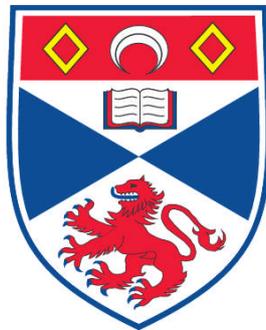


**'MYSTERIOUS IN CONTENT': THE EUROPEAN UNION
PEACEBUILDING FRAMEWORK AND LOCAL SPACES OF
AGENCY IN BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA**

Stefanie Kappler

**A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
University of St. Andrews**



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**'Mysterious in content': The European Union Peacebuilding
Framework and Local Spaces of Agency in Bosnia-
Herzegovina**

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School of International Relations
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Submission in application for the degree of a Ph.D.
Date of Submission: September 2011

Abstract

This thesis aims to investigate EU peacebuilding in Bosnia-Herzegovina, focusing on the ways in which EU actors engage with local cultural actors and vice versa. Given that, in the liberal peacebuilding tradition, civil society has been considered a key actor in the public sphere, peacebuilding actors have tended to neglect seemingly more marginal actors and their subtle ways of impacting on the peacebuilding process. However, this thesis contends that processes of interaction are not always direct and visible, but centre on discourse clusters, which I frame as imaginary ‘spaces of agency’. Through the creation of meanings within a space of agency and its translation into other imaginary spaces, actors develop the power to impact upon the peacebuilding process, often in coded ways and therefore invisible in the public sphere, as peacebuilding actors, including the EU, have created it. A typology of the modes of interaction and possible responses between spaces helps understand the complexities and nuances of peacebuilding interaction.

The thesis uses this framework to analyse several exemplary spaces of agency of the EU, rooting them in institutional discourses with specific reference to Bosnia-Herzegovina. Based on this, I investigate a number of responses to those spaces on the part of local cultural actors, as well as how the latter contribute to the emergence of alternative localised spaces, where the EU’s spaces fail to connect to the everyday dimensions of peace. I suggest that this represents a way in which local actors try to claim the ownership of peacebuilding back in subtle ways. This also points to the ability of actors that have traditionally been excluded from the peacebuilding project to contextualise abstract and distant processes into what matters locally, as well as their capacity to reject and resist when the EU’s spaces remain irrelevant for local peacebuilding imaginations.

Declarations

1. Candidate's declarations:

I, Stefanie Kappler, hereby certify that this thesis, which is approximately 90,000 words in length, has been written by me, that it is the record of work carried out by me and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree.

I was admitted as a research student in September 2008 and as a candidate for the degree of PhD in July 2009; the higher study for which this is a record was carried out in the University of St Andrews between 2008 and 2011.

I, Stefanie Kappler, received assistance in the writing of this thesis in respect of language, which was provided by Kathryn Lichti-Harriman and Maria O'Reilly.

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I hereby certify that the candidate has fulfilled the conditions of the Resolution and Regulations appropriate for the degree of PhD in the University of St Andrews and that the candidate is qualified to submit this thesis in application for that degree.

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To my parents, Heide and Willi Kappler

The critique of everyday life (...) implies criticism of the trivial by the exceptional -
but at the same time criticism of the exceptional by the trivial, of the 'elite' by the mass
- of festival, dreams, art and poetry, by reality.¹

¹ Henri Lefebvre, *Critique of everyday life, vol.1*; translated by John Moore; with a preface by Michel Trebitsch, London: Verso, 2008, p.251.

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September 2011

Table of Contents

ABSTRACT	II
DECLARATIONS	III
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	VI
TABLE OF CONTENTS	VII
ACRONYMS	X
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 2: AGENCY, CIVIL SOCIETY AND CULTURE IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE OF PEACEBUILDING	11
Civil Society: The Location of ‘Civilised’ Social Agency?	11
Civil Society, Civility and Liberal Peacebuilding Agency?.....	16
Peacebuilding and Civil Society.....	20
The Peacebuilding Framework	20
The Agency of Civil Society in the Liberal Peacebuilding Framework	23
Peacebuilding and Local Culture	29
The Degradation of Local Culture in Peacebuilding and Civil Society Programmes.....	29
<i>Culture</i> as an Ethnographic Concept.....	32
Some Issues in Relation to Culture.....	34
Conclusion	36
CHAPTER 3: A (HI)STORY OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY IN BOSNIA- HERZEGOVINA.....	39
The International Community in Bosnia (non-EC/EU)	39
Pre-War Engagement.....	39
The International Community During the War	42
International Approaches to Peacebuilding	44
EC/EU Engagement in BiH	49
The European Community in Pre-War Yugoslavia	49
The EU During the War.....	50
EU Post-Conflict Involvement in Bosnia	51
The Underlying Normative Principles of EU Peacebuilding in Bosnia.....	56
EU Engagement on a Sub-National Level	61
The EU and Culture	65
Assessment.....	67

CHAPTER 4: THE SPACES OF AGENCY CONCEPT TO FRAME PEACEBUILDING INTERACTION	70
Introduction	70
Spaces of Agency	72
How Do Spaces of Agency Operate?	77
(Infra-)structure	77
Inclusion and Exclusion.....	77
Open and Closed Spaces	78
Top-down or Bottom-up Mechanisms.....	78
Hybridity.....	79
Structured and Improvised Spaces.....	80
Hidden and Public Spaces.....	80
Spaces Reflecting Society.....	81
Identities, Representations and Power within Spaces of Agency.....	81
Functions of Spaces of Agency.....	87
Agency in Spaces.....	90
Peacebuilding Agency.....	95
Interactions between Spaces of Agency	97
Methodologies: Institutional Ethnography and Participatory Research Techniques.....	97
Types of Interaction Between Spaces.....	104
Accommodation and Assimilation.....	106
Acceptance and Tolerance	107
Complicity	108
Compliance, Conformity and Obedience.....	108
Ambiguity.....	109
Negotiation	110
Modification	110
Co-optation.....	111
Ignorance	111
Rejection	112
Resistance.....	112
Translation between Spaces	114
Conclusion	116
 CHAPTER 5: THE EU’S SPACES OF AGENCY IN THE BOSNIAN PEACEBUILDING CONTEXT	 118
The EU and its Peacebuilding Spaces in BiH	118
Civil Society	120
Democratisation.....	127
Regional Cooperation.....	131
Human Rights	133
Institutions/Control.....	135
State and Politics.....	139
Travel.....	142
Future	143
Conclusion	145

CH.6: LOCAL RESPONSES TO THE EU’S SPACES OF AGENCY	149
The Choice of Voices and Agents.....	149
Responses to the EU’s Spaces of Agency.....	153
Civil Society.....	153
Democratisation.....	159
Regional Cooperation.....	164
Human Rights	169
Institutions/Control.....	172
State and Politics.....	180
Travel.....	186
Future	190
Conclusion.....	193
CHAPTER 7: LOCAL SPACES OF AGENCY.....	196
The Social Relationships Space	196
The Freedom Space.....	203
The Arts Space	208
The Past Space	215
Conclusion.....	220
CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION.....	222
APPENDICES	238
Appendix A: Oručević, Husein, “Defense of public space – defense of our future”	239
Appendix B: Dosta! website,.....	251
Appendix C: Žbanić, Jasmila, “European Commission Made Disastrous Mistake”,.....	253
Appendix D: Sarajevo Center for Contemporary Art, “New Monument. De/Construction of Monument”, 2006”	254
Appendix E: Ethical approval.....	256
BIBLIOGRAPHY	257

Acronyms

ACIPS	Alumni Centra za interdisciplinarne postdiplomske studije
BICCED	Balkans' Initiative for Cultural Cooperation, Exchange and Development
BiH	Bosnia-Herzegovina
CARDS	Community Assistance to Reconstruction, Development and Stabilisation
CEDB	Council of Europe Development Bank
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CSO	Civil society organisation
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
DG	Delegation
DPA	Dayton Peace Agreement
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EC	European Community
ESDP	European Security and Defence Policy
ECHR	European Convention on Human Rights
EEAS	EU External Action Service
EIDHR	European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights
EU	European Union
EUFOR	European Union Force
EUPF	EU Peacebuilding Framework
EUPM	European Union Police Mission
EUSR	European Union Special Representative
GSP	Generalized System of Preferences
ICTY	International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia
IE	Institutional Ethnography
IFIs	International Financial Institutions
IFOR	Implementation Force
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPA	Instrument of Pre-Accession Assistance
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OBNOVA	EU support programme for the rebuilding of Bosnia, Croatia and FYROM (Macedonia)
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
OHR	Office of the High Representative
PHARE	Pologne Hongarie Assistance à la Reconstruction des Economies
PIC	Peace Implementation Council
RS	Republika Srpska
SAA	Stabilisation and Association Agreement
SAP	Stabilisation and Association Process
SCCA	Sarajevo Center for Contemporary Art
SCP	Swiss Cultural Programme in the Western Balkans
SFOR	Stabilisation Force

SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SSR	Security Sector Reform
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNPROFOR	United Nations Protection Force
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

Chapter 1: Introduction

In 2011, Dubioza Kolektiv, a rather popular music band from Sarajevo, produced a new single, entitled “Euro Song”, in which they sing “I’m sick of being European just on EuroSong”. This is a telling statement if one considers the decreasing popularity of the European Union (EU) in Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH). As the Early Warning Quarterly Report from July / September 2008 of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) reflects, between March and September 2008 the general approval of the EU’s work in BiH had decreased from 46.1% to 42.1%, while the general acquiescence to EU membership had declined significantly as well.²

From the perspective of the EU and other actors engaged in post-conflict peacebuilding in BiH, the situation seems to be getting worse. It looks like the international community has not been able to create sustainable peace, while its popularity is in steady decline. Furthermore there is an increasing dissatisfaction among the people with the work of the international community and the lack of engagement by local people in the peacebuilding project. Bosnians, in turn, are increasingly disappointed by the failure of international peacebuilders to improve the quality of their lives, to create employment, and provide a stable foundation on which peace can develop. At the same time, the international community feels that local elites are unable to bring about constitutional reform with the Dayton Peace Agreement (DPA) a major obstacle. Indeed, the Constitution introduced by Dayton has been reinforcing ethnic divisions and has led to further fragmentation of the political structure in BiH – mainly between Republika Srpska (RS) and the Federation. The situation looks hardly any better in the social realm with people increasingly disappointed by the peacebuilding process and sick of talking about it. Given that the EU used to be one of the few actors on which big hopes were placed, its decreasing popularity is particularly disappointing for all. Apart from its recent success in the context of visa liberalisation, the EU’s engagement in BiH has failed to produce many of the results it had envisaged earlier in the peacebuilding process. Although there seems to be much talk about future

² Bosnia and Herzegovina United Nations Development Programme, Early Warning System, Annual Report 2008, 2008. Available at <http://www.undp.ba/upload/publications/EWS%20Annual%202008%20E%20-%20web%20edition.pdf> (accessed 23 May 2011).

membership of BiH in the EU as the only way to solve the countries problems,³ this seems to be very far off for the Bosnian people at the moment. This results in further frustration vis-à-vis the EU and the ways in which it is conceived in BiH.

This is the background against which this thesis takes an interest in examining the reasons for which the EU has remained distant from local imaginations of peace and peacebuilding. It also investigates the reasons for which it seems to have failed to connect to such local imaginations despite its high ambitions of European integration and the associated, mostly implicit, peacebuilding efforts. The investigation conducted in this thesis ties in with debates about international and local ownership of peacebuilding as well as the connections and their hybridisation.⁴ In this context, it has to be said that the original goal of this thesis was to examine the direct relationship and patterns of interaction between EU actors and local actors, i.e. those actors situated in an everyday context. However, repeated fieldwork in BiH showed that a big issue in the peacebuilding process more generally, but also specifically with respect to the EU's work, is that there is hardly any direct interaction between international agencies (such as the EU) and local grassroots actors. Furthermore, there is often some degree of reluctance of the latter to talk about the EU in detail. Its policies do not seem to connect to their goals, values, or ambitions.

Therefore, what this thesis aims to look at is how those actors are still influencing the EU and vice versa, not in a very obvious or direct way, but in a much more subtle and hidden manner. The EU and local grassroots actors may not talk to each other, at least not frequently, but they talk about similar things, similar topics, albeit in very different ways. The ways in which they are talking and interacting is therefore centred on a specific issue or subject field. Therefore, the interaction between EU and local cultural actors, i.e. actors that are situated in an everyday context in BiH and channel their associated experiences, views and discourses into creative processes, is all but obvious. However it helps us understand a lot about the successes and the failures of the EU's peacebuilding- and state-building ambitions. In fact, what seems to happen is that the EU is quite influential in some fields, while in other fields, there is

³ Marco Mantovanelli, World Bank BiH, *Student Presentation*, Sarajevo, 07/03/11.

⁴ Cf. Oliver Richmond and Audra Mitchell (eds.), *Hybrid Forms of Peace: From Everyday Agency to Post-Liberalism*, Palgrave, forthcoming 2011.

hardly any impact on local dynamics, or a rather negative one that obstructs the original goals of the EU's mission. The other way round, some of the EU's efforts are perceived as supportive among the local population (the visa liberalisation process, for instance), while others are considered obstacles to local ambitions and imaginations, and are therefore resisted. This casts light on a tension between EU institutions and norms as against the contextual agency of local cultural actors to respond to and transform the former.

