined in relation to 'Europe' which represents a universal normative and a superior civilized/civilizational complex whose cultural assumptions represent the major aspect of modern political culture and the model for the entire planet (see Alcoff 2007).

In line with this, I link race conversations in Bosnia and Chile to the epistemic violence and coloniality of being that is derived from a structural positions of Southeast Europe and Southern

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America which assigned them the role of reproducers of modernity inside of which the homogenous euro-occidental nation-state represents normative form of social organization. In this sense, I explore how racial projects of Chilean and Bosnian Croat elites affect the possibility of constructing a unified political construct that would welcome local particularity over and beyond the modular form that is imported from the occident and which remains „imbued with racialized hierarchies that equate Europeaness with whiteness and modernity“. Finally, I argue that replication of the universalist model, largely ignoring the reality found on the ground, has resulted in the fact that both of these countries produce forms of „subjectivational practice“ that are self-colonizing (Kiossev 2000) and which inevitably lead to auto-racism. Therefore, I argue that this replicative action, highly imbued with aspirational whiteness and associated attachments to Europe, has led to the racialized nation-state body-politic that is at the very foundation of the „coloniality of being“ found in contemporary Bosnia and Chile.

The chapter is divided into three parts. Thus, the two following parts explore the dynamics of identification with the idea of Europe that exist in racial projects of Chilean and Bosnian Croat elites. After this, in the third and last part, the chapter integrates these two racial projects and analyses them within the common frame of globally entangled histories. In this last part of the chapter, I bring into the conversation the voices of protesting students with whom I have extensively discussed this question during my online ethnographic research. It is from these personal micro-histories where I think that we can both understand the effects of larger institutional led subjectivational practice and the opposition and uncomfotability expressed in relation to those. Finally, in this chapter I intend to arrive to an answer of why did these two micro encounters introduced at the very beginning happen and what do they signify for the construction of imagined political communities known as nation-states in Bosnia and Chile.

Decolonial turn and national state in Chile

Pioneered by the work of Peruvian sociologist Anibal Quijano at the turn of the 1990s, decolonial theory developed a critique of modernity as an occidental epistemic project. While differentiating coloniality from the historic period of colonialism, decolonial theory understands the former as a contemporary condition that is “embedded in the constitution of modernity.” In this sense, building upon modern world-system approach (Wallerstein), decolonial studies posited coloniality as phenomenon that is derived from “a long durée perspective on global forms of domination.” Thus, arguing that “there is no modernity without coloniality”, decolonial theory interrogates the two through their conceptual unity, meaning that the two represent different sides of the same coin. Here, eurocentrism emerges as the main ideology the is embedded within the modernist/colonialist project. As such, it comes to represent “the major aspect of modern political culture” and a dominant “mode of knowing and representation” that “claims universality for itself” despite being derived from a particular point of Europe as a centre of the world-system (Escobar 2004: 217).

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Moreover, in line with the larger argument that understands coloniality as 'mental captivity' (Alas), decolonial theory approaches race in a more culturalist sense and reads race-based distinctions through the frame of epistemic eurocentrism. Conversely, in decolonial thinking racism is seen as a structure of power built into European colonialism and deeply tied to the ideas of 'civilization' and 'modernity'. In this sense, racialization goes beyond the mere phenotypical differences and is understood as practice of assigning people and places within the global hierarchy of space and time by taking the idea of Europe as its main referent (Mills 1997; Mignolo 2000; Winant 2001). Therefore, for decolonial thinkers racism makes an essential part of the same structure of power that puts the idea of Europe and certain European peoples, aesthetically but even more so culturally, as a key element for differentiation and hierarchization of humanity. (Hybris).

Furthermore, decolonial theory posits evolutionism and dualism as „two principle founding myths“ of the modern/colonial world according to which racial-cultural hierarchization of the entire planet takes place. Thus, while evolutionism proposes a „theory of history as a linear sequence of universally valid events“ that inexorably lead towards European or Western civilization (2000: 550-51), dualism naturalizes distinct positions that Europe and its others occupy within such historical configuration (2000: 542). In this sense, decolonial theory posits contemporary coloniality of power as a global condition that is always linked to the control of knowledge, subjectivity, and body-politics which is based on the macro-narrative of modernity as it was initiated in the western Europe. Here, persistent residues of colonial thinking in postcolonial world are defined as 'coloniality of being'.

Thinking about national formations and their relation to occidental modernity, Quijano suggested that the fact that in Latin America "the Eurocentric perspective was adopted by the dominant groups as their own" has led them "to impose the European model of nation-state formation for structures of power organized around colonial relations." According to Quijano, within such socio-cultural configuration "coloniality of power established on the idea of race" turns into "a basic factor in the national question." Building upon Quijano's proposal, Chilean decolonial thinker Santiago Castro-Gomez (2005) offered a critique of Benedict Anderson's concept of an 'imagined community' by arguing that this idea, once employed without taking into account racial ideology that dominated the elitist project of national construction in Chile, fails to comprehend strong links that exist between nation, race, and coloniality (*entre nacion*).

With this in mind, I consider how Quijano's and Castro's ideas can help us to make a deeper inquiry into the events witnessed in the Costanera Centre. But first, in order to come to this point, we need to take a brief look of the historical process of constructing the Chilean nation-state. Thus, we need to note how during 19th century, in its early postcolonial period, newly defined Chilean nation state remained virtually an unchanged social construct. That is, rather than leading towards democratization of social relations, Chilean independence gave way to "oligarchic modernity", a socio-political configuration inside of which the ruling white European elites

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maintained 'colonial contract' of the old order. Thus, since in Chile the state predated the nation, the latter was to be invented essentially from the position of the ruling alliance that was imbued with the social prejudices of the old age.

Conversely, guiding idea of the national project was based on the premise that modernity could only be achieved if the local cultural character was replaced with a model that would be more in line with Europe (abierto a Europa). As a result, the official policy of the Chilean state during the first century of its existence advanced official projects of 'improving the race' and 'whitening the nation' by encouraging European immigration through fiscal brakes and land distribution policies. During this period, so and so many people from this and that came to live in Chile, essentially taking over the lands that were taken away from indigenous peoples. With this in mind, Chilean sociologist Maria Tijoux notes how „once Chile is constructed as an independent republic the notion of „race“ starts permeating social body and it gets crystalized in racial institutions“ (para la autora).

At the same time, such state efforts were ideologically supported through „National Society for Protection and Foment of Chilean Race“ and „National Review of Education“ whose founder, Nicolas Palacios, insisted that not any European immigration would suffice for improving the Chilean race. Thus, Palacios remained reluctant towards the idea of bringing migrants from hot climates (Iberian, black, or any kind of Latin races), and instead advocated immigration of Nordic and Germanic peoples. Despite the fact that official politics in the end welcomed any kind of European to its community, the migration itself remained imbued with positivist notions of progress, modernity, civilization, and development, since every migrant that escaped the imaginary of darkness came to represent "the positive aspect of a physical-racial character" that are desired by Chileans.

Furthermore, the other side of this process of whitening and improving the Chilean race and nation was the face of the indigenous. Thus, according to Andres Bello, the founder of the first Chilean university, the presence of the indigenous, portrayed as the "slave races" consisting of men who "are barely superior to the animal", embodied the main obstacle to Chilean entry into modernity. In this sense, the thinking of the time, especially as it was advocated by Domingo Sarmiento, an influential Argentinian politician and philosopher exiled in Chile, defined the indigenous not so much in terms of physical but rather in terms of its cultural character. That is, within Sarmientian distinction between civilization and barbarism, indigenous came to represent the latter and was thus described as "an untameable brute, enemy of the civilization that adores all the vices in which he lives submerged, idleness, intoxication, lie, betrayal and all that sum of abominations that constitute the life of a savage" ("un broto indomable). Having the aforementioned in mind, we can understand how Chilean nation was constructed from the principle of alterity that establishes an indigenous population as an internal other against which the imagined Chilean national subject came to be constructed (Maria Tijoux).

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In this sense, and due to their characterization as “culturally inferior” people, as an obstacle for the modernization of a country, Chilean indigenous were constructed as the principle internal enemy of the state that, in the official language, had to be pacified. With this in mind, Mapuche people, the only indigenous people never conquered by the Spanish Kingdom, were finally defeated by the postcolonial Chilean state in 1861 through an internal war that was euphemistically defined as “pacification”. The hate towards the indigenous was such that even in those case when extermination was not deemed as necessary, the Europeanization of the Chilean people stayed vital for successful national project. In this sense, Tancredo Pinochet, a colleague of Palacios that actually opposed foreign immigration, still advocated to send local population to Europe so that Chileans „could Europeanise” and “assimilate European civilization.”

With this in mind, we can also note how in recent time, the portrayal of indigenous in Chilean history textbooks were highly derogatory of an indigenous element of Chileanity. Thus, Sergio Villalobos, historian who up until very recently wrote all the textbooks used for elementary and secondary education and whom most of my informants know very well, essentially describes indigenous Mapuche people as drunkards, lazy, and unthankful for all the benefits of civilization and modernity brought to them by the Chilean state. It is interesting to note how Villalobos, when accused of being racist, asserts how “people confuse race with culture.” In this sense, while saying how there are no racial differences between Chileans and indigenous, he defends that idea that distinct peoples are positioned in distinct cultural stages. Here, Villalobos positions Mapuche as both morally and intellectually at a lower stage than European cultures, which in this sense he openly describes as superior. With this in mind, he goes as far as saying that Mapuche people have not contributed at all in terms of their culture to the Chilean nation and how at best they only offered necessary labor force.

Furthermore, another aspect of the obsession with Europe that characterizes Chilean national project is its rejection of Latin American ‘civilization’ and regional belonging. With this in mind, Herdandez, famous historian of the 19th century, underlines Chilean singularity in Latin America by declaring how “unimaginative, like we Chileans are, without the exaltations that are popper to the tropical temperament of other peoples, cannot be prohibited the legitimate pride that we feel due to the fact that the base in which our nationality was founded does not have the inconvenience of others found in our vicinity” (22 vecindades). Thus, considering it inferior to Europe, Chilean elites historically believed how Latin America has little to offer in terms of desired national character. Thus, Chile has essentially been constructed as a “country that is different from the rest of Latin America, a country of European character that has overcome its premodern past” (Larrain 2001: 163). In similar way, during contemporary post-authoritarian era Chilean elites have consistently attempted to define Chile as “the north Americans of the south”, an entrepreneurial country and a conqueror businessman who embodies ‘the South American jaguar’ the most developed part of the continent and the only regional country that forms part of the exclusive OECD club.

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National state, 'roto chileno', and the position of mestizo

The fact that in Latin America the construction of the nation was deployed against American Indians, blacks, and mestizos (Quijano), has led to the social situation defined as "internal colonialism" (Cassanova 2002). Discussing the specific case of Chile, Alonso notes that here "the nation is not constituted solely as a project of totalization or homogenization of 'Chileans' around a series of myths, symbols and beliefs, but also as 'internal coloniality', a social formation within which application of social respect and privileges according to the criteria of ethnicity has resulted in intra-national hierarchization of collective identities (cfr. Alonso 2006: 172-173) (464). Here, "doctrines of 'progress' and 'civilization' have turned over time into a powerful disguise for ethnic/racial differentiation which sustains an anthropological project according to which class of European descendants are positioned as natural leaders of civilizatory and moral progress of an entire Chilean society. To put it in words of Bourdieuan sociology, we can affirm that "to imagine a nation in Chile at the same time implied imagining strategies that permitted elites to impose themselves socially in a way that their imposition was officially accepted as legitimate (2001:66)." In this sense, the Chilean elite, historically aware of its particular symbolic capital that placed it in a position of superiority with respect to the rest of population, has since the early times of the republic forged a sense of its own specific identity (*su propia identidad*).