Interestingly enough, the ways in which both the EU as an institution and the vast majority of academics have conceptualised peacebuilding engagement, not only by the EU, but also the international community in general, represents a belief in the visibility of power as well as relying on an actor-centred notion of agency. Mac Ginty has problematised this through what he calls the “liberal peace ‘silo’”, referring to the assumption that there are chains of interaction between leading states, international organisations and institutions, reaching down to governments, ministries, municipalities, NGOs and so forth.⁵ The silo assumed that the direction of interaction is mainly downwards, while ideas and resources are believed to trickle down from top-level actors via national and sub-national policy agents to finally reach communities and individuals.⁶ This means there is an assumption that the main actors in control of the peacebuilding process are the *institutions* in power. In BiH, these are often believed to be the institutions of the international community. It has therefore long been assumed that local actors or the people on the ground are nothing more than recipients of what is being imposed on them by seemingly more powerful actors. Even more critical accounts of peacebuilding have focused their criticism on the ways in which institutions govern their subjects, often referring to “biopolitics” and associated discourses.⁷

Against this background, it has often been neglected that the peacebuilding subjects are not just passive victims, but they may act as the creators of their own history, thus exercising their agency, although this is not always visible in the public sphere. In this context, Richmond has reminded us of the ability of local populations to make a difference in their everyday context, which has been depoliticised and indeed

⁵ Roger Mac Ginty, *International peacebuilding and local resistance: hybrid forms of peace*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, p.32f.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Cf. Michael Merlingen and Rasa Ostrauskaitė, *European Union Peacebuilding and Policing*, New York: Routledge, 2006.

also often romanticised, partly because neither policymakers nor academics found ways of accessing this rather complex sphere.⁸ At the same time, an academic discourse is gradually emerging that is taking account of the importance of the everyday context of peace, its political nature as well as its central role in social life.⁹ However, this is not to reduce ‘everyday life’ to a notion of primitive localness, but to view it in the trajectory between “the particular and the universal, the local and the global.”¹⁰ It has now also been recognised as a sphere in which people find security¹¹ and (maybe as a result of this) voice their agency, which tends to be subtle and barely visible in public, but is full of content and substance, both of which the technical nature of peacebuilding operations have failed to connect to. In this context, Mac Ginty’s definition of the ‘local’ conceptualises it as follows:

...’local actors’ refers to all levels within the state subject to a liberal peace intervention, national government, municipalities, political parties, militant groups, NGOs and civil society, businesses, communities, and individuals. All these actors have the ability to hybridise the liberal peace, convinced of the merits of the internationally sponsored peacebuilding programme.¹²

Against this background, *the local* will be considered as what is concerned with ‘everyday social reality’, reflecting the competing visions of peace within this reality. In this context, Richmond has claimed that:

[t]he local can be thought in terms of everyday social reality. This includes customary processes and institutions, as well as indigenous forms of knowledge, traditional authorities, elders, chiefs, communities, tribes, and religious groups. Of course, it also includes the life of modernity, and the impact of liberal state institutions and markets.¹³

Here, the local is not viewed in necessary opposition to international actors, such as the EU, but as a broad range of actors in various segments of society and connected to the international system. At the same time, internationals can become locals, once they start connecting to everyday social reality rather than speaking from an ‘ivory

⁸ Oliver Richmond, *A Post-Liberal Peace*, New York: Routledge, 2011.

⁹ Cf. Alison M.S. Watson, “Agency and the Everyday Activist”, in Oliver Richmond and Audra Mitchell (eds.), *Hybrid Forms of Peace: From Everyday Agency to Post-Liberalism*, Palgrave, forthcoming.

¹⁰ Henri Lefebvre, *Critique of everyday life, vol.3*; translated by Gregory Elliott; with a preface by Michel Trebitsch, London: Verso, 2008, p.16.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Mac Ginty, *International peacebuilding and local resistance: hybrid forms of peace*, op. cit., p.84.

¹³ Oliver P. Richmond, “De-romanticising the local, de-mystifying the international: hybridity in Timor Leste and the Solomon Islands”, *The Pacific Review*, vol.24, no.1, 2011, pp.115-136.

tower’, or from an ‘air-conditioned room’.¹⁴ In that respect, the spaces of agency of the EU and local cultural actors presented in this thesis should not be read as necessarily oppositional, but rather as in situations of mutual constitution and hybridisation. The thesis therefore builds on what Pugh et al. have called a “new ‘geometry of power’” that feeds local needs into the policy process rather than seeing the local as isolated from the institutional.¹⁵

An approach that takes into account the subtle agency of local actors in turn requires a broad notion of agency in a certain structural context, which accounts for the multiple ways in which power can play out. This requires a rethinking of our conceptualisations of agency after the “visual turn” towards a much more subtle analysis of the ways in which actors communicate and interact through imaginary spaces and spheres, which in turn represent the structural foundation of action, but are at the same time subject to continuous challenge. Against the background of an often invisible and romanticised “local”¹⁶, this thesis aims to restore political agency to the seemingly powerless, situated within the structures of imaginary spaces. Interestingly enough, the assumption that ‘ordinary people’ cannot make a difference to the peacebuilding process seems to be a fairly common one in BiH, not only among the peacebuilders, but also in more general social discourses. Yet, as the work of numerous music groups, youth centres, cultural initiatives and arts festivals illustrates, there is a high degree of mobilisation and implicit political agendas to be found in such places. Often people are not aware of this agency, and this is certainly not very well explored by actors such as the EU, which lacks the institutional structures to be able to engage with dynamics beyond the political, public sphere. Problematically, the EU is constrained to focus on what is visible, public and formally political, at the same time missing out on those alternative, fruitful discourses situated in an everyday life context which have the potential to create a locally sustainable peace and to constantly re-negotiate it in the trajectories between the particular and the universal, as outlined above.

¹⁴ Cf. Emmanuel Terray, “Le climatiseur et la veranda“, in G. Balandier (ed.), *Afrique plurielle, Afrique actuelle: Hommage à Georges Balandier*, Paris: Karthala, 1986.

¹⁵ Michael Pugh, Neil Cooper and Mandy Turner, “Conclusion: The Political Economy of Peacebuilding – Whose Peace? Where Next?”, in Michael Pugh, Neil Cooper and Mandy Turner (eds.), *Whose peace? Critical perspectives on the political economy of peacebuilding*, Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, pp.390-397, p.391.

¹⁶ Henri Lefebvre, *Critique of everyday life, vol.3*, op. cit., p.16.

This is the context in which this thesis situates its notion of “spaces of agency” as a way in which interaction between different actors in peacebuilding contexts can be investigated taking account of the complexities of power and agency within a specific structural environment. To do so, chapter 2 investigates how social agency in the public sphere has been conceptualised academically, finding that peacebuilding actors have promoted a narrow version of “civil society”, often relating to the corresponding academic literature, and made it a central actor in the public sphere. This derives from a liberal tradition of thought and has resulted in rather limiting notions of agency, excluding actors that are not traditionally thought of as ‘civil’ actors in the public realm, often because they are neither professional nor visible in that arena. Although such actors may be key to understanding complex social dynamics, they hardly ever appear as holders of agency, neither in the policy-world, nor in the related academic discourses.

Chapter 3 gives a historical overview of the conflict and peacebuilding context of BiH, looking at the ways in which the international community has developed its approaches over time, before more specifically investigating the EU’s policies of member state-building as they have developed in interaction with the major actors of the peacebuilding community in BiH. Discussing the extent to which the EU can be considered a peacebuilding actor in the first place, the chapter is particularly interested in how the EU has conceptualised local agency in BiH, which seems to have followed the academic discourses as outlined in the preceding chapter, in terms of focusing on civil society as the principal instrument for transforming the public sphere, and, in its professionalised version, one of the central partners for the EU to work with.

These chapters form the background against which chapter 4 introduces a theoretical framework with the help of which the interaction of EU actors and local cultural actors can be investigated in detail. To do so, the chapter develops the concept of “spaces of agency”, which frames interactions around discursive spaces, the meanings of which are constantly open to challenge and resistance. “Spaces of agency” therefore represent clusters of discourses on which different actors work to voice their own needs and interests in subtle, possibly coded, ways. This means that different actors may not necessarily interact directly, but through the creation of meanings within an imaginary space. As a result, different peacebuilding spaces are crystallising, which are not fixed, but transversal and fluid, while actors’ ability to translate meanings between

spaces can be viewed as a manifestation of agency in the peacebuilding context. Outlining the notion of ‘peacebuilding agency’, the chapter investigates the infrastructures of such spaces, how they are shaped by structural properties – actors’ needs, structures of representation, power and identity – as well as their agency to transcend those structural constraints and to challenge existing spatial structures. In that sense, the concept of ‘spaces of agency’ offers a way in which the structure-agency debate can be re-thought through a focus on complex discourse clusters rather than exclusively on an allegedly homogenous mass of publicly visible actors.

The chapter further introduces a typology of responses between spaces, the quality of which is nuanced and ranges from acceptance to resistance. The methodology used for this investigation is based on participatory research techniques combined with “institutional ethnography”. The chapter will outline the latter in detail in its ability to investigate the impact that discourses clustering within a space of agency have on people’s everyday lives. The chapter will then argue that this also works in opposite direction in terms of providing a way in which two-way processes and their impacts on each other (i.e. from space to space) can be framed through the discourses they exchange and the impact they thereby have upon each other. As the chapter will explain, participatory research techniques will help understand various discourses, both on the part of the EU and of local cultural actors, in their interaction in the peacebuilding context.

Chapter 5 then uses the “spaces of agency” concept to shed light on some selected spaces that are mainly shaped by the EU in its engagement in BiH, namely the civil society, democratisation, regional cooperation, human rights, institutions/control, state and politics, travel and future spaces. The chapter investigates EU discourses as they can be found in such spaces, analysing them according to their infrastructures, processes of (self-) representation, audiences and dynamics.

This is the basis on which chapter 6 examines selected local responses to these spaces, particularly focusing on local cultural actors in a broad understanding, i.e. actors situated in an everyday context and channelling their subjectivities into creative processes. Their responses to what has been outlined in chapter 5 are indeed quite diverse and help explain why some of the EU’s spaces have managed to connect better to local spaces than others. At the same time, such responses are not merely reactive,

but they come with a huge creative potential, reflecting the quality of agency of specific actors, as diverse as those may be.

Therefore, chapter 7 investigates a number of spaces that local cultural actors own and use, i.e. the social relationships, freedom, travel and past space. Those spaces of agency point to the ability of local actors—often portrayed as victims—to become authors of their own history and to challenge, modify or resist what is being imposed on them. This also reflects the extent to which the EU’s institutional peace has partly been rejected, while cultural actors have focused on alternative spaces where they find better ways of articulating certain needs and interests.

The analysis conducted in this thesis may not be common to the discipline of International Relations, with the focus on the politics of cultural activities representing an exploratory approach to conceptualising the political nature of peace and peacebuilding. Yet this approach helps understand not only the quality of interaction between different peacebuilding actors, but it also sheds light on the broader question of peacebuilding legitimacy. If we agree with Berman who suggests that legitimacy is a never-completed process in need of continuous recreation by taking account of the constantly newly emerging configurations of a power regime, the spaces of agency concept takes account of the fluidity of (de-)legitimisation processes as they emerge in the ever-changing interaction between spaces.¹⁷ The concept also allows to consider the fact that legitimacy is not a static concept, but rather implies contested power struggles between highly diverse actors,¹⁸ The fluidity of spaces of agency therefore reflects the extent to which complex power struggles shape the degree of legitimacy of certain peacebuilding spaces through their (in)ability to connect to spaces that matter locally. These spaces may indeed represent the symbolic locations where local legitimacy develops and emerges due to the ability of their discourses to connect the institutional to the everyday as well as establishing contextualised meanings of abstract norms.

¹⁷ Nathaniel Berman, “Intervention in a “Divided World”: Axes of Legitimacy”, in Hilary Charlesworth and Jean-Marc Coicaud, (eds.) *Fault lines of international legitimacy*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010, p.136.

¹⁸ Anders Uhlin, “Democratic Legitimacy of Transnational Actors: Mapping Out the Conceptual Terrain”, in Eva Erman and Anders Uhlin (eds.) *Legitimacy Beyond the State? Re-examining the Democratic Credentials of Transnational Actors*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, p.22.

At this stage, I need to briefly comment on my epistemology and bias as a researcher. To investigate selected spaces of agency, I have not only consulted written sources, but I have also undertaken fieldwork. This involved three trips to Brussels, and five stays of different length (between a week and two months respectively) in Bosnia-Herzegovina, mainly based in Sarajevo, with shorter stays in Banja Luka, Mostar, Srebrenica, Travnik, Pale, Zenica, Trebinje, Konjic and Tuzla. I conducted all interviews myself in English, Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian, French and German, some over the phone, but most of them in person. The language in which interviews were conducted certainly made a difference as to what my interviewees communicated. With improving language skills over time, the information I got access to, not only in interviews, but also in daily life, changed considerably and became increasingly insightful with respect to informal discourses, resistance beyond the public realm and social life more generally. I am aware of my own biases, spending most of my time in Sarajevo and in mostly urban areas, therefore being part of certain networks more than of others, which is why I consider myself to be part of this research process and its outputs. To a certain extent, I tried to gain access to actors in BiH through multiple entry points to ensure that I would hear a diversity of voices instead of just one narrative, asking myself the question as to what would be my own responsibility in terms of whose voices I hear and whose voices I do not hear and represent. Yet since this is not a technical problem that can ever be solved, this thesis should not be read as a representation neither of the EU, nor of Bosnian society. It is rather to point at the complex processes of interaction in the peacebuilding context with the help of specific examples, to show how hidden agency becomes powerful agency that is capable of transforming the structural boundaries of action, often in disguised and coded ways, and how this gradually modifying what we understand as a “EU peace” or a “liberal peace” in terms of challenging the associated spaces of agency and translating specific meanings into them. Therefore, the main aim of the thesis is to investigate the varied dynamics and fluidities of peacebuilding, its hidden mechanisms of power and agency as well as the processes through which it has been claimed back locally. Such processes often take place beyond the traditional spheres of peacebuilding (understood as “the

public”, “civil society,” or the formal political process) and have been neglected in the literature so far, which is the gap that this thesis aims to fill.

Chapter 2: Agency, Civil Society and Culture in the Public Sphere of Peacebuilding

Civil Society: The Location of ‘Civilised’ Social Agency?

How is a specific version of peace created, and especially, by whom? Who has the right and the ability to speak on behalf of the grassroots and how do external actors gain access to this? This certainly raises the question of agency, i.e. which actors are believed to be capable of making a difference in cooperating with the international community? In both academic and policy-oriented discourses, social agency is often ascribed to an organised version of society. A narrow definition of civil society seems to have become the standard lens to frame social agency.