With this in mind, I claim that Chilean national ideal, constructed on the racial premise that positions the white-European as the central element for symbolically defining the nation, coexists in a tense relationship with the fact that this same principle is used for internal differentiation of various socio-cultural groups that inhabit the territory of Chilean state. Here, racial logic of the national project does not simply marginalize the indigenous population from the ideal of Chilean nation, which in any case has numerically deteriorated over time, but it does the same to mestizos, a socio-cultural group that represents a numerical majority in Chile. Conversely, while postulating internal differentiation along the idea of homogenous national community, the official politics has historically left Chilean mestizos as a social group in a position of permanent marginalization that was never really wholeheartedly embraced as an equal part of the national equation).

Having the aforementioned in mind, we can return to the Costanera Centre and interrogate its wider meaning with respect to the question of integration of mestizo people into the Chilean imagined community. Here, I will think through this issue with the help of Gonzalo, a high school student who is both mestizo and comes from the southern periphery of Santiago. As I have already underlined above, Gonzalo has on various occasions received insults like 'indigenous face', 'ugly black', and 'a broken piece of shit'. Considering that the insults of 'indigenous face' and 'an ugly black' remain easily understandable, in a sense that they clearly portray the rejection of an indigenist body within the imaginary of Chilean subject, I would like to use the following paragraphs to tackle the idea expressed in the final insult, one that defines certain members of political community as 'broken pieces of shit'. My decision to do so is based on my firm belief that this concept reflects in the best possible manner the simultaneous drive for unity and disintegration existing within the Chilean national project.

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Having the aforementioned in mind, I consider how the problem of the national articulation that is unable to reconcile within the same discourse differences that exist within its territory in terms of race and class is most visible in the relationship that Chilean elite has historically maintained with the so-called 'low people', a socio-cultural group of mestizo origin that was historically denominated as 'roto' (broken). According to Gabriel Salazar, a Chilean social historian of Thompsonian inspiration, the 'low people' have moved from the rural areas of the country to cities since the late 19th century in search of work and as a result of progressive industrialization. Here, they lived in marginal conditions and until 1931 they have not even been subjects of rights. As such, they could be abused with impunity in all imaginable forms, including violence, torture, and death. The historical progress has resulted in the conversion of rural into a urban roto.

Gonzalo's family, forming part of this larger historical process, moved to the city of Santiago during 1950s, at the very peak of the internal migrations of the 'low people'. Once in Santiago, together with other migrants they would settle on the periphery of the capital where they engaged in the practices of land occupations (tomas de terreno). This specific and widespread phenomenon of Latin American history that emerged as an effect of an internal led industrialization implied building informal settlements for internal migrants on the occupied land located on the peripheries of the big cities. In Santiago, internal migrations were so significant that during the post-war times "the mestizo city came to be three times bigger than the "cultured city" of the oligarchy. As a result of the new arrivals, Chilean elites have responded by leaving the central area of Santiago and inhabiting the part of the town that is close to the cordillera of the Andes and that today we know as 'the upper town'. At the time, Gonzalo's family moved to south Santiago, into what today is known as municipality of Puente Alto. Here, they would build with their own hands a house in which Gonzalo lives up to this very day.

Over time, migration resulted in internal differentiation of the city in terms of both class and race. I witnessed these stark differences that characterize distinct parts of the capital for the first time about six months after I moved to Santiago, that is, once I started my professional practice in Vitacura municipality. Thus, since I was going to my internship with a bike, I crossed on a daily basis the path that led me from the lower town where I lived, and that to my mind was the epitome of what Latin America is, into the part of Santiago that reminded me of the rich neighbourhoods where I lived as a student in the northern suburbs of Chicago. The change was so dramatic that I recall telling everyone at the time that it feels like moving not from the fifth (not third as I emphasized to everyone) to the first world. In a notch, to my eyes Vitacura looked nothing like what I imagined Latin America before I left there for my studies. Thus, as I was moving from the south towards northwest, I would witness not only the changes in the landscape but also those in terms of physical-racial characteristics of the people I saw on the streets. The change was so stark that I remember how, as I reached my workplace, I thought of being in some developed Western European country where the skin tone and even colour of the eyes was very different to what I got used to in the neighbourhood of *Barrio Brasil*, where I lived at the time. On an intimate level, I would say that my own personal feeling of being European and white, which was quite affirmed within the spaces of the 'low town', became questioned once I reached the UN headquarters in Vitacura, the place I worked at as an unpaid intern. The spatial

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segregation in Santiago was such that months ahead I would find out that there is a street in the city, very close to the cordillera of the Andes, where almost all of the ex-presidents of Chile, none of them pertaining to the lower class, have their houses.

At the same time, I would also learn that Puente Alto occupies in popular discourse a very distinct imaginary to the one that is connected to Vitacura. Thus, on various occasions I was reminded not to visit this part of the city which, being much poorer than even the one where I lived, represented the most stigmatized municipality of the greater Santiago. Over time, I also learned that Puente Alto (The High Bridge) is alternatively denominated as Puente Asalto, meaning the bridge where you get robbed. The ideal of Puente Alto came to the public light once on the 18th September 2020 when Pablo Aguilera, famous Chilean TV host and an inhabitant of the 'upper town' reflected upon the short visit of puma to the municipality, an event that emerged as part of the wider global phenomenon witnessed during corona lockdowns. Trying to make a joke, Aguilera would say during his TV appearance how "Puma saw Puente Alto and said nooo, here you only have *flaites*¹, they are stealing, they are destroying, they are contaminating, I better leave."

Gonzalo's is a family of modest background, he self-defines as mestizo, and is one of the few students belonging to very low class, usually suspicious of any foreigners, that I was able to meet more intimately. Gonzalo's mom is housewife and his father works in the shoe factory. As many other things in Chile, Gonzalo's social position is most easily distinguishable by knowing the type of school he attends. Racial differentiation in Chilean education is best explained by Marco, a common friend of me and Gonzalo, who says: "Well, you have to understand that if you visit a school for rich people you will see people who are more blonde than I am², and you will see people who talk differently. It is very weird man. But then you go to a public school, or an emblematic one (which Marco attends), and the majority of people will be short, with brown skin tone, and dark hair." Thus, Gonzalo is a student of a municipally run Technical High School in which, according to his words, 80% of the students are in condition of vulnerability. He defines his school as an 'institution intended for those who will not go to the university and a place that only serves to produce cheap future labour force.' The working prospects of Gonzalo's class are such that his mom put him in the technical and not humanist career because she wanted to make sure that he at least has some trade with which he could find employment in the future.

Now, and going back to the imaginary of 'roto', it is interesting to note how the official politics has indeed attempted, during the first half of the 20th century, to make 'roto' part of the national ideology. Here, the Chilean elite intended to use the imaginary of roto in order to recognize Chile as a mestizo country and thus integrate the 'low people' within the common political project. Here, the myth of 'roto chileno' was constructed in the aftermath of Chilean victory against Peru and Bolivia in the 'War of the Pacific'. In this sense, 'roto chileno' was represented as a fictive

¹ Chilean Spanish slang used to define urban youth of low-socioeconomic background who are linked to vulgar habits and crime.

² Marco is indeed blondish (guero), but that is the story to which a reader will be introduced in another chapter.

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national identity and “an ethnic base of Chilean nation”, and it essentially consisted of a fierce warrior coming from the humble parts of the country.

Nevertheless, the myth of ‘roto chileno’ had another more racialized part of the story that was attributed to it. In this sense, WHO claimed that “in order to understand the essential characteristics of the roto, his “uniformity of thinking” and his patriotic values, it is necessary to investigate the origins of his blood, that is, his race.” Here, ‘roto chileno’ was connected to the pseudo-scientific discourse of the Chilean race which was imbued with the very distinct logic from the idea of a humble Chilean. In other words, while in general the ‘roto’ embraced the mestizo, it was simultaneously presented as white and European as it was possible. In this sense, ‘roto’, even when mestizo, had to be racially superior, and was thus presented not as any mix of races, but as a perfect mixed race (raza mestiza), one that came into being through the contact of Gothic Spanish and the Araucanian.

Here, Araucano, or Mapuche, the largest indigenous population of Chile, was accepted within the new national mestizo myth for its warrior qualities which were exalted due to the fact that Mapuche people were the only indigenous society that was never defeated by the Spanish Kingdom. On the other hand, the Gothic Spanish was defined as a special case of Spanish or, to put it more clearly, as not Spanish at all. Thus, this European component of Chileanity supposedly belonged to a Teutonic race originating in Sweden, and represented a Nordic soldier that presumably migrated to the south of Europe where it destroyed the Roman Empire. Within such discourse, that still highly valued specific kind of white europeanity, the low mestizo people, who never really assimilated this specific image, could hardly become anything but an example of a contaminated whiteness, an internal alterity difficult to incorporate into such racial-national invention.

Thus, when I asked Gonzalo about what is the meaning of ‘roto’, he responded: „Back in the day they did try to use it to create this image of a heroic Chilean, but it never stuck. Today, roto is used to express derogatory treatment of people, especially when someone rich is treating someone poor. In this case, this word becomes particularly despective and is used to talk about someone with little class, with little intellect. Then this person becomes roto, a broken one.” Throughout time, I have learned that Gonzalo, like most of the students I talk with, believes that Chile (which for them essentially means Santiago) is divided into two. Also, despite the fact that he was not the only one who told me that he feels uneasy about the ‘upper town’ people, he was one of the few that felt particular discomfort when moving through the spaces of this part of the city. In fact, the feeling of discomfort was only underlined to me by the students whose visible physical features were most clearly associated with the ideal of non-whiteness. Thus, Gonzalo told me that on several occasions he was yelled at by the people in ‘the upper town’, who tend to suspect him of criminal activities. Having in mind that ‘identity controls’ are quite regular in the ‘upper town’, but only for people inhabiting specific kind of bodies, this declaration was not surprising.

Moreover, some months after we met each other, Gonzalo would tell me that he was rejected for a job opening in the mall located in the upper town. Here, he said that the decision to not hire

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him was made on the basis of a skin colour because he was completely qualified for a job of a store seller. As I would find out later, the mall is located very close to the place where his friend Marco lives, and is a venue frequented by many of these people that belong to the same group of friends and whom I, because of their staunch dedication to Marxist analysis, call 'cientificos' (the scientists). Thus, the mall is a place where other friends of Marco that come from the 'low town' and that look like mestizos have reported feeling discomfort. For example, Carlos, another member of científicos, told me a story of his visit to the Starbucks of this mall where he felt like people, whom he describes as "really white", were giving him strange looks that made him feel quite uncomfortable.

Similarly, when I asked Gonzalo how does he know that he was rejected because of his race he told me: "You can notice this in the look of the people, you realize when someone is treating you like this, when there is certain rejection towards someone. I do not have a paper that tells me that they rejected me for my skin colour but I can notice when someone is treating me in a way that is not normal. It is a despotic attitude, an attitude of rejection, and even more an attitude of disgust I would say. That made me feel like I was rejected for what I am. It was a very bad treatment." During this very long and most difficult conversation that I had up to this day with students from Chile, which was produced because of distinct realities inside of which both me and Gonzalo are inserted, and during which Gonzalo, usually cheerful guy, became rather quiet and kept his head down, I asked him what does he think how would they treat me in 'the upper town'. To this, Diego said: "You could go to Vitacura and sit down in front of someone's house and they would not even notice you. They would not even send a personal security to ask what are you doing there".

It is very interesting to note that this idea of being rejected or of having a body that is noticed or not, that does or does not fit, was also pointed to me by Ines, a young female resident of Puente Alto. Here, I leave a short exchange me and Ines had on the question of perception of the municipality where she lives.

Me: Why is there a stigma upon Puente Alto?

Ines: There is a stigma upon Puente Alto because it is considered a poor municipality that lacks culture. This happens because around here you can find garbage dumps everywhere, because people here talk differently, and because of the way that people of Puente Alto are dressed.

Me: But what does it mean to lack culture?

Ines: It is not that we lack culture, but that the others do not like the culture of Puente Alto.

Me: And where do these ideas about Puente Alto come from?

Ines: From many parts but obviously not from here. I think it is something that always comes from the 'upper town', from the authorities, from the high class in the end. It comes from the people that disown this part of the city or that disown all the periphery that is bad. In my opinion, they only like us, the rotos, during national holidays, but not so much when we come to their part of the city.