Civil society is a notion that has a long tradition of thought in various disciplines, such as Sociology, Political Science, International Relations and Development Studies, and has therefore to be seen as a nexus between academic discourse and political practice. However, Paffenholz and Spurk point out that, due to the long history of the development of the concept, there is no commonly-agreed upon definition, neither in terms of what the term *civil society* actually means, nor who its representing actors are, nor in which sectors they can be situated.¹⁹ Yet, it becomes obvious that the idea of civil society as a separate sphere from both the state and the market has developed, with an emphasis on *civility*, in Western thought from the 18th century on.²⁰ Providing a language and a code of acceptable moral behaviour at the time,²¹ the idea of civil society has not only been used as an analytical tool for understanding societal dynamics. The concept has always been heavily influenced by the normative background of the respective thinker’s historical and social context, hence reflecting ideas of what was considered as ‘civil’ in social life. According to Seligman, this connects with ideas derived from Protestantism and the Scottish Enlightenment by bringing in the notion of *universal principles* with a clear focus on

¹⁹ Thania Paffenholz and Christoph Spurk, “Civil Society, Civic Engagement, and Peacebuilding“, *Social Development Papers: Conflict Prevention & Reconstruction*, no.36, October 2006, p.2.

²⁰ John A. Hall and Frank Trentmann, “Contests over Civil Society: Introductory Perspectives”, pp.1-25, in John A. Hall and Frank Trentmann (eds.) *Civil society: a reader in history, theory and global politics*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, p.3.

²¹ John A. Hall and Frank Trentmann, *op. cit.*, p.4.

the individual as a social actor.²² In that sense, the ability to speak has been closely linked to a normative underpinning in relation to civility. Being able to represent society has therefore been a question of responding to the respective civil norms of that society – their content certainly being contested.

Both Montesquieu and Kant, as important Enlightenment thinkers of civil society, put emphasis on the aspect of *civility* as the predominant feature of civil society. While the former believed civil society to be the sphere in which relations between citizens could be dealt with and regulated,²³ the latter considered it “as a cosmopolitan sphere of law and justice.”²⁴ This is, to a large extent, in line with Locke’s argument defining civil society as a condition opposed to the state of nature and regulated by laws and codes of moral behaviour.²⁵ In Locke’s writings, the normative dimension of the concept *civility* becomes particularly obvious by its connection to religion. In that sense, civil society serves as a tool through which the individual can achieve his own and God’s goals, namely the promotion of the rights of all members of civil society.²⁶ Developing from those strands of Enlightenment thinking, civil society came to be considered a vital element of “civilised” political life. This was later taken up by Tocqueville, who emphasised the role of independent associations as institutions in which democracy could be learned by means of socialisation in terms of establishing values such as tolerance or trust.²⁷ Civil society did not only respond to the normative requirements of organised social life, but it also provided a way in which the role of an otherwise fragmented social complex could be conceptualised in a public space. This ties in with Cox’s argument that, in the European tradition of thinking, civil society came to be equated with the bourgeoisie. It thus represented the specific interests of this very social class at the expense of the common good and the vast majority of citizens.²⁸

²² Adam B. Seligman, *The Idea of Civil Society*, New York: The Free Press, 1992.

²³ Cf. Thania Paffenholz and Christoph Spurk, op. cit., p.4.

²⁴ John A. Hall and Frank Trentmann, op. cit., p.93.

²⁵ Ibid., p.30.

²⁶ Zbigniew Rau “Introduction”, in Rau, Zbigniew (ed.), *The Reemergence of Civil Society in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union*, Boulder: Westview Press, 1991, pp.1-23, p.8.

²⁷ Cf. Paffenholz and Spurk, op. cit., p.4.

²⁸ Robert W. Cox, “Civil society at the turn of the millenium: prospects for an alternative world order”, *Review of International Studies*, vol.25, 1999, pp. 3–28, pp.5, 6.

In contrast to Marxist and Gramscian discourses on civil society, which pointed to the possibility of resistance to an existing order,²⁹ Habermas embeds the concept in a liberal idea of the public sphere. According to him, communication structures are developed in the public sphere through the connecting networks of civil society.³⁰ Using an institutional approach, Habermas claims that civil society is:

composed of those more or less spontaneously emergent associations, organizations, and movements that, attuned to how societal problems resonate in the private life spheres, distil and transmit such reactions in amplified form to the public sphere.³¹

Habermas' approach rests on a definition of *human beings* as democratic beings that can interact in a pluralistic society based on an institutional core that facilitates mutual communication.³² This reflects the belief in the ability of civil society organisations to connect the private and the public arenas, and thus making an important contribution to the political life of a society. In this context, it is worth looking at Arendt's notions of *public* and *private*. What she understands as the traditionally private sphere, is a context shaped by people's wants and needs, while the *polis*, or the political and public context, has been assumed to represent the realm of freedom.³³ However, Arendt does not view "the social" as a neutral connector between those two spheres, rather she argues that the former has changed the meaning of those arenas and has assumed new patterns of behaviour:

It is decisive that society, on all its levels, excludes the possibility of action, which formerly was excluded from the household. Instead, society expects from each of its members a certain kind of behavior, imposing innumerable and various rules, all of which tend to "normalize" its members, to make them behave, to exclude spontaneous action or outstanding achievement.³⁴

²⁹ Cf. Robert W. Cox, "Gramsci, Hegemony and International Relations", *Millennium*, vol. 12, no.2, 1983, pp. 162-175 and Cox, "Civil society at the turn of the millenium: prospects for an alternative world order", op. cit. p.25.

³⁰ Jürgen Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy*; translated [from the German] by William Rehg., Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996, p.359.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p.367.

³² Bent Flyvbjerg, "Habermas and Foucault: Thinkers for Civil Society?"; *The British Journal of Sociology*, Vol.49, no.2, 1998, pp. 210-233, pp.212 ff.

³³ Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959, p.29.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.37, 38..

In this vein, Arendt shows that society – and this may well be read as civil society – is not necessarily a neutral force that represents the common good in the political arena, but it follows its own rules and logics of (normalising) behaviour. Arendt then goes on to argue that the conquering of the public realm by the social has not only changed the former, but also the latter.³⁵ Along those lines, one could argue that the tendency of the social to deploy its “normalising” qualities has extended to the public realm, which is then shaped by the current norms and values of (civil) society and vice versa. If we claim that, indeed, civil society has become one of the central agents within the public realm, this tells us a lot about the disciplinary potential of specific forms of social relations. To a certain extent, this ties in with Foucault’s approach to civil society, which looks at power dilemmas and the degree of domination inherent in social structures.³⁶ According to Foucault, civil society needs to be seen in its historical context and thought about from the perspective of the local sphere, i.e. from a bottom-up perspective.³⁷ It can therefore be viewed as both the subject and agent of various power structures as they inhabit the social sphere. This mode of thinking, again, points to questions of agency, structure and power.

Generally, what has hardly ever been challenged is the idea that the central manifestation of social agency is civil society. In this context, Meyer and Jepperson remind us that “the modern actor” is a cultural construction of agency as it derives from the cultural, legal and religious context of the West.³⁸ Meyer and Jepperson claim that:

[t]he liberal model legitimates an actor (as self or an interest) as an abstract, rather unsubstantial, entity in social space. It also constructs a standardized agent who manages, elaborates, and standardizes that self, employing the latest cultural recipes³⁹

One may argue that the notion of autonomous agency is deeply rooted in liberal thought, which has tended to emphasise the connection between agency and democracy in terms of assuming that the most central actors in the public sphere are those that are

³⁵ Ibid., p.43.

³⁶ Bent Flyvbjerg, op. cit., pp.219 ff.

³⁷ Ibid., p.227.

³⁸ John W. Meyer. and Ronald L. Jepperson, “The “Actors” of Modern Society: The Cultural Construction of Social Agency”, *Sociological Theory*, vol.18, no.1, 2000, pp.100-120, pp.101, 108.

³⁹ John W. Meyer. and Ronald L. Jepperson, op. cit, p.109.

part of liberal and democratic structures.⁴⁰ Yet, this approach fails to view agency as situated within a structural and relational environment, and it implies that civil society is able to create the ideal conditions for democracy and, therefore, represents the central location of agency in the public sphere.⁴¹

Against this background, civil society can be considered an incorporation of liberal notions of agency in that it represents rationalised action as well as the production of standardised agency, sometimes even control. In this context, it is interesting to observe how civil society has gradually lost its connotation of freedom (from the state) and has further been seen as (self-) limiting.⁴² This ties in with recent debates with respect to development and participation, which have challenged the assumption that participation is desirable by nature.⁴³ On the contrary, it has been contended that “participation can result in political co-option,”⁴⁴ not only serving as an instrument of power for diverse local actors, but also representing external interests in terms of presenting those interests as based on local or community needs.⁴⁵

Chandhoke has pointed out that, rather than representing independence and emancipation from the political sphere in terms of voicing interests beyond the political, civil society represents power struggles as they take place in the arena of the state and the grassroots. Those dynamics in turn work according to the logics of the political sphere.⁴⁶ Referring to the work of Goffman, Kothari suggests:

The ‘front-stage’ is where performances are enacted in order for people to create impressions in public life. The ‘back-stage’, on the other hand, is where unrehearsed performances take place, those that are not intended for public consumption. Back-stage performances constitute the dramas of everyday life and represent the work that goes into the making of a front-stage performance.⁴⁷

⁴⁰ Cf. John Christman and Joel Anderson (eds.), *Autonomy and the Challenges to Liberalism*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

⁴¹ Cf. Jean L. Cohen and Andrew Arato, *Civil Society and Political Theory*, Massachusetts: MIT, 1992.

⁴² Cf. Neera Chandhoke, “The ‘Civil’ and the ‘Political’ in Civil Society”, *Democratization*, vol. 8, no.2, 2001, pp.1-24, pp.1ff.

⁴³ See Bill Cooke and Uma Kothari (eds.), *Participation: The New Tyranny?*, London: Zed Books, 2001.

⁴⁴ Bill Cooke and Uma Kothari, “The Case for Participation as Tyranny”, in Cooke and Kothari, *Participation: The New Tyranny?*, op. cit., pp.1-15, p.6.

⁴⁵ David Mosse, “‘People’s Knowledge’, Participation and Patronage: Operations and Representations in Rural Development”, in Cooke and Kothari, *Participation: The New Tyranny?*, op. cit., pp.16-35, p.22.

⁴⁶ Neera Chandhoke, op. cit., p.8.

⁴⁷ Uma Kothari, “Power, Knowledge and Social Control in Participatory Development”, in Cooke and Kothari, *Participation: The New Tyranny?*, op. cit., pp.139-152, pp.148f; referring to Erving Goffman, “The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life”, in Charles Lemert and Ann Branaman (eds.), *The Goffman Reader*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1997.

However, the EU's tendency (and indeed the tendency of numerous liberal peacebuilding institutions) to merely focus on the front stage of public life reflects the extent to which our understanding of agency has been restricted to a specific arena as well as to a certain group of civil society actors, assuming that those will help connect the social with the political and 'civilise' the latter.

Civil Society, Civility and Liberal Peacebuilding Agency?

Despite its inherent tensions, the development of the liberal peacebuilding discourse has tended to put emphasis on the democratic potential inherent in civil society developments. This is particularly evident in the context of Eastern Europe where the transition to democratic structures and free market economies was ascribed to the emergence of civil society and the liberal-democratic benefits of that.⁴⁸ Rau underlines that civil society has come to be defined by the following elements: an *individualist philosophy*, the *market* as space for voluntary action, as well as *pluralism* in terms of maintaining a competitive spirit in society.⁴⁹ Thus, civil society comes to serve as a countermovement to totalitarianism in Eastern European countries. Based on the liberal notion that frames civil society as a force moving towards an open and democratic form of society, neo-liberals have tried to free the concept from the state. This is based on the assumption that a "proper" state (including a "proper" market) can only be created with the help of a "proper" civil society, while at the same time dichotomising state and (civil) society.⁵⁰ In that sense, from a liberal perspective, democracy, as the desired form of governance, has come to depend on civil society as a sphere that counterbalances the power of the state.⁵¹ Again, this mirrors the extent to which concepts of *civil society* have become associated with democratic and civic values; thereby being constructed as the counterpart to totalitarian and patrimonial

⁴⁸ Cf. Thania Paffenholz and Christoph Spurk, op. cit., p.5.

⁴⁹ Zbigniew Rau, op. cit., pp. 4, 5.

⁵⁰ Björn Beckman, "The Liberation of Civil Society: Neo-Liberal Ideology and Political Theory", *Review of African Political Economy*, no.58, 1993, pp. 20-33.

⁵¹ Kasfir, Nelson, "The conventional notion of civil society: a critique", *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*, vol.36, no.2, 1998, pp.1-20, p.1.

political systems as well as capable of making “progress” possible.⁵² This is in line with Elias’s argument as to how Western society has gradually become “civilised” during the course of history by increasingly exercising self-constraints as a reaction to growing complexities in social structures.⁵³ In that sense, ‘civilised agency’ has increasingly been conflated with the organisational capacities of an actor, as well as its ability to engage professionally in the spheres of politics and the market.

This is supported by Perez-Diaz’s call for a differentiation between civil and uncivil voices in society,⁵⁴ which brings back the debate about the idea of *civility* in civil society as well as in social capital structures and dynamics, and hence mirrors the normative dimension of those concepts. Evers, for instance, alludes to various forms of incivility that he identifies in social interactions, such as a lack of mutual respect and destructive behaviour.⁵⁵ In this context, Dowley and Silver point out that ethnic polarisation can be clearly reflected in social capital, which is especially the case in post-communist countries, and, more generally, in societies in transition.⁵⁶ They argue that negative social capital can also be an obstacle to democratisation, especially if the majority group(s) in a nation-building process are exclusive towards national minorities.⁵⁷ Barnes agrees, claiming that civil society can be “a factor in war as well as a force for peace,” depending on how it is organised.⁵⁸ This implies that action has to be presented in a certain way to be recognised as agency in the peacebuilding context. Only if actors dispose of professional internal structures that enable them to engage with the bigger peacebuilding actors can their agency be recognised by the latter in the peacebuilding context. Local agencies need to be visible in the public sphere, be able to move within its boundaries and engage in their associated discourses if they hope to

⁵² Catherine Barnes, “Weaving the Web: Civil-Society Roles in Working with Conflict and Building Peace”, in Paul Van Tongeren, Malin Brenk, Marte Hellema and Juliette Verhoeven (eds.), *People Building Peace II: Successful Stories Of Civil Society*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2005, pp.7-24, p.8.

⁵³ Elias Norbert, *The civilizing process: The history of manners, and State formation and civilization*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1994, pp.47, 446.

⁵⁴ Victor Perez-Diaz, "From Civil War to Civil Society: Social Capital in Spain from the 1930s to the 1990s", in Robert D. Putnam (ed.), *Democracies in Flux: The Evolution of Social Capital in Contemporary Society*, Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2002.

⁵⁵ Adalbert Evers, “Observations on uncivility – Points of reference to blind spots in third sector research.” A comment to the keynote address of Victor Pérez-Diaz at the ISTR / EMES World-Congress at Barcelona July, 8 – 11, 2008.

⁵⁶ Kathleen M. Dowley and Brian D Silver, “Social Capital, Ethnicity and Support for Democracy in the Post Communist States”, *Europe-Asia Studies*, vol.54, no.4, 2002, pp.505-527.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p.525.

⁵⁸ Catherine Barnes, *op. cit.*, p.9.

represent meaningful agency from the perspectives of the larger peacebuilding organisations such as the EU. This in turn requires not only specific strategies as they relate to public diplomacy and certain media strategies, but also specific internal structures, i.e. sub-departments that are able to cope with the complex demands donors and sub-contractors may have on them. Yet if actors are unable or unwilling to situate their actions in this organisational context, they are less likely to be recognised as central peacebuilding actors, particularly from an EU point of view.

In this context, speaking about BiH more specifically, Belloni has suggested that civil society mainly serves as a buzzword to externally-driven peacebuilding ambitions, while implying that (‘uncivilised’) Bosnians have to undergo a civilisation process in order to become trustworthy peacebuilding actors.⁵⁹

Linking the necessity of framing peacebuilding agency in professional frames to be recognised as valid partners to larger organisations and donors, to the instrumental value of civil society actors, Kaldor suggests that the importance of civil society is related to the centrality of the global sphere since 1989, with global civil society serving as an answer to war and a vehicle for overcoming the gap between local civil societies and the “uncivil” part of the world.⁶⁰ She argues that, in its neo-liberal version, civil society has been defined as laissez-faire politics and, equally, as a substitute for supposedly negative state politics.⁶¹ Here, Howell and Pearce point to the increasing Americanisation of the debate, in which civil society has become linked to ideas such as liberty, equality, individuality and democracy.⁶² From a similar point of view, Paffenholz and Spurk point to the historical nature of civil society concepts, arguing that:

civil society has been an almost purely Western concept, historically tied to the political emancipation of citizens from former feudalistic ties, monarchy and the state during the 18th and 19th century.⁶³

⁵⁹ Roberto Belloni, “Civil Society and Peacebuilding in Bosnia and Herzegovina”, *Journal of Peace Research*, vol.38, no.2, 2001, pp.163-180.

⁶⁰ Mary Kaldor, *Global Civil Society: An Answer to War*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003, p.144.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p.9.

⁶² Jude Howell and Jenny Pearce, *Civil Society & Development. A Critical Exploration*, Boulder, Colo; London: L. Rienner Publishers, 2001, pp.43f.

⁶³ Thania Paffenholz and Christoph Spurk, *op. cit.*, p.4.

Yet, despite the connectedness of the civil society discourse to Western philosophical and political thought, civil society has come to be considered as incorporating universalistic principles,⁶⁴ with clear, even though contested, ideas about what counts as “civil” or “uncivil” behaviour. According to Shils, this goes back to Adam Ferguson’s reading of civil society, in which he celebrates a form of society cultivating arts and letters as opposed to barbarous societies without such qualities.⁶⁵ Against this background, Shils defines *civil society* as follows:

A civil society is a society of civility in the conduct of the members of the society towards each other. Civility enters into conduct between individuals and between individuals and the state; it regulates the conduct of individuals towards society. It likewise regulates the relations of collectivities towards each other, the relations between collectivities and the state and the relations of individuals within the state.⁶⁶

Consequently, as Lynch suggests, the neo-liberal approach to civil society with its focus on *civil*, in terms of regulated and controlled behaviour, has led to neo-liberal techniques of governance by neglecting the respective historical and social context of the development of the concept.⁶⁷ Liberalism has then, according to Hall and Trentmann, used concepts of *civil society* as a product for exportation into colonies where societies were constructed to become civil societies in the Western sense, as was the case under British colonial rule in India.⁶⁸ Indeed, numerous scholars have suggested that this exportation of the civil society concept - based on the assumption that its normative claims are universally valid - has marginalised indigenous and traditional groups that are not part of this framework.⁶⁹ In that sense, in liberal and neo-liberal thought, civil society has increasingly been considered a legitimate actor in the public sphere, thus serving as one of the main interlocutors for peacebuilding actors. It has been assumed that a professionalised civil society can be controlled, governed and “normalised,” while at the same time serving as a convenient partner for peacebuilders to transform societies in a controlled way. The notion of *civility* has then served as a

⁶⁴ Mary Kaldor, *op. cit.*, p.16.

⁶⁵ Edward Shils, “The Virtue of Civil Society”, Government and Opposition lecture delivered at the Athenaeum Club on 22 January 1991, p.5.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p.4.

⁶⁷ Cecilia Lynch, “Reflexivity in Research on Civil Society: Constructivist Perspectives”, *International Studies Review*, vol.10, 2008, pp.708-721.

⁶⁸ John A. Hall and Frank Trentmann, *op. cit.*, p.13.

⁶⁹ Cf. Nelson Kasfir, *op. cit.*

tool to narrow the definition of civil society, imposing a normative frame on it and legitimising the exclusion of certain actors from that framework.

The following section will show how concepts of *civil society* have become part of the liberal peacebuilding framework and how this has been used to develop universalist approaches to dealing with conflict.

Peacebuilding and Civil Society

The Peacebuilding Framework

After the end of the Cold War, most conflicts were no longer viewed as taking place between sovereign entities, but were rather seen to be based on ethnic conflicts revolving around identities and needs, and which could not solely be explained by reference to national power.⁷⁰ These new kinds of conflicts turned out to be intractable and deep-rooted, involving many actors from different levels.⁷¹ Due to the failure of traditional approaches to peacemaking and peacekeeping, there was a need to develop a new approach to dealing with the changed nature of conflict. It was against this background that peacebuilding was introduced as a highly structured model for addressing conflict. The techniques used for peacebuilding operations draw heavily on conflict resolution tools that were developed as a reaction to the growing complexities of conflict in the 1990s. This was accompanied by the inclusion of individual and social features in approaches to dealing with conflict, as well as those connected to the need to democratise peace negotiations and agreements vis-à-vis democratic publics.⁷² Emphasis came to be placed on relationships, social networks and individual psychological processes that are supposed to be transformable by tools such as problem-solving workshops, reconciliatory processes and dialogue projects.⁷³ Since approaches

⁷⁰ John W Burton, *Global Conflict. The Domestic Sources of International Crisis*, Brighton: Wheatsheaf, 1984, p.6.

⁷¹ Edward E. Azar, "Protracted International Conflicts: 10 Propositions", in Edward E. Azar and John W Burton (eds.), *International Conflict Resolution*, Brighton : Wheatsheaf, 1986, p.29.

⁷² Karin Aggestam, "Two-Track Diplomacy: Negotiations Between Israel and the PLO Through Open and Secret Channels", in Christer Jönsson and Richard Langhorne (eds.), *Diplomacy. Vol III*, London: Sage, 2004, pp.203-227, p.210.

⁷³ See, for instance, Ronald J. Fisher, "Social-Psychological Processes in Interactive Conflict Analysis and Reconciliation", in Ho-Won Jeong (ed.), *Conflict Resolution: Dynamics, Processes and Structure*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999; Edward E Azar, *The Management of Protracted Social Conflict: Theory and*

based on individual and social processes that are intended to address the very roots of a conflict require an engagement with actors below the state level, civil society actors and particularly non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are believed to be the implementers of the conflict resolution agenda *par excellence*.⁷⁴ This is linked to the belief that solutions to contemporary conflicts require changes in economic, political and social systems, with civil society actors being considered as capable of achieving this.⁷⁵ Indeed, Van Tongeren et al. point out that

in order to effectively prevent and resolve the violent conflicts of today, all stakeholders, from the grassroots to the international levels, need to be included in developing and implementing such strategies throughout the entire conflict cycle.⁷⁶

One of the central documents that attempts a definition of *peacebuilding* was Boutros-Ghali's *Agenda for Peace* in 1992.⁷⁷ Not only does this document delineate the boundaries between peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding, but it also outlines the latter as a long-term approach to working in post-conflict settings by addressing the very root causes of violence and serving as "action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict."⁷⁸ This is based on the assumption that empowerment of the poor and marginalised, coupled with the democratisation of the respective society in conflict, will eventually lead to sustainable peace.⁷⁹ Cousens describes the approach to conflict outlined in *Agenda for Peace* as a linear one, given that *peacebuilding* is defined as a post-conflict activity, and assumes that once conflict is overcome, international assistance is a key factor to successful long-term settlement.⁸⁰ In that sense, Doyle and Sambanis suggest that the identification of the root causes of conflict, coupled with

Cases, Aldershot: Dartmouth, 1990; Andrew Rigby, *Justice and Reconciliation. After the Violence*, Boulder, CO; London: Lynne Rienner, 2001.

⁷⁴ Oliver P. Richmond, *Maintaining Order, Making Peace*, Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave, 2002.

⁷⁵ John Burton and Frank Dukes, *Conflict: Practices in Management, Settlement, and Resolution*, Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan, 1999, p.144.

⁷⁶ Paul Van Tongeren, Malin Brenk, Marte Hellema and Juliette Verhoeven, "Introduction", in Paul Van Tongeren, Malin Brenk, Marte Hellema and Juliette Verhoeven, (eds.), *People Building Peace II: Successful Stories Of Civil Society*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2005, pp.1-4, p.1.

⁷⁷ Boutros Boutros Ghali, *An Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peacekeeping*, New York: United Nations, 1992.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ Elizabeth M Cousens, "Introduction", in, Elizabeth M Cousens Chetan Kumar (eds.), *Peacebuilding as Politics: Cultivating Peace in Fragile Societies*, Boulder, CO ; London : Lynne Rienner, 2001, pp. 5, 6.

international and local capacities, create the political space required for peacebuilding.⁸¹ The idea of not only managing, but rather resolving and transforming peace, as it has been taken up by *Agenda for Peace*, is informed by Galtung's idea of creating "positive peace," as opposed to "negative peace" that is characterised by the mere absence of violence, yet has persisting structural and cultural violence.⁸² Lederach's pyramid model has certainly heavily influenced the ways in which both theorists and practitioners view peacebuilding strategies, i.e. strategies of building "positive peace," by providing an analytical tool for looking at different levels of society.⁸³ According to this model, society can be broken down into the top-leadership level, the middle-range leadership level and the grassroots-leadership level, all of which come to play an important role in peacebuilding missions.⁸⁴ Although paying attention to all of those levels, Lederach shows a particular interest in grassroots dynamics with his idea of building *peace constituencies* as a citizen-based form of peacemaking based on local cultural resources.⁸⁵ Boulding has taken this further with her book on *Cultures of Peace*, in which she calls for the use of local capacities for peace in order to create a general social climate of peacefulness.⁸⁶ The need to include local people in conflict resolution and peacebuilding via participatory governance was also voiced in the Carnegie Report on the *Prevention of Deadly Conflict*.⁸⁷ From this perspective, peacebuilding missions claim the need for change and intervention into society in order to create structural, bottom-up changes conducive to the emergence of sustainable peace.

Against this background, liberal ideas have been criticised for treating peacebuilding as an "enormous experiment in social engineering" based on political and economic liberalisation.⁸⁸ Mac Ginty suggests that the liberal peace is exported in a highly standardised form that is based on Western ideas, such as Disarmament,

⁸¹ Michael W. Doyle and Nicholas Sambanis, "Building Peace: Challenges and Strategies after Civil War", World Bank Publication, 1999, pp.15f.

⁸² Johan Galtung, "Violence, Peace and Peace Research", *Journal of Peace Research*, 1969, vol.6, no.3, pp.167-191.

⁸³ John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*, Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, esp. p.39.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.94f.

⁸⁶ Elise Boulding, *Cultures of peace: the hidden side of history*, Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2000.

⁸⁷ Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, "Preventing Deadly Conflict. Final Report", 1997.

⁸⁸ Roland Paris, "Peacebuilding and the Limits of Liberal Internationalism", *International Security*, vol.22, no.2, 1997, p.56.

Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) and Security Sector Reform (SSR), civil society capacity-building and marketisation,⁸⁹ which Richmond refers to as the “neoliberal marketisation of peace.”⁹⁰

Peacebuilding concepts in both the policy world and academia have led to a focus on societal rather than on state-centred approaches to creating peace. Civil society has thus served as a concept that could be easily integrated into the liberal peacebuilding framework, since its liberal tradition refers to the minimisation of violence through the notion of civility as outlined above.⁹¹ At the same time, what becomes obvious is that civil society has been represented as a clearly delimitable element of the peacebuilding context, an independent tool of conflict transformation that could be used to direct, govern and control the liberal peacebuilding process. Against this background, the following section will show how the concept of *civil society* came to be integrated within the liberal peacebuilding framework.