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I think it is important to also note how when I met Ines for the first time, she told me that for her 'roto chileno' comes from Puente Alto, Pintana, Independencia (other poor and stigmatized municipalities of Gran Santiago).

Having the aforementioned experiences of Gonzalo, Carlos, and Ines in mind, I argue that their feeling of unease in the 'upper town', of coming from the part of the town that is disowned by the high class, and of having bodies that do not fit or that are recognized as unfit, display the issue of racial aspect of national body-making in Chile, one that reveals both historical and contemporary phenomenon of failed social integration in Chile. Thus, due to the specific nation-state body-politic that values European white and never really embraces the indigenous character of Chilean people, one that remains so visible in the physical make-up of mestizo population, expressly presents people like Gonzalo or Carlos as part of unwanted self, something to be discarded. For the same reason it results that I, as non-Chilean and as someone who is closer to the ideal of Europeanity, inhabit a body that fits better in the 'upper town' and goes much more unnoticed than it would be the case with the body of the majority of Chileans. Thus, I claim that for these same reasons, the incidents like the one that was witnessed in Costanera Centre, occurs on regular basis within the contemporary world of the territory that we know as Chile.

Decolonial Theory and Southeast Europe: Balkanism, Coloniality, and Racialization

Maria Todorova's 'Imagining the Balkans' (1997) is considered as the founding work of postcolonial theory in Southeast Europe. In this book, Todorova demonstrates how the region has historically been situated in a position of civilizational inferiority within the global hierarchies of modernity. In a notch, Todorova critically examines the construction of the Balkans through a cultural discourse that is projected from the West and which constructs this region as Europe's "incomplete self" (1997: 17), "repository of negative characteristics" (1997: 188) in comparison to which an idealized image of the West is constantly reproduced (copy paste).

Moreover, while Todorova remained reluctant to apply decolonial theory to the Balkans due to lacking historical experience of real colonialism in the region, it is rather difficult to ignore the fact that she herself deeply contributed to our understanding of the shared experiences of structural Othering that exist between postsocialist and postcolonial spaces (structures of Othering). In this sense, it remains difficult, if not impossible, to understand the discourse of Balkanism outside of the overall rhetoric of orientalism, since the two share the common underlying logic (quote). With this in mind, Nikolay Karkov, Eastern European decolonial thinker, critiques Todorova's stance by reminding us how decolonial theory posits coloniality as a global condition pertaining to the modern world as a whole and not as experience that is resitrected only to those that experienced colonialism in a more direct manner. Thus, together with Tichindeleanu (year), Karkov suggests to examine Eastern European coloniality through the lenses "ontological inferiorization" and "occidentalization" of the region.

Following the same train of thought, Manuela Boatca interrogates the construction of the Balkans through the long durée perspective of the modern world. Here, she notes that during the times

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of second modernity "hierarchies that structured Europe according to principles similar to those applied to the colonial world gradually started taking shape." In this sense, Boatca demonstrates how in the 18th century the Balkans came to be established as the most significant internal European other through the process of hierarchization very similar to those that western Europe applied to its global others. With this in mind, Boatca posits the existence of multiple Europes and defines the Balkans as epigonal Europe, an internal European periphery whose relation with its north-western counterpart, the 'Heroic Europe' is "profoundly shaped by unequal and exploitative" character.

In this sense, both Boatca and Karkov demonstrate how the two founding myths of Eurocentric modernity, evolutionism and dualism, are not an exclusive monopoly of the non-European postcolonial world. Rather, the imaginary of the world they project, inside of which one is ahead and its other behind, where one is the centre and its other periphery, where one is civilized and its other barbarian, forms an integral part of the relationship that Southeast Europe historically maintained with the West. Therefore, since spatial and ontological divisions that Western Europe deployed against its global others remain integral for understanding the construction of the Balkans within the modern system. In this sense, decolonial theory approaches the region through its specific structural position within larger global system. In other words, spatial and ontological division that Western Europe deployed against its global others, has likewise been projected upon its internal periphery. This structural position implied how the Balkans, as reproducers of modernity, had to climb that same evolutionary ladder in order to reach the Northwest, the only region in the world that was historically capable of imposing its universal definition (see Boatca 2007; 2008).(evolutionary ladder)

Building upon this tradition of thought, Catherine Baker (2019) suggests to read "spatialised hierarchies of modernity with which the literature on 'balkanism' was so familiar" with, within a broader pattern of racialization and interiorization." In line with Bjelic and Savic (2002) and Kovacevic (2008), Baker suggest to position balkanist discourse as a phenomenon not separable from the historical constructions of the region that maintains the Balkans in the position of civilizational inferiority and thus as subjugated part of the world. With Baker in mind, and building upon Longinovic's (2011) idea that posits Balkanism as a form of racialization that is driven by identification with whiteness whether open or unavowed, in this chapter I read the construction of Bosnian Croat ethnic identity in postsocialist BiH as a form of racial-cultural discourse that portrays the idea of Bosnia and the Balkans as a social trait of lower civilizational value that one needs to abandon in order to become truly European.

Bosnia-Herzegovina, post-socialist transition, and 'apartheid cartography'

Bosnia's imperial and colonial legacy is reflected in its historical experience of being subjugated firstly under the Ottoman Empire since 15th until 19th century, then under the Austro-Hungarian Empire until 1918, and finally under the Kingdom of Yugoslavia until 1943. The historic mission of European colonialisms revealed itself all too clearly during the Austro-Hungarian Empire, when

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Bosnians came to be described as 'peoples without history' and thus strictly differentiated from the historic peoples of the empire (Germans, Magyars, Italians) (Glajar 2001: 19). Here, Bosnia came to inhabit similar archaic temporality to which European powers previously ascribed Latin America, and was put under a 'civilizing mission' that simultaneously tied hyginize its people through the public health programmes and temper their unmodern and uncivilized mentality (Baker 2018: page).