The Agency of Civil Society in the Liberal Peacebuilding Framework

The decade after the release of *Agenda for Peace* witnessed a quick increase in the emergence of numerous non-state actors in conflict-ridden countries. The combination of civil society and peacebuilding lent itself as a practicable tool for international actors involved in peace missions, given that both concepts implicitly assume universality of liberal values and the desirability of democratisation.⁹² Howell and Pearce outline how the civil society discourse has emerged from the development context and how it has come to act as an important tool for donors, such as the World Bank, despite having an ambivalent relationship with the concept.⁹³ It was in the 1980s that the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) came to develop mechanisms of cooperation with civil society actors, and which were institutionalised by the World Bank’s creation of an NGO Unit in 1989 that had the aim of making the state more effective by using civil society actors for specific policy purposes. In contrast, the

⁸⁹ Roger Mac Ginty, “Indigenous Peace-Making Versus the Liberal Peace”, *Cooperation and Conflict*, vol.43, 2008, pp.139-163, p.144.

⁹⁰ Oliver P Richmond, “The Romanticisation of the Local: Welfare, Culture and Peacebuilding”, *The International Spectator*, vol.44, no.1, 2009, pp.149-169.

⁹¹ Cf. Mary Kaldor, *op. cit.*, pp. 3, 6.

⁹² Cf. Jude Howell and Jenny Pearce, *op. cit.*, p.23.

⁹³ The following is drawn from Howell and Pearce pp.95 ff.

UNDP has been more at ease with civil society, basing their approaches on community-policies already in place the 1980s and, later on, focusing on NGO partnerships in order to implement their policies.

In order to empower local communities and to build peace constituencies, NGOs were given priority in this field. Using NGOs as policy partners started to become fashionable amongst donors engaged in conflict zones, not least because they were considered as having advantages regarding programme implementation compared with other actors. NGOs have often been considered to be able to deliver social services and welfare.⁹⁴ As a general trend, donors came to emphasise the need for local ownership as a way to strengthen local capacities for peace via co-operations and partnerships with NGOs.⁹⁵ In this context, Richmond argues that the idea of creating a “civil peace” that aims to bypass state sovereignty has been conducive to a focus on NGOs in peacebuilding.⁹⁶ Indeed, the latter are increasingly viewed as crucial actors in crisis situations and complex emergencies.⁹⁷ This is not least due to their ability to professionalise their strategies and policies as envisaged by a plethora of donors.

The growing donor emphasis on peacebuilding via civil society programmes is mainly due to the influence of the conflict resolution toolkit, as it has been outlined above. This is related to the perception that peacebuilding has to deal with relationships, mechanisms, processes, institutions and authorities with the aim of developing local capacities in order to improve and heal relationships at various levels.⁹⁸ To have an impact on social relationships, peacebuilders need to gain access to the local sphere,⁹⁹ with civil society serving as a gateway to that sphere. In this context, Kaldor points to the representative functions of civil society actors as they can serve as a medium through which social contracts between individuals and the centres of power can be

⁹⁴ Ibid., p.91.

⁹⁵ Hannah Reich, “Local Ownership in Conflict Transformation Projects. Partnership, Participation or Patronage?”, *Berghof Occasional Paper No.27*, Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management, September 2006, pp.5, 6, www.berghof-center.org/uploads/download/boc27e.pdf (accessed 06/11/07).

⁹⁶ Oliver P. Richmond, *The Transformation of Peace*, Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, p.137.

⁹⁷ Francis Kofi Abiew and Tom Keating, “Defining a Role for Civil Society. Humanitarian NGOs and Peacebuilding Operations”, in Tom Keating and W. Andy Knight (eds), *Building Sustainable Peace*, Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2004, pp.93-117, p.99.

⁹⁸ Elizabeth Cousens, op. cit., p.16.

⁹⁹ Oliver P. Richmond, “The Dilemmas of Subcontracting the Liberal Peace”, in Oliver P. Richmond and Henry F. Carey, (eds.), *Subcontracting Peace. The Challenges of NGO Peacebuilding*, Aldershot; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005, pp.19-35, p.25.

negotiated.¹⁰⁰ This, in turn, reflects the degree to which civil society actors are increasingly considered to be legitimate actors in peacebuilding missions. *Local ownership* is a recurring phrase when it comes to implementing peace programmes in various settings.¹⁰¹ This approach coincides with Edwards's model of civil society as the "good society" that represents the public sphere.¹⁰² Against this background, Doyle and Sambanis call for an involvement of local actors specifically for higher-order peacebuilding, arguing that:

The higher up we move in the spectrum of peace, the less we need muscular third-party assistance and the more we need specialized peace operations with a developed civilian component. Furthermore, enhancing local capacities is more important for higher-order peacebuilding than for lower-order peacebuilding, while reducing the depth of hostility factors is more important for successful lower-order peacebuilding.¹⁰³

The centrality of civil society involvement in peacebuilding operations is not least a result of the realisation that various struggles for peace, which had focused on negotiations at the elite level, did not manage to create sustainable peace. On this basis, Yordán claims that the failure of the Dayton Peace Agreement in BiH is due to the fact that it ignores grassroots potentials such as inter-ethnic dialogue and social empowerment.¹⁰⁴ As an alternative approach, the author suggests the inclusion of local civil society and local needs, arguing that "the state and the international community must pay attention to the demands of Bosnian citizens and act on their proposals, voiced by the means of civil organizations or elections."¹⁰⁵ Doyle and Sambanis argue for the definition of peacebuilding to be a "process of developing the indigenous capacities for self-governance."¹⁰⁶

Yet Stewart observes that civil society and the state have become dichotomised by both peacebuilding actors and donors, with the former being assumed to be able to cure the ills caused by ethnic conflict and the state.¹⁰⁷ Not only does such reasoning

¹⁰⁰ Mary Kaldor, op. cit., pp.44, 45.

¹⁰¹ Hannah Reich, op. cit.

¹⁰² Michael Edwards, *Civil Society*, Cambridge: Polity, 2004, pp.37 ff.

¹⁰³ Michael W. Doyle and Nicholas Sambanis, op. cit., p.26.

¹⁰⁴ Carlos L. Yordán, "Society Building in Bosnia: A Critique of Post-Dayton Peacebuilding Efforts", *Seton Hall Journal of Diplomacy and International Relations*, vol.4, no.2, 2003, pp.59-74, p.64.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p.72.

¹⁰⁶ Michael W. Doyle and Nicholas Sambanis, op. cit., p.31.

¹⁰⁷ Sheelagh Stewart, "Happy Ever After in the Marketplace: NGOs and Uncivil Society", *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol. 24, no.71, 1997, p.16.

neglect the fact that the functioning of civil society cannot be considered in isolation of the state on which it is dependent,¹⁰⁸ but it also develops a rather romantic image of civil society actors, as a result of their plurality and civil values.¹⁰⁹ This ties in with discussions about which civil society actors are included and, more specifically, which donors make those choices. In that sense, as Howell and Pearce argue, “civil society becomes a technical instrument for the implementation of donor agendas.”¹¹⁰ At the same time, as Young points out, civil society is often assumed to represent some form of unity, while inherent cleavages and exclusionary tendencies tend to be ignored:¹¹¹ there is a tendency to harmonise groups into a particular social order that fits the interests of the dominant actors.¹¹² Jenkins confirms this, arguing that the aid community has taken up the idea of civil society “and fashioned it to suit its own unique culture and purposes.”¹¹³ As a result of this and the fact that peace is subcontracted mainly to NGOs, Richmond suggests that bottom-up peacebuilding techniques have come to represent an international rather than local consensus.¹¹⁴

Despite the realisation that NGOs are only one element of civil society among many,¹¹⁵ those organisations have become the cornerstones of international peacebuilding and the main recipients of resources directed at conflict zones. This, in turn, causes a conflation between NGOs and civil society actors in general, whereby the former are believed to be representative of local society in general and thus able to increase popular participation in development.¹¹⁶ Against this background, Pouligny suggests that whenever external actors do not find Western civil society structures in the society they engage in, then they tend to create those groups or, alternatively, try to find

¹⁰⁸ Björn Beckman, op. cit., p.30.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Jude Howell and Jenny Pearce, op. cit., pp.113, 114.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p.232.

¹¹¹ Crawford Young, “In Search of Civil Society”, in John W. Harbeson, Donald Rothchild and Naomi Chazan, (eds.), *Civil society and the state in Africa*, Boulder, CO; London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1994, pp.33-50, p.47.

¹¹² Cf. William I. Robinson, *Promoting Polyarchy: Globalisation, US Intervention and Hegemony*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, p.29 and Ian Taylor, “South Africa’s transition to democracy and the ‘change industry’: a case study of IDASA”, *Politikon*, vol.29, no.1, 2002, pp.31-48, p.39.

¹¹³ Rob Jenkins, “Mistaking ‘governance’ for ‘politics’: foreign aid, democracy, and the construction of civil society“, in Sudipta Kaviraj and Snail Khilnani (eds.), *Civil Society: History and Possibilities*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001, pp.250-268, p.251.

¹¹⁴ Oliver P. Richmond, *The Transformation of Peace*, op. cit., p.133.

¹¹⁵ Michael Edwards, David Hulme and Tina Wallace, “NGOs in a global future: marrying local delivery to worldwide leverage”, *Public Administration and Development*, vol.19, 1999, pp.117-136, p.117.

¹¹⁶ Sheelagh Stewart, op. cit., esp. p.26.

collectivities that can easily be labelled as such.¹¹⁷ Since NGOs generally come closest to Western ideas of *civility*, Duffield suggests that those organisations have come to reflect “the international predominance of neo-liberal thinking.”¹¹⁸ In this respect, the contemporary neo-liberal discourse has tried to selectively combine elements from different philosophical approaches to *civil society* and homogenised those elements into a discourse that provides a definition for what can be considered “normal” and “civil” in the neo-liberal framework.¹¹⁹ Yet, as Pugh suggests, although peacebuilding actors have tried to transform civil society to make it compatible with their normative framework, it is impossible to create trust and positive relationships in civil society from an external stance.¹²⁰ This is the background against which Duffield argues that NGOs embody “a liberal problematic of power,” in terms of representing a liberal technology of governing people.¹²¹

Through this approach, in which aid agencies create civil society according to their own images and standards, and thus conflate society with civil society, subordinate and uncomfortable groups are often seemingly disempowered.¹²² For instance, Croissant et al. suggest that civil society has to have clear boundaries, only including those groups that identify themselves with liberal values, peacefulness and tolerance.¹²³ This leads to large-scale exclusions of various local actors who are not compatible with the liberal peace framework, while peacebuilders build new societies that include only the chosen few civil society actors that conform to their preferences.¹²⁴ Similarly, the Westernisation of peacebuilding processes is illustrated by the fact that Northern NGOs have, as it seems, gained predominance over local ones, and hence have the power to

¹¹⁷ Béatrice Pouligny, “Civil Society and Post-Conflict Peace Building: Ambiguities of International Programmes Aimed at Building ‘New Societies’”, *Security Dialogue*, vol. 36, no.4, 2005, pp.495-510, p.498.

¹¹⁸ Mark Duffield, “NGO Relief in War Zones: Towards an Analysis of the New Aid Paradigm”, *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 18, no.3, 1997, pp 527-542, p.532.

¹¹⁹ Cf. Béatrice Pouligny, op. cit.

¹²⁰ Michael Pugh, “The Social-Civil Dimension”, in Michael Pugh (ed.), *Regeneration of War-Torn Societies*, Basingstoke: Macmillan Press; New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000, pp.121, 122.

¹²¹ Mark Duffield, *Development, Security and Unending War: Governing the World of Peoples*, Cambridge: Polity, 2007, pp.32, 43.

¹²² Rob Jenkins, op. cit., pp.258, 263, 268.

¹²³ Aurel Croissant, Hans-Joachim Lauth and Wolfgang Merkel, “Zivilgesellschaft und Transformation: ein internationaler Vergleich“, in Wolfgang Merkel, (ed.), *Systemwechsel 5. Zivilgesellschaft und Transformation*, Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 2000, pp.9-49, pp.18, 19.

¹²⁴ Béatrice Pouligny, op. cit., p.498.

speak on behalf of the people on the ground.¹²⁵ The connectedness of civil society building to power is also problematised by Arato, who claims that the reconstruction of civil society can be viewed “as a cover for a hidden motivation, namely the seizure of state power.”¹²⁶ According to Richmond, civil society actors in liberal peacebuilding missions are only free to the degree to which they still remain within the liberal framework and do not deviate from the standardised assumptions of the latter, while uncomfortable local voices are marginalised.¹²⁷ As far as the case of the EU is concerned, Finke shows that civil society has become a central concept in the idea of *deliberative democracy* – a process that is based on the input of various groups.¹²⁸ Yet at the same time it becomes clear that only those groups that are compatible with the EU’s normative framework are included in EU deliberations. Given that the EU is, amongst others, concerned with the liberalisation of economies, it has, according to Arato, tended to reduce civil society to economic society and has focused on integrating groups who are compatible with the neo-liberal marketisation model.¹²⁹ Batliwala has problematised the instrumentalisation of civil society according to donor preferences, suggesting that global actors, such as Northern NGOs working in conflict zones, have come to be identified as grassroots actors, associated with specific values and policies.¹³⁰ This is in line with Paffenholz’s and Spurk’s observation that civil society makes attitude change possible and is hence a central element to peacebuilding as long as it is “civil” in its values and characteristics.¹³¹

To recap: liberal peacebuilding is dependent on what it defines as professional civil society actors, while it tends to exclude uncomfortable and supposedly “uncivil” voices. The conceptualisation of agency is therefore mono-dimensional and focused on

¹²⁵ Michael Edwards et al., op. cit., p.131.

¹²⁶ Andrew Arato, “Revolution, Civil Society, and Democracy”, in Zbigniew Rau (ed.), *The Reemergence of Civil Society in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union*, Boulder: Westview Press, 1991, pp.161-181, p.161.

¹²⁷ Cf. Oliver P Richmond, “The Romanticisation of the Local: Welfare, Culture and Peacebuilding”, op. cit.

¹²⁸ Barbara Finke, “Civil society participation in EU governance”, *Living Reviews in European Governance*, vol. 2, no.2,, 2007, p.21.

¹²⁹ Cf. Andrew Arato, op. cit., p.162.

¹³⁰ Srilatha Batliwala, “Grassroots Movements as Transnational Actors: Implications for Global Civil Society”, in *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, vol. 13, no. 4, 2002, p.396.

¹³¹ Thania Paffenholz and Christoph Spurk, op. cit., p.1.

a narrow set of actors. The success after civil society discourse within the peacebuilding context is due to a number of reasons.

First, although attention is given to local societies and local ownership, many international peacebuilders' notions of civil society tends to be selective and romanticising. In order to keep control over more comfortable and easy-to-deal-with voices, bottom-up mechanisms are institutionalised, but from the top-down, so that the liberal-international can keep control over what it considers as (local) civil society. In that sense, liberal peacebuilding is dependent on assimilating the local into its framework instead of adapting the liberal peace to local settings and circumstances. Civil society partnerships can be governed best given that they tend to follow liberal prescriptions and norms instead of following their own goals and norms.

Second, civil society is often considered an independent factor in post-conflict situations. This is based on the assumption that it can help transform a war-torn society and, therefore, be a neutral partner through whom the international community can implement their agendas. Civil society can, according to this discourse, help “normalise” disrupted social structures, the creators of which in turn are deprived of agency in an internationally created public sphere. Civil society tends to be portrayed as a technical and more or less neutral tool in the imagination of many peacebuilding actors, deprived of cultural particularities, but happy to adapt to the requirements of peacebuilding and conflict transformation. Yet, the unwillingness to engage in the cultural nuances of civil society or its dynamics and fluidities has been one of the main points of criticism of liberal peacebuilding. Against this background, the following section will shed light on the role of culture and the degree to which dominant actors have tended to neglect the cultural context of peacebuilding as well as the potential of culture to serve as a platform for agency.

Peacebuilding and Local Culture

The Degradation of Local Culture in Peacebuilding and Civil Society Programmes

As Richmond has suggested, liberal peacebuilding is based on the assumption that there are universal values, which, once under threat, legitimise intervention by

outside actors.¹³² As a result of this, there is a general lack of cultural awareness and sensitivity for local dynamics in peacebuilding missions. Rather, various peacebuilding actors assume that the inherent values and goals of their projects are necessary for transforming a post-conflict context according to a certain set of rules. Richmond refers to the culture-welfare paradox, arguing that there is a belief that peacebuilding can occur without engagement in either of these areas.¹³³ Whenever culture is taken into account at all, this tends to be a rhetorical device to make peacebuilding policies appear more legitimate.¹³⁴ This, in turn, means that an engagement with local civil society and its cultures is marginal at best.¹³⁵ In this context, Deveaux criticises liberalism's exclusion of cultural groups and calls for a consideration of social practices and places.¹³⁶ Yet, civil society has come to be viewed as a tool of peacebuilding, and this is based on the assumption that it is homogenous and constructed in opposition to what the liberal peace considers as "backward" or "traditional".¹³⁷ This approach neglects the degree to which society constitutes itself in the context of a specific culture and considers "organizations formed along ethnic, kin, or clan principles as equivalent to tradition and backwardness," even though those may play an important role in achieving social justice and equality.¹³⁸ There seems to be an increasing awareness among donors about this problem, given that the promotion of certain civil society actors and the exclusion of others creates parallel societies and reduces the impact of peacebuilding policies due to their failure to connect to society more broadly. Not only is there now a tendency to increasingly fund economic actors, such as small and medium-sized enterprises,¹³⁹ but donor reports increasingly reflect an awareness of the potential lack of representativeness of professionalised civil society actors. The UNDP, for instance, recently produced a report entitled *The Silent Majority Speaks*, aimed at reaching

¹³² Oliver P. Richmond, *The Transformation of Peace*, op. cit., p.219.

¹³³ Oliver P. Richmond, "The Romanticisation of the Local: Welfare, Culture and Peacebuilding", op. cit.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Christopher Hill, "'Where are we going?' International Relations and the voice from below", *Review of International Studies*, vol.25, 1999, pp. 107–122, p.107.

¹³⁶ Monique Deveaux, "A Deliberate Approach to Conflicts of Culture", *Political Theory*, vol. 31, no.6, 2003, pp.780-807, p.782.

¹³⁷ Jude Howell and Jenny Pearce, op. cit., p.118.

¹³⁸ Ibid., p.235.

¹³⁹ Cf. Nick Killick, VS Srikantha and Canan Guñduñz. "The Role of Local Business in Peacebuilding", Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management, 2005, http://www.berghof-handbook.net/documents/publications/killick_etal_handbook.pdf (accessed 15/07/11).

beyond those actors who are vocal in the public sphere.¹⁴⁰ This ties in with Fisher's observation that NGOs tend to embrace Western values and often consider local conditions to be a problem that needs to be solved.¹⁴¹ In this context, Gray points to the limits of importing the Western model of market socialism to post-communist states,¹⁴² while Rau describes the (re-)emergence of civil society in those countries as bound to their respective historical and social circumstances.¹⁴³ Hann argues that *civil society* is generally not a useful category for describing societies in Eastern Europe as such an approach is based on "errors in western diagnoses of the social conditions of late socialist societies."¹⁴⁴ Indeed, since societal interests in many Eastern European countries have historically been subordinated to the state, the concept of civil society in that region is lacking in substantial value.¹⁴⁵ Thus Seligman argues that:

[d]enied both civil and political rights during forty years of state socialism, civil society is, for many in contemporary Eastern and East-Central Europe, simply a model of civil and political citizenship that never existed.¹⁴⁶

By neglecting those and other local dynamics that can partly be attributed to the respective cultural background, Pouligny suggests that peacebuilders have failed to build on local existing resources and knowledge.¹⁴⁷ Local culture is often referred to as "backwards" and "traditional," rather than seen as a foundation from which peacebuilding can unfold.¹⁴⁸

Yet, if we talk about *local culture*, what do we understand by it? What is it that is missing in contemporary peacebuilding policies?

¹⁴⁰ United Nations Development Program, "The Silent Majority Speaks", Sarajevo, 2008.

<http://www.undp.ba/Upload/SC/The%20Silent%20Majority%20Speaks%20Report.pdf> (accessed 01/06/11).

¹⁴¹ William F. Fisher, "Doing Good? The Politics and Antipolitics of NGO Practices", *Annual Review of Anthropology*, vol. 26, 1997, pp. 439-464, pp.442, 446.

¹⁴² John Gray, "Post-Totalitarianism, Civil Society, and the Limits of the Western Model", in Zbigniew Rau (ed.), *The Reemergence of Civil Society in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union*, Boulder: Westview Press, 1991, pp.145-160, p.155.

¹⁴³ Zbigniew Rau, op. cit.

¹⁴⁴ Chris Hann, "Introduction. Political society and civil anthropology", in Chris Hann and Elizabeth Dunn (eds.), *Civil society: challenging Western models*, Imprint London: Routledge, 1996, pp.1-26, p.9.

¹⁴⁵ Adam B. Seligman, op. cit., pp.6f.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., p.114.

¹⁴⁷ Béatrice Pouligny, op. cit., pp.502, 503.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. Oliver P. Richmond, *A Post-Liberal Peace*, op. cit.

Culture as an Ethnographic Concept

Culture has been defined in various ways and remains a highly contested concept. Only recently has it become a core concept in the social sciences, with the “Cultural Turn” acknowledging that it may represent a site of politics and power.¹⁴⁹ Since culture is neither testable nor concretely tangible, it is impossible to draw a clear-cut boundary around what it is. Yet although it cannot be defined, we still have to be aware of the impact it has on people’s lives and vice versa.

It is generally observable that culture has increasingly become democratised in terms of moving away from an idea of “high culture” towards anthropological ideas in which *culture* includes daily life.¹⁵⁰ Smith argues that culture is conducive to the construction of identities to the same degree to which it is “a dialogic process through which meanings are established and transformed.”¹⁵¹ This goes hand in hand with Geertz’s interpretation of *culture* as various webs of significance that allow for a thick description of people’s lives.¹⁵² This approach to culture has to take relationality into account as “relationships among individuals within groups, among groups, and between ideas and perspectives.”¹⁵³ Yet such an ethnographic approach does not try to portray culture as something discrete, stable or constant, but rather demonstrates that:

ideas and practices of globalizing modernity are appropriated and reembedded in locally situated practices, giving rise to a plethora of modernities through the assemblage of diverse cultural elements.¹⁵⁴

Such a situational approach to local culture allows for the consideration of locality as relational and contextual, expressed in “certain kinds of agency, sociality and

¹⁴⁹ Kate Nash, “The ‘Cultural Turn’ in Social Theory: Towards a Theory of Cultural Politics”, *Sociology*, vol.35, 2001, pp.77-92, p.82.

¹⁵⁰ Mark J. Smith. *Culture: Reinventing the Social Sciences*, Buckingham; Philadelphia, Pa: Open University, 2000, p.21.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., pp.32, 36.

¹⁵² Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*, London: Fontana Press, 1993, pp.5 ff.

¹⁵³ Vijayendra Rao and Michael Walton, “Culture and Public Action: Relationality, Equality of Agency, and Development”, in Vijayendra Rao and Michael Walton (eds.), *Culture and Public Action*, Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press: Stanford Social Sciences, 2004, pp.3-36, p.4.

¹⁵⁴ Arturo Escobar, “Place, Nature, and Culture in Discourses of Globalization”, in Ali Mirsepassi, Amrita Basu and Frederick Weaver (eds.), *Localizing knowledge in a globalizing world: recasting the area studies debate*, Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2003, pp.37-59, p.58.

reproducibility.”¹⁵⁵ This is in line with Hann’s argument, calling for a more inclusive usage of civil society, taking everyday experiences, beliefs and values of social life into account.¹⁵⁶ Indeed, a more ethnographic and inclusive usage of local culture – yet without implying normative judgements about which culture is “more progressive” or “backward” – would give the notion of *civil society* a new take and represent a major challenge for peacebuilding operations. However, such an approach has so far been neglected. Therefore, Said suggests that “only recently have Westerners become aware that what they have to say about the history and the cultures of ‘subordinate’ peoples is challengeable by the people themselves.”¹⁵⁷

According to Haugerud, many development agency reports naturalise, romanticise or homogenise the local.¹⁵⁸ This is equally criticised by Badie who suggests that the international community has developed pressures for a unified civil society according to externals’ preferences,¹⁵⁹ while societies are not only politically, but also culturally, much more complex than what is often assumed. At the same time, peacebuilding actors have assumed that local cultures are unsuitable for neo-liberal strategies, so that the latter have come to be neglected and romanticised in their diversity.¹⁶⁰ Therefore, Mac Ginty calls for recognition of alternative and indigenous approaches to peacebuilding, taking into consideration that peace is plural rather than singular.¹⁶¹ This neglects the contested and fragmented nature of (local) culture – not only of the local subjects of peacebuilding, but equally of the local of peacebuilding actors themselves, such as the EU.

¹⁵⁵ Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press, 1996, p.178.

¹⁵⁶ Chris Hann, op. cit., pp.14, 21, 22.

¹⁵⁷ Edward W. Said, *Culture & Imperialism*, London: Vintage, 1994, p.235.

¹⁵⁸ Angelique Haugerud, “The Disappearing Local. Rethinking Global-Local Connections in Ali Mirsepassi, Amrita Basu and Frederick Weaver (eds.), *Localizing knowledge in a globalizing world: recasting the area studies debate*, Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2003, pp.60-81, pp. 62, 68.

¹⁵⁹ Bertrand Badie, *The Imported State: the Westernization of the Political Order*, Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2000, p.85.

¹⁶⁰ Oliver P. Richmond, “The Romanticisation of the Local: Welfare, Culture and Peacebuilding”, op. cit.

¹⁶¹ Roger Mac Ginty, op. cit., p.159.

Some Issues in Relation to Culture

As suggested above, taking local culture into consideration within the framework of peacebuilding operations does not mean that it is easy to identify what the “cultural” element within society is, given that it cannot be separated from social life of which it is an essential part. Pouligny proposes that “the idea of ‘community’ contains highly variable forms of organisation and mediation,” which makes it difficult to recognise distinct elements of the cultural and social fabric.¹⁶² Deveaux confirms this, arguing that conflicts over the legitimacy of customs and norms are quite common in societies and are very likely to be related to interests, benefits and power.¹⁶³ Haugerud asserts that the local is constructed and potentially contradictory, so that each image of representation only reflects a partial and subjective truth.¹⁶⁴ This alludes to the slippery nature of culture and its representation as a matter of social discourses and institutional practices.¹⁶⁵ Similar observations have led researchers, such as Kuran, to raise the issue of “preference falsification,” defining culture as a sphere of power struggles and as a potential “misrepresentation of desires under perceived social pressures.”¹⁶⁶ The variety of competing claims to represent local culture can then raise questions about whose voices are heard and who may define “the community” or “the local” in development and peacebuilding approaches.¹⁶⁷ Again, this mirrors the complexity of local culture that is produced by a variety of competing, conflictive and mutually reinforcing processes, while “local subjects engage in the social activities of production, representation, and reproduction,”¹⁶⁸ which in turn brings in issues of authenticity: is authenticity possible at all, or is it not rather a cultural construct of the West in itself, as part of a search for authentic culture?¹⁶⁹ Briggs asks what it is that constructs authenticity in discourses that “invent” cultural traditions and how discursive authority is established when traditions

¹⁶² Béatrice Pouligny, op. cit., p.507.

¹⁶³ Monique Deveaux, op. cit., p.784.

¹⁶⁴ Angelique Haugerud, op. cit., p.61.

¹⁶⁵ Mark J. Smith, op. cit., pp.4, 121, 129).

¹⁶⁶ Timur Kuran, “Cultural Obstacles to Economic Development: Often Overstated, Usually Transitory in Vijayendra Rao and Michael Walton (eds.), *Culture and Public Action*, Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press: Stanford Social Sciences, 2004, pp.115-137, p.116.

¹⁶⁷ Pauline Peters, “‘Who’s Local Here?’ The Politics of Participation in Development”, *Cultural Survival Quarterly*, vol.20, no.3, 1996.

¹⁶⁸ Arjun Appadurai, op. cit., pp.178, 179, 185.