Moreover, when thinking about Bosnia and its place within the structures of modernity, it remains indispensable to take into account how its Ottoman and Islamic cultural heritage influenced this position (see Rexhepi year). That is, historical experience of Ottoman rule has led Balkans in general and Bosnia in particular to be portrayed as a contested civilizational space, a bridge between cultures, and a mixture of races. Besides, it remains important to understand how Bosnia has remained a specificity even within the larger context of the larger Balkans since most of the other regional countries, despite undergoing Ottoman rule, have not remained that visibly Islamic in present times. For such reason, Bosnia escapes the definition of the Balkans as it was set forth by Todorova, in a sense that it does not only constitute, like most other countries, European but not Western country, but since it is also the only Slavic society in Southeast Europe that is in its majority Muslim. Conversely, Islamic cultural trait has made Bosnia stand much farther from the idealized European civilization and its associated whiteness. For such reason, Bosnia came to resemble like no other society in the Balkans the ideal of being the 'Turkey in Europe' and has, in this sense, become the most Balkan of all.

Furthermore, the negative idea of Bosnia and its Balkanism would become even more pronounced in the aftermath of Yugoslav wars. Here, the country became denominated as the embodiment of the "Balkan powder keg" and a "source of international instability (Hansen 2006)". Moreover, Bosnians came to be largely seen as people that function outside of the preestablished Western civilizational standard and a society that is dominated by the "ancient hatreds". This understanding of the country and its people became so prominent during the 1990s that it served as the main explanation for the country's dramatic disintegration and the terrible war crimes that ensued during this period. This understanding of Bosnia and its people stays largely vital throughout the world up to this day that, during my stay in Chile, even those few people that have somehow heard about my country always told me how we, the Bosnians, are the people who are violent, aggressive, and like to fight. Such reasoning was even used on by my landlord as a basis for his decision to kick me out of the house after I have got in an argument with him for protesting the fact that I slept during two months on a worn-out mattress filled with mice.

Having this context in mind, **G. Kennan (year: page)**, an American diplomat and historian, while talking about the events taking place in Bosnia during the previous war, depicts Bosnia in the following way: "What we are up against is the sad fact that developments of those earlier ages, not only those of the Turkish domination but of earlier ones as well, had the effect of thrusting into southeastern reaches of the European continent a salient non-European civilization which has continued to the present day to preserve many of its non-European characteristics." In this sense, while I do not want to downplay the role of local ethno-national elites in this process of

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our destruction, I do think that it is important to underline how the logic according to which Bosnia became partitioned in the post-war era was highly impacted by the vision that the global powers had of it. Thus, international understandings and prejudices that existed against the Balkans and Bosnia as its epitome have significantly helped in discarding visions of the country that would imply a construction of Bosnia outside of the very modernist ethno-national model. In this sense, the constitution of the country, made behind closed doors in cooperation between ethno-national elites and foreign powers in the American military base in Dayton, Ohio, only served to establish the ethno-national divisions and ethnic hatred as institutional categories.

With this in mind, Australian political scientist David Campbell described political anthropology that led international post-war ordering of Bosnia as an 'apartheid cartography'. Here, Campbell demonstrates how a powerful set of assumptions about the country and its people has resulted in "the absence of a comprehensive and sustained effort by the international community to pursue non-ethnic and non-national options" in BiH. Conversely, unable to think outside of the modernist nation-state paradigm, inside of which the link between ethnicity and territory functions as an underlying logic, has pushed international community to support the conversion of Bosnia from a historically heterogenous society into a construction within whose foundation there is "a nexus between identity and territory reminiscent of apartheid (quote)." In this sense, Dayton accords, country's current constitution, proclaim(ed) democracy while entrenching apartheid structures and ethnic-based parties" (Pajic 1998: 137), where ethnic identities were repositioned in a condition of timeless purity and physical isolation reminiscent of racial politics (see Nixon 1994:4-5; Norval 1994).

Having the aforementioned in mind, it is essential to notice how the current socio-political and socio-cultural construction of Bosnia as a country of fixed and non-negotiable ethnicity represents a configuration unseen in the previous historical epochs. In other words, contemporary Bosnia came to be established as an ethno-national state along the lines of modernist imaginary of political communities that dominated not only the internal political actors but also the external understanding of what Bosnian socio-cultural environment should look like. In this sense, post-socialist BiH is run under fully operative neocolonial or protocolonial administration under which the highest political position is not occupied by some locally elected politician but by the High Representative, a politician directly elected by the international powers. Thus, this contemporary understanding of Bosnia and its people is best defined through a foreign policy that advocates "a change to normality presupposing an abnormal Bosnia (Majsotorovic).

This novel fragmentation, quite recalling of racial segregation in the US, is most visible in schools. In this sense, while reminding completely unified since its establishment during the Habsburg period, today Bosnian education is completely segregated on the ethnic principle and as such is reminiscent of the divisions that resulted in the US education in the aftermath of the Civil War and that were set along the Mason-Dixie line of division (Lisa Alcoff). In this sense, it is hard to ignore the fact that identity-making politics of Dayton Bosnian state, so reflective of the cultural-educational model, is highly imbued with the legacies of racialized thinking and representation,

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which is very specific since its society still represents a construction inside of which distinct ethnicities speak the same language and share common sociocultural framework (Lovernovic).

In this sense, both Ante's and my high school represents quite specific product of a novel Bosnian history. Thus, the new educational arrangement, managed under the principle of „two schools under one roof“, directly replicates wider institutional (di)vision enforced by the constitution enshrined in the Dayton Peace Agreement. Thus, Ante's school is „divided“ into Bosniak-Muslim and Croat-Catholic „parts“, and is alternatively called *Srednja Strukovna Skola* and *Srednja Prometna Skola* ('Technical High School' in Bosnian and Croatian respectively). In this sense, being part of the larger symbolic and spatial intervention regulating the life of this city and country, Ante's school space reflects a novel micro-situational character of a larger state arrangement within the city that used to pride itself as being the place with the biggest percentage of interfaith or interethnic marriages in the whole of Yugoslavia. With this in mind, it is important to note that Ante's comment remained deeply embedded within his own experience of growing up in such country and attending such educational system.