¹⁶⁹ Richard Handler, “Authenticity”, *Anthropology Today*, vol.2, no.1, 1986, pp.2-4, p.2.

are “invented”.¹⁷⁰ This is linked to the question of whether there can be one single source of cultural authenticity at all, or whether local culture is informed by various sources of agency.¹⁷¹ Especially within groups, as Hobsbawm suggests, the invention of traditions has served as a means for creating group cohesion, for legitimising institutions and authority as well as for socialising people by inculcating beliefs and values.¹⁷² This relates to Spencer’s observation that the creation of discrete cultures is a political act¹⁷³ and is connected to Haugerud’s perception that NGOs use local culture as their source of legitimisation by claiming to represent the local.¹⁷⁴ Such a strategy (possibly deliberately) fails to take account of the complexity of local processes and the variety of local voices, with processes of indigenisation being constituted by both homogenising and heterogenising tendencies.¹⁷⁵

Despite the complexities inherent in the local sphere, both domestic and international actors in conflict zones tend to romanticise local cultures by ascribing authenticity to one strand, instrumentalising a specific cultural discourse that fits into their objectives.¹⁷⁶ For this purpose, international peacebuilding discourses often imagine culture as something discrete, bonded and unique.¹⁷⁷ While researchers have warned of dichotomising the local and the international, Spencer points out that the interaction between those two spheres creates a new culture by fusing elements of both.¹⁷⁸ Hughes shows that authenticity can serve as a means of getting preferred access to the local sphere for local elites in that national actors try to wrest power from international actors through their claims to authentically represent their community.¹⁷⁹ This, in turn, shows how identity is formed along the lines of people’s sense of locality in competition with, in opposition to, and in line with international approaches to

¹⁷⁰ Charles L. Briggs, “The Politics of Discursive Authority in Research on the “Invention of Tradition””, *Cultural Anthropology*, vol. 11, no.4, 1996, pp. 435-469, pp.439, 459.

¹⁷¹ Jonathan Spencer, *Anthropology, Politics, and the State. Democracy and Violence in South Asia*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 2007, p.63.

¹⁷² Eric Hobsbawm, “Introduction: Inventing Traditions”, in Hobsbawm, Eric and Terence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, pp.1-14, p.9.

¹⁷³ Jonathan Spencer, op. cit., p.164.

¹⁷⁴ Angelique Haugerud, op. cit., p.70.

¹⁷⁵ Arjun Appadurai, “Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy”, *Theory, Culture & Society*, vol.7, 1990, pp.295-310, p.295.

¹⁷⁶ Cf. Jocelyn Linnekin, “Cultural Invention and the Dilemma of Authenticity”, *American Anthropologist*, vol.93, no.2, 1991, pp.446-449, p.447.

¹⁷⁷ Richard Handler, op. cit., p.2.

¹⁷⁸ Jonathan Spencer, op. cit., p.52.

¹⁷⁹ Caroline Hughes, *Dependent Communities: Aid and Politics in Cambodia and East Timor*, Cornell, 2009.

peacebuilding.¹⁸⁰ Due to those complex processes of identity and culture formation, especially under the presence of various local and international peacebuilding actors, it is hard, if not impossible, to define what local culture really is. Any definition would certainly have to take processes of hybridity into account, which are often linked to an instrumental way of using culture on both local and international sides. In these processes, authenticity dissolves and becomes impossible. Yet, at the same time, this points to the potential of culture to serve as a platform of agency. Actors decide from their perspective and position in society which forms of identity and culture they consider as their own as well as how they represent and imagine themselves. This depends on what people's idea of their cultural self actually is¹⁸¹ and to what extent people want a custom preserved.¹⁸² This relates to questions of how cultures are narrated, and for whose purposes, how groups present themselves and how that relates to privileges and access to resources. The need to know local cultures and their logic is thus an indispensable prerequisite in order to avoid failures in institution- and peacebuilding processes from the onset. Such an understanding would require structures that allow for genuine local participation in peacebuilding missions.¹⁸³ At the same time, it is important to be aware of the fluidities of culture, its dynamic nature and its tendency to not necessarily conform to normative concepts such as *state*, *city*, or *community*. This is due to its multidimensional character as well as to its relation to identity, instrumentality, emotion and so forth.

Conclusion

This chapter has claimed that a professionalised version of civil society has been considered a central actor in the public sphere. It has outlined the degree to which the idea of *civility* has been woven into Western thinking about civil society and how this

¹⁸⁰ Cf. Arjun Appadurai, op. cit., p.306.

¹⁸¹ Jevgenia Viktorova, "The Promise of Ethnography. Capturing the 'local' in violent conflict and peacebuilding", *CPCS working paper*, University of St Andrews, 2008, p.13, <http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/intrel/media/The%20Promise%20of%20Ethnography.pdf> (accessed 02/06/11).

¹⁸² Timur Kuran op. cit., p.120.

¹⁸³ Jarat Chopra and Tanja Hohe, "Participatory Intervention", *Global Governance*, vol.10, no.3, 2004, pp.289-305, p.298.

has been taken up by the liberal peacebuilding framework in its attempts to transform societies in a particular way. In that sense, a public sphere has been created that favours a romanticised version of civil society as its main agent, assuming that peacebuilding actors can use the support of civil society actors to implement their agendas of transformation.

Civil society has equally served as a gateway for instilling certain values into local societies, which are often considered as homogenous units that can be transformed and/or co-opted by the peacebuilding framework. Societies are thus believed to be able and willing to become Western, often individualistic, civil societies. At the same time, local culture is taken into account rhetorically at best, while the “local” is often viewed as backward and in need of social and cultural change. There seems to be a focus on exporting Western values into conflict zones, with NGOs being given preference over more diverse forms of social organisation. This, in turn, leads to a conflation of the concept of *civil society* with *society* more generally, implying that civil society is an actor that can be clearly delineated from other spheres of government and, thus, encouraging the development of specific tools of engagement with civil society as a gateway to the “local.” Yet, despite a growing awareness that civil society is not in all cases legitimate nor representative of the society in question, only a small amount of literature has been written about alternative forms of social organisation. This partly relates to the fact that civil society represents an organised and accessible domain for academics to research, as well as for policy-makers to work with, while more fragmented, *ad hoc* collectivities are hard to research due to their lack of visibility in the public sphere. Their ways of organising and internal logics often differ considerably from those that Western civil society is familiar with, so their voices often remain unheard – both in academia and in the world of policy. This can be attributed to a tendency to look at what is visible and organised at the expense of what is subtle and fragmented. *Culture*, both in the sense of *everyday culture* and *high culture*, can be considered such a marker of subtle, fragmented existence that is hard to research, while it still represents a crucial factor in the ways in which people view peacebuilding as well as how it can be implemented locally. Against this background, it becomes clear that the concept of *agency* in peacebuilding has often been simplified and reduced to one-dimensional notions of civil society. Civil society has then been believed to reinforce

peacebuilding frameworks and structures, based on the assumption of a professionalised and normalising cultural background, while the nuances of power and agency have been neglected. In addition, *agency* seems to have been isolated from its structural environment in that it has been assumed that agency emerges from a white canvas rather than from situational interaction with other actors. This is related to an implicit assumption that identities are stable and coherent across subject fields, referring to who a certain actor is in relation to the *self*, rather than to its interactive dynamics with its environment. This is why we need to investigate more clearly how agency comes into being, how it plays out in the peacebuilding context- even beyond what is visible and what it means for the form of peace that is being created. This, in turn, requires a deeper look into the *processes* during the course of which different actors, and here I mean actors within and outside the civil society framework, subtly influence peacebuilding operations through its different subfields.

Chapter 3: A (Hi)story of the International Community in Bosnia-Herzegovina

To give an overview of the context in which this thesis situates its approach, the following section will focus on the involvement of the international community in BiH throughout recent history. For this purpose, it will first look at international actors engaged in the country before the war in 1992-5. Second, it will explore their strategies of intervention during the war. Third, it will investigate the post-war peacebuilding activities of the international community as they have developed in response to its engagement in the Western Balkans.

While the first part focuses on international actors other than the European Community (EC, later EU), the second part highlights the central role of the EC/EU in Bosnian history to investigate how the EU's approach to peacebuilding has developed in cooperation and competition with other actors in the field as well as converging with, or diverging from, the work of other actors within the international community. Following an analysis of concrete EC/EU involvement in the Western Balkans in its historical context, the EU's normative principles and its specific approach to dealing with local (civil) society will be explored. A brief assessment of EU peacebuilding will conclude the chapter. This will shed light on the processes through which the EU has been developing its priorities and values in its engagement in BiH as well as focusing on civil society as an agent that the EU has considered key to engaging in the public sphere.

The International Community in Bosnia (non-EC/EU)

Pre-War Engagement

BiH has a long history of international involvement and cannot be seen in isolation from either its neighbours nor from various great powers on a global level.¹⁸⁴ Bosnian culture

¹⁸⁴ For a general history of Bosnia, see Noel Malcolm, *Bosnia: A Short History*, London: Pan, 2002 and Misha Glenny, *The Fall of Yugoslavia: The Third Balkan War*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1996. For a more detailed cultural analysis, see Ivan Lovrenović, *Bosnia: A Cultural History*, New York, New York University Press, 2001.

and society have therefore always been hybrids of Eastern and Western influences, shaped by the rule of different empires (Ottoman, Habsburg) and the associated flows of migrants.¹⁸⁵ Sahović points to the different elements that those influences brought to the country, suggesting that Turkish rule was mainly shaped by a tendency of withdrawal from public life and repression, although this became more relaxed in the later stages of Ottoman rule.¹⁸⁶ In contrast, the Habsburg Empire was characterised by its ambitions to modernise and ‘civilise’, while struggles emerged with respect to national identity and the predominant ethnic nationalism.¹⁸⁷ Sahović concludes that this concoction – viewed in relation to industrialisation processes in the 20th century that pushed society towards a pattern of individualist social solidarity, and to the complex ruptures in Bosnian history – led to a high degree of fatalism in society.¹⁸⁸ Both World War I and II count as such ruptures in terms of creating a climate of insecurity and a fear of external influence among the population. Indeed, after the Serbs and Croats had been competing for control over the country during the First World War, the First Yugoslav State was established, which was marked by a strong dependence on, and pressure from, Moscow.¹⁸⁹ Again, World War II unwillingly involved Bosnia in the affairs of the greater regional powers, with the country being annexed by the Croat fascist Independent State of Croatia and the population suffering from atrocities committed by the *ustasha*. At the same time, European countries exerted political pressure on Yugoslavia when Germany and Italy invaded in 1941.

The fact that the country was tired of foreign dominance and governance became evident when, after the emergence of Socialist Yugoslavia, Tito broke with Russia in 1948 to develop his own distinct model of socialism. In the context of the Cold War,

¹⁸⁵ Lovrenović reflects on the constant influx of different powers and cultures on Bosnia (the Ottomans, Habsburgs, Spanish Jews, Slavs) looking at various spheres of life, such as literature, arts, intellectual and philosophical strands of thinking etc. Due to the variety of influences, the author describes Bosnian culture as a traditionally tolerant way of life: “To be Bosnian was to have a feeling for otherness.” See Ivan Lovrenović, op. cit., p.209. Kostić tends to put emphasis on internal and external factors that have been a burden on the unity of Bosnia and the social consequences of this. See Roland Kostić, *Ambivalent Peace. External Peacebuilding, Threatened Identity and Reconciliation in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, Report/ Department of Peace and Conflict Research 78, Uppsala: 2007. Cviic points to the insecurity created by the presence of various empires in the Balkans. See Christopher Cviic, *Remaking the Balkans*, London: Pinter, Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1995.

¹⁸⁶ Dženan Sahović, *Socio-Cultural Viability of International Intervention in War-Torn Societies. A Case Study of Bosnia Herzegovina*, Coronet Books Inc, 2008, p.133.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., p.133.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., p.133.

¹⁸⁹ Christopher Cviic, op. cit., p.10.

this meant the expulsion from the Soviet Bloc, whereas Western powers started considering Yugoslavia as a potential ally to be instrumentalised for their goals. This represented the beginning of the provision of military and economic aid from the West, and established a link to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) through the Balkan Pact with Greece, Turkey and Yugoslavia in 1953.¹⁹⁰

Although, before and after the war, Yugoslavia was still an agrarian society, based on egalitarian village communities and working classes submissive to state power, the 1960s were shaped by market-oriented reforms and integration into the international division of labour.¹⁹¹ It was thus part of global and regional economies and developed its role in a bigger context. The World Bank started to get involved in the region, which was deemed as strategically important in the balance of power game, so the first World Bank loans were given out in 1951.¹⁹² Generally, during his rule and particularly in the 1970s, Tito received a lot of support from Western states, which kept the system going. At the same time, this strategy, appreciated by some, accused of its repressive features by others, served to uphold the Western alliance. It was in 1981 that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) became deeply involved in Yugoslav politics, approving the biggest IMF loan ever in order to tie the country more closely to the Western financial system as well as attaching conditions relating to the creation of market socialism and facilitating import liberalisations.¹⁹³ Not only did those reforms lead to the fragmentation of the country's economic and political structures in terms of countering the egalitarian features inherent in the centrally organised economic system, but the constitution passed in 1974 had already reinforced centrifugal tendencies by arranging for economic modernisation and political decentralisation. Combined with the reforms imposed by the International Financial Institutions (IFIs), this led to a deep transformation of societal structures. It was particularly in the 1980s that Yugoslavia had to face huge obligations to Western donors, with the IMF calling for radical fiscal

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., p.28.

¹⁹¹ Carl-Ulrik Schierup, "Memorandum for Modernity? Socialist Modernisers, Retraditionalisation and the Rise of Ethnic Nationalism", in Carl-Ulrik Schierup (ed.), *Scramble for the Balkans: Nationalism, Globalism and the Political Economy of Reconstruction*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999, pp.32-61, pp.37, 38.

¹⁹²

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTABOUTUS/EXTARCHIVES/0,,contentMDK:20120924~pagePK:36726~piPK:36092~theSitePK:29506.00.html> (accessed 23/07/09).

¹⁹³ Christopher Cviic, op. cit., p.53. For a more detailed analysis of the International Financial Institutions in former Yugoslavia, see David A. Dyker, *Yugoslavia: Socialism, Development and Debt*, London: Routledge, 1990.

measures, while Western countries exerted pressure for further liberalisation and decentralisation. This resulted in a growing gap between richer and poorer regions and therefore undermined the development or maintenance of a common Yugoslav identity.¹⁹⁴ According to Likić-Brborić, this led to the macroeconomic transformation crisis in 1991/2, a period of privatisation with high restructuring costs and unemployment,¹⁹⁵ which can, amongst others, be viewed as one factor for the accumulation of social grievances and finally the outbreak of fighting in Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The International Community During the War

When the war spilled over from Slovenia and Croatia to BiH in 1992, the international community lacked a coherent position. Glenny points to the extent to which the conflicting parties played the various actors of the international community off against each other, claiming that the high extent of violence in the conflict was due to the incoherent position of various European states which were not able to find a common position.¹⁹⁶

Generally, the role of the international community during the war can be seen as a rather ambivalent one, shaped by two opposing tendencies. On the one hand, Cox argues that the “dissolution of Yugoslavia posed the first substantial threat to European public order in the post-Cold War era,” with European states – particularly those struggling with centrifugal tendencies and a heterogeneous social structure themselves – being afraid of the spill-over effects associated with ethnic separatism throughout the Balkans and the possibility of the creation of an Islamic state within Europe.¹⁹⁷ On the other hand, the West’s geo-strategic interest in the Balkans had decreased after the end of the Cold War,¹⁹⁸ while “the complexity and localised nature of the conflict was a

¹⁹⁴ Thanos Veremis, “The Balkans in transition and the great powers”, *Eur View*, vol.7, 2008, pp.121-128, p.123.

¹⁹⁵ Branka Likić-Brborić, “Globalisation, Governance and the Political Economy of Transition”, in Carl-Ulrik Schierup (ed.), *Scramble for the Balkans: Nationalism, Globalism and the Political Economy of Reconstruction*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999, pp.171-200, pp.189ff.

¹⁹⁶ cf. Misha Glenny, op. cit.

¹⁹⁷ Marcus Cox, “Strategic Approaches to International Intervention in Bosnia and Herzegovina”, CASIN publication, Sarajevo, 1998, p.6.

¹⁹⁸ Christopher Cviic, op. cit., p.90.

major disincentive for close international engagement.”¹⁹⁹ As a result, the interest of the international community in the conflict was rather weak at the outbreak of the war, but gradually increased when its proportions could no longer be easily assessed and represented a potential danger to the stability of the wider region. This was accompanied by increasing public pressure, particularly when the media started to report the humanitarian consequences of the conflict. Various strategies for possible international involvement were developed over the duration of the conflict with the EU assuming a central role that will be explored in detail below.

It was mainly the United Nations (UN) that were criticised for the failure to put an ending to open violence. Apart from the fact that its peacekeeping force, the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), hardly managed to control Sarajevo airport, and was a rather weak and powerless body, UN sanctions imposed on the conflicting parties turned out to be inefficient, failing to have a substantial impact on the war and even strengthening Milosević’s position, while weakening the Serbian opposition.²⁰⁰ Equally, NATO air presence did not prevent major incidents of violence, such as the massacre of Srebrenica in 1995, which Malcolm refers to as the blackest moment of UN involvement in Bosnia and a humanitarian disaster.²⁰¹ Generally, international engagement was hampered by tensions between the different external parties, with major disagreements emerging between the UN and European countries,²⁰² as well as among European countries themselves. In this context, Glenny accuses the German government of showing sympathy for Croatia and Slovenia in terms of selectively recognising or encouraging parties’ actions, which in turn raises issues of moral responsibility.²⁰³

Several attempts to find ceasefire agreements were made, but they were broken as that they did not manage to respond to the demands of all parties involved. US President Carter, for instance, had brokered an agreement in 1995, but this was breached by the Serbs’ bombardment of Sarajevo so that the UN granted NATO permission to launch an air strike in response. This reflects the extent to which the West tended to treat the symptoms of the war rather than deal with its causes – treating the

¹⁹⁹ Marcus Cox, *op. cit.*, p.6.

²⁰⁰ Misha Glenny, *op. cit.*, p.211.

²⁰¹ Noel Malcolm, *op. cit.*, p.264.

²⁰² Marcus Cox, *op. cit.*, p.6.

²⁰³ Misha Glenny, *op. cit.*, pp.112, 188.

conflict as a military rather than a political issue.²⁰⁴ It was only due to a high degree of pressure from the United States (U.S.) that a final ceasefire was achieved in 1995, resulting in the signing of the DPA, becoming the foundation upon which the subsequent peace process was based.

International Approaches to Peacebuilding

Although the Dayton Peace Agreement was only achieved under pressure from the West, and mainly the U.S., it was the first agreement signed by the leaders of all conflicting parties and was successful in bringing about an end to direct violence and fighting. The agreement equally served as the constitution for the new Bosnian state and determined the political structure of the latter by dividing Bosnia into two entities, namely the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (subdivided into ten cantons) and the Republika Srpska, as well as the self-governing Brčko District. Not only did this create some degree of institutional confusion due to the necessity of different constitutional arrangements for each entity and the federal state, but it also decentralised and weakened the latter considerably, given that this seemed to be the only way to get the conflicting parties to agree. In addition, due to their political arrangements that made representation a question of ethnicity, the Dayton Peace Accords institutionalised ethnic divisions. Meanwhile, the very roots of the conflict, such as the fears of the ‘other’ ethnicity – fuelled by politicians – coupled with a climate of economic and political insecurity, remained unresolved.²⁰⁵ At the same time, Dayton served as a tool for peacebuilding actors to implement various elements of the liberal peace, such as the free market, the rule of law and democracy, which the international community took responsibility of.²⁰⁶ The latter, represented by the Peace Implementation Council (PIC) and comprising 55 countries, assigned the main responsibility to the Office of the High Representative (OHR) as the principal agency supervising the implementation of Dayton, as well as to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)

²⁰⁴ Noel Malcolm, op. cit., p.242.

²⁰⁵ Oliver P. Richmond and Jason Franks, “Between Partition and Pluralism: The Bosnian Jigsaw and an ‘Ambivalent Peace’”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, vol. 9, no.1, 2009, pp. 17 – 38.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

as the main supervisor of the democratisation agenda. This complemented the role of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), established in 1993 and tied in with the work of other international actors, such as the Implementation Force (IFOR) as the main peacekeeping agency, the EU, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UNDP, the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and others. As the basis of the ensuing state-building agenda, those international agencies took over sovereignty functions to govern Bosnia in a trusteeship-style way²⁰⁷ with various parallel systems of governance.²⁰⁸

The peace agreement did not only consolidate international involvement in the country, but equally became the basis for the integration of non-state actors in service provision. Bartlett argues that the initial approach of international organisations after the war was the idea of a “welfare mix” as a form of public and private service provision in parallel, whereby many tasks were outsourced to NGOs, which partly led to inequalities in resource distribution across the country.²⁰⁹ The elections supervised by the OSCE in 1996 turned out to be equally problematic. Failing to empower the moderates as hoped, it strengthened nationalist parties and thus reflected the insecurity felt by people in the war-torn country.²¹⁰ This is mainly due to the fact that since the signing of the DPA, ethnicity had become the main criterion of representation on all levels²¹¹ and was an easily instrumentalisable tool for politicians to gain power by stoking fears among the population and evoking wartime memories.

There emerged a realisation that, despite the presence of international actors, the peacebuilding project seemed to be derailing and not going according to the ideas that the peacebuilding actors had originally had in mind. This was often a result of cooption of the peacebuilding project by local political leaders, so the international community started to change its overall strategy. The OHR, which had until 1997 mainly focused on the implementation of the DPA framework, subsequently started to engage in nation-

²⁰⁷ Richard Caplan, “International Authority and State Building: The Case of Bosnia and Herzegovina”, *Global Governance*, vol.10, no.1, 2004, pp.53-65, p.54.

²⁰⁸ Kimberley Coles, “Ambivalent Builders: Europeanization, the Production of Difference, and Internationals in Bosnia-Herzegovina”, in Bougarel X., G. Duijzings and E. Helms (eds.), *The New Bosnian Mosaic. Identities, Memories and Moral Claims*, Aldershot, Burlington: Ashgate 2007, pp.255-272, p.267.

²⁰⁹ William Bartlett, *Europe's Troubled Region: economic development, institutional reform and social welfare in the Western Balkans*, London: Routledge, 2008, p.164.

²¹⁰ Elizabeth M. Cousens and Charles K. Cater, *Toward Peace in Bosnia: Implementing the Dayton Accords*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2001, pp.112 ff.

²¹¹ Marcus Cox, op. cit., p.9.

building efforts with an increasing number of interventions into local politics.²¹² This was made possible through the so-called Bonn Powers, which to this day allow the OHR to veto legislation and to remove politicians from office should they appear to be obstructing the overarching Dayton peace project.²¹³ The increased power of the High Representative has, however, been received with mixed feelings on the ground, particularly under Paddy Ashdown, who used the Bonn Powers frequently to dismiss a high number of local politicians. A particularly problematic incident took place in 2000 when the OHR rewrote legislation in Republika Srpska to reduce unemployment benefits, which, in turn, reflects the market-oriented philosophy of the institution.²¹⁴ It equally mirrors the extent to which the free market, as opposed to the socialist system, is viewed as a place for reconciliation within the neo-liberal project.²¹⁵ In this context, the IFIs have increasingly been pushing for market liberalisation and the privatisation of formerly state-owned enterprises.

In contrast to that, the OSCE has adopted a less economically-oriented approach, concentrating on the pillars of democratisation, education, human rights and security cooperation.²¹⁶ The organisation has been trying to shift their strategy towards grassroots approaches, particularly with their electoral programme designed to support those opposition parties it sees as most promising, while identifying “potential transitional parties which could contribute to creating enough of an opening in the political environment for more grass-roots alternatives to emerge.”²¹⁷ A number of organisations and donors, such as the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) or the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), have pursued minority return programmes to push reconciliation on a local level. However, most of those programmes failed due to the high degree of physical and economic insecurity experienced by minorities in areas where they no longer feel

²¹² Roland Kostić, “Nationbuilding as an Instrument of Peace? Exploring Local Attitudes towards International Nationbuilding and Reconciliation in Bosnia and Herzegovina”, *Civil Wars*, vol. 10, no.4, 2008, pp. 384-412, p.387.

²¹³ On the characteristics and ways of governing of the different High Representatives, see Dženan Sahović, op. cit.

²¹⁴ Richard Caplan, op. cit., p.61.

²¹⁵ Larisa Jašarević, “Everyday Work: Subsistence Economy, Social Belonging and Moralities of Exchange at a Bosnian (Black) Market”, in X. Bougarel, G. Duijzings G. and E. Helms. (eds.), *The New Bosnian Mosaic. Identities, Memories and Moral Claims*, Aldershot, Burlington: Ashgate 2007, pp.273-293, p.284

²¹⁶ See http://www.oscebih.org/oscebih_eng.asp (accessed 24/07/09).

²¹⁷ Marcus Cox, op. cit., p.24.

welcome.²¹⁸ Even in areas in which refugee return was high, this did not always represent sustainable reconciliation in the long run, since people often only returned to sell their houses and then moved on to an area where they would not be a minority. Belloni, however, refers to Prijedor as one of the more successful examples of refugee return as a result of moderate local forces and the facilitation of the process by international activism.²¹⁹

There are still many other issues that trouble Bosnian society and that have not been resolved by the international community despite their rather high ambitions.²²⁰ Unemployment remains high, although there are no clear figures available due to difficulties relating to the quantification of the size of the grey and black markets. Even though the World Bank and other agencies have addressed this, job creation is limited and poverty remains a big issue in BiH, and particularly in RS, mainly due to the lack of a social welfare system that is accessible to all.²²¹ Schools are still ethnically divided so that contact between different ethnic groups is impeded from an early stage. Moreover, issues often instrumentalised by politicians to mobilise public support are related to unresolved problems with respect to property rights and social mobility within BiH. Finally, the fact that public trust in political institutions and actors is very low and organised crime remains a big problem, contributes to a climate of fear and human insecurity. Thus, public discourses about a possible resurgence of violence have been intensifying, it seems, in the last few years. Not only among the population, but also within the international community, there seems to be a growing fear of renewed violence as a result of the failure of peacebuilding policies. The latter have, according to Belloni, had an emphasis on stability and the preservation of the *status quo*, and have thus not managed to respond to the challenges in social, economic and political spheres.²²²

²¹⁸ Ibid., p.29.

²¹⁹ Roberto Belloni, "Peacebuilding at the Local Level: Refugee Return to Prijedor", in David Chandler (ed.), *Peace without politics? Ten years of international state-building in Bosnia*, London; New York: Routledge, 2006, pp.128-141.

²²⁰ For the following issues, see, for instance, United Nations Development Program, "National Human Development Report 2007, Social Inclusion in Bosnia and Herzegovina", Sarajevo, 2007.

²²¹ Cf. Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, "Assessing the Realization of the Right to Social Assistance in Bosnia and Herzegovina", December 2005.

²²² Roberto Belloni, *State Building and International Intervention in Bosnia*, London; New York: Routledge, 2007, p.5.

This is not to argue that the international community (certainly only to the extent that one can speak of a *community* with its partially competing approaches) is not aware of those problems. Indeed, many reports and institutional documentation show awareness of them, but they tend to shy away from the difficulties associated with tackling those rather socially sensitive problems. As a result, one can observe a tendency to subcontract those tasks to NGOs, which have created a new political space in the country – a competitive, market-like sphere – where organisations compete for international funding. Organisational forms active in BiH range from *ad hoc* social movements to internationally-directed NGOs, with the latter having much better access to resources due to their privileged access to funding and closeness to the policy agendas of various international actors. Indeed, numerous NGOs have become instruments for the implementation of donors' agendas and can thus not be considered in isolation of financially strong donors outside BiH, the IFIs, the UN, EU, Western foundations, and regional actors. On the other hand, the degree to which those NGOs are (not) free to deviate from the policies of their donors varies depending on a number of factors, such as the conditions imposed by the respective donor, the standing of the NGO itself, its strategies of circumventing donor requirements in subtle