Nesting Orientalism and Bosnian Croats as carriers of European values within BiH

With the coming of an end of real existing socialisms, the rise of nationalisms within the sphere of larger Eastern Europe has once again been significantly influenced by the dominance of Euro-American universalism. Here, the desire to “return to Europe” (Iordanova 2000) and assimilate the West (quote) has emerged as the main guiding idea of the new ethno-national regimes that rose to power in the aftermath of Yugoslav wars. In this sense, the novel political forces have engaged in the practices of “cultural nationalism” (Csepeli 1991) which essentially revolved around the aspirational whiteness and a desire to become truly European. This practice was not truly novel and it replicated 19th century developments inside of which the rise of Eastern European national states was based on the models that were imported from the Western Europe by the intellectual elites studying at the universities of their ‘geopolitical allies’ (Kiossev 2000; Bjelic 2009). In this sense, we can note that Eastern European national-states “came into existence by adopting the models of European national and imperial development”, where models and symbols of imperial “Europeanness,” (Kiossev 2000:18), played central role in construction of the national self. Here, modernist European and American racial thought became embedded within the concepts of an ethnic nation in Eastern Europe nation (Todorova 2006; Turda and Weindlinkg (eds) 2007; Bartulin 2013) and aspirational whiteness turned into an essential part of the ethno-national political projects in the region.

Within the post-Yugoslav space, the desire to project oneself as European became embedded within the politics of internal othering which Milica Bakic-Hayden defined as “nesting orientalism”. For Bakic-Hayden, “nesting Orientalism” signified a “process of internalization and redirection of stigmatizing identities” by Balkan countries who attempted to distance themselves from the region and its stereotypes in an attempt to “claim a more Western – and hence, more civilized, developed and advanced status” and identity. In this sense, novel identitarian practice of nesting orientalism

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became inserted within the national projects in a sense that it revealed itself as a need to leave the Balkans and everything associated with it behind as an unwanted cultural trait.

Within the space of Yugoslavia, the internal differentiation between the more and less European peoples was made on the basis of distinctions that were made between those parts of the country that formerly belonged to the Ottoman Empire and those that formed part of the Austro-Hungarian one. In this sense, the internal gradation of orient withing Yugoslavia became based upon a spatial hierarchy according to which Slovenia and Croatia, its two northernmost republics, came to represent the most European nations of all. At the same time, this differentiation also included a cultural element, since it characterized parts of the country that formerly belonged to the Ottoman Empire with lower level of civilizational development due to their special connection to Turkey and Islam. Within this context, Bosnia, together with Kosovo, emerged as society that became qualified as the least civilized, the least European, and thus, the least white of all. On the contrary, the same logic positioned Slovenia and Croatia as spaces of civilizational superiority and carriers of Christian-Catholic and European heritage connected to the ideal of the Habsburg Empire, regardless of the actual role both of these states occupied within such socio-political formation.

In line with the aforementioned distinctions, new Croat national narrative of the 1990s would assert how Croatia has been unjustly stopped on its march towards modernity by the so called „Balkan burden“ and the evil of Yugoslav communism. Conversely, as part of its new national body-politic, Croatian state would forcefully attempt to extrapolate itself from the Balkan cultural space. Thus, making a jump into the European region that scores higher on the hegemonic scale of europeanity, Croatian state forged politics of geopolitical making according to which it started classifying itself as Central European country. This official politics of the new Croat state and its identity could be summarised through the discourse of Croatian prime minister Tomislav Karamarko who, upon Croatian entrance into the EU declared: „By entering the EU, we are returning home, to a calm port to which we belong. We are leaving behind a geostrategic space that is politically labelled as the Balkans, we never were, nor will be, people from the Balkans. [Balkanci] (T. Karamarko, HDZ 2013)

This politics of national body making of the Croatian state, that desperately attempted to leave the problematic Balkans behind, would not leave the configuration of the identity of Bosnian Croats unaffected. In this sense, the new politics of transborder pancroatism, while embracing the historical central-european and mediterranean heritage of the Croat people, turned reluctant with respect to the balkanist-orientalist cultural heritage pertaining to the territory on which Bosnian Croats lived for centuries. In this sense, the official Croatian state turned willing to integrate Bosnian Catholics into its national configuration, but only under the condition that, prior to their entry into the new national community, they were both debalkanized and debosnianized. According to Ivan Lovrenovic, a well known Bosnian Croat anthropologist, such practice of „unificatory political and cultural pancroatism“ implied „rearticulation of croatian cultural and poltiical identity in Bosnia and Herzegovina“ in a sense that it forced Bosnian Croats to forget

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their specific cultural tradition which was, in one way or another, always connected to the historical development that affected BiH and its peoples as a whole.

Moreover, within Bosnia itself, this aspirational whiteness and the desire to assimilate the West became most visible in the official narrative of the Croat Democratic Union (HDZ), the largest party of Bosnian Croats. At the official level, such politics was evidenced in a yearly conference organized by the Croat National Congress of BiH, an institution that functions as some sort of non-formal parliament of Croat political parties from BiH and that is completely monopolized by HDZ. Titled "Croats: Carriers of European values in BiH", the conference purports a very straightforward idea that positions Bosnian Croats as most European of all Bosnian peoples. While conference participants never engage in any deep way with the title itself, or explain the reason of having such title, it is easy to conclude how the entire premise of this self-ascribed title is based on the fact that, unlike other ethnic-groups inhabiting the territory of the Bosnian state, Croats are the only Catholic people of BiH and thus closest to the European ideal of all. Therefore, it is almost impossible not to notice how in this context 'European values', as they are propagated by HDZ, obtain overtly racialized overtones and come to express the practice that David Theo Goldberg (2009) defined as "racial Europeanization."

Furthermore, new national narrative of Bosnian Croats would build on the global post-Cold War premise of the "clash of civilizations" and the post 9/11 context inside of which Islamophobia became the mainstream European politics (Rexepi). In a notch, such politics would bandwagon on the widespread idea according to which Islam was placed into a problematic relationship with the imagined Europeanness. In this sense, and much in line with the tendencies prevalent in various other countries of the East Europe, Bosnian Croats would advance the 'antemurale myth' to the very center of its discursive ethno-national construction. Here, Croat people within BiH would come to embody the most courageous defenders of Europe that heroically resisted three centuries of Ottoman occupation, of which post-war Bosnian state, with its Muslim majority, comes to represent some form of contemporary incarnation.

This play on the widespread European fear of Islam is a known part of the Croat politics that emerges on both sides of the border. Thus, during 2019, Croatian president Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic has declared Bosnia to be "unstable country under the control of radical Islamism", a "nest of terrorism" (leglo) in which there is 10.000 radicalized people that are threat for the region." During the same year, Dragan Covic, the uncontested political leader of Bosnian Croats, attacked the political idea to turn BiH into a citizen democracy by saying how any idea of "citizen-like principle of democracy in BiH would result in the construction of the Islamic State", thus implicitly referring to the problematic political nature of the Bosnian Muslims. This hate towards anything that is in one way or another relatable to Islam, Ottomans, Turkey, or the imagined Orient in general, has likewise been an integral part of political propaganda of the ethno-national elites that rose to power during the war. Thus, at the specific occasion of bombardment of Mostar's famous Old Bridge dating from 16th century, the same one that Ante didn't visit until he was 17, Slobodan Praljak, general of Croat Defense Council (HVO, a political wing of HDZ), declared in contempt how "we (the Croats) will make a more beautiful bridge on the same place."

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Moreover, the practice of Croat subjectification within BiH is likewise impacted by the official educational system which remains control of the dominant party. Thus, according to the analysis of elementary school textbooks for history completed by WHOM, the education implemented among Bosnian Croats observes the world from a strictly ethnocentric perspective. That is, failing to deal with the specific history of BiH itself, the textbook material is highly focused on the Croatian state and its history. Thus, the school textbooks are filled with symbols of the Croatian state, and while one can find the coats of arms of the EU and the UN alongside the Croatian one on the introductory page, the coat of arms of BiH is inexistend throughout entire textbook (p138). The Croatia-centricity of our education is such that I still remember how, when I came back from the elementary school one day, I asked my mom „where is Herzegovina on the maps of the textbooks that show us our homeland?“ (for Bosnia I didnt even ask since its inexistence I considered natural at the time).

Additionally, textbooks used for education of young Croats from BiH treat pluralism and difference, a thing our country is defined by, only as a problem and the cause of conflicts. In this sense, while Balkans are defined as the sapce where war has become „the main trait of its people“, the Bosnian war is interpreted as an „inevitable occurrence“. In this sense the idea of Bosnia, constructed as an epitome of the Balkans, a region that is „still primitive and premodern“, is intellectually degraded and turned into a synonym for „undevelopment, stagnation and cultural backwardness“ (kulturnu zaostalost). Besides, cultural degradation of Bosnia is such that even in the case when textbooks discuss progressive feminism and education, the texts identify Balkans as a region where „balkanic way of treating the women exists up to this vary day (i danas traje). At the same time, low intellectual capacities and civilizatory stagnation of the region are explained as a historical occurrence that resulted from the past legacy when this region „didnt even have primary education while Western and Central Europe opened Univerities!“.

Moreover, textual discursive constructions articulates Bosnia and the Balkans as an inseparable identity that feeds of each other. Thus, everything that refers to one simultaneously refers to the other, an integration which is achieved through the long Turkish rule that is identified as the main cause for „lower development of south Slavic countries.“ In this sense, textbooks speak of Balkans not so much as a physical space but more so as an unwanted cultural trait that is located „in the minds of the people“ and that, implicitly, represents something that needs to be corrected.

Furthermore, alternative to this unwanted identity, or the wanted self, is always connected to Croatia and its non-Balkan character. Thus, the research finds that textbooks for social sciences used by Croat students in BiH essentially try to develop a sense of belonging to the Croat state and the idea of Croatia among the Croat pupils in BiH. In this sense, history is told essentially from the perspective of Croatian state and the so-called Croat national interest (which we hear on TV on a daily basis). Here, the fact that South Slavic, Balkan, and Bosnian themes, are largely subjugated to the Croatian ones is probably best explained by the fact that in the textbook HIP18 19 out of 42 lectures deal with Croatian history, while BiH is represented in two lectures only. Also, since Croatia is presented as the “parent state” („maticna zemlja“) for all Croats, regardless of where they live, in a certain sense Bosnian Croats in BiH are interpreted as “emigrants from

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Croatia” and are put in the same sack with Croats who at the moment live in Americas . Thus, our Bosnian identity is at no point even taken into account, not to say embraced.

At the same time, textbooks largely assert the supremacy of the white modern man and position Europe as „cultural, industrial, and civilizational centre of the world“. In this sense, since ideas ascribed to the imagined Europe are at no point ascribed to the Balkans, historical period of Yugoslavia, as yet another typical Balkanist construction, is related to the idea of Yugobalkanism and is defined as an era during which Croatia was removed from the Central European cultural sphere. Here, Croatian identity, largely explained through the lenses of Catholicism, embodies the clear element that is shared with and wanted from Bosnian Croats too.

Thus, when we think about Ante's comment, it is important to go back and rethink the educational material and the picture of the world and Bosnia that he, just as I, was thought throughout his youth. In this sense, while thinking about this representation of Bosnia it came to my mind the discussion I had with my high school friend Adem, a muslim guy from Bosnia, and how he got really offended once I told him how Sarajevo, unlike Zagreb, is a very dirty city. Also, and now thinking about the fact that having 'indigenous face' is an offense in Chile that makes people cry once they are directed these words, I can remember how while I was growing up the title of having 'bosnian head' functioned in pretty much the same manner in Mostar. Thus, I remember how I felt quite angry when on various occasions I would receive this insult from the other kids I used to hang out in my neighbourhood on the western side of Mostar. Likewise, during my childhood, when I was a big fan of the local Croatian club HSK Zrinjski Mostar, I would have a lesson about Bosnia, and the spatial politics of Mostar, on the stands of the *Bijeli Brijeg* stadium while singing the song in support of the club that said: "You are the champion of a country that has mange. You are an idol of Mostar's dreams, you come from the west side, and I love you'. This ideas of filth and mange, of having head or face that does not fit, **if not having racist connotations within itself then I really do not know what is racism (need to develop this part further).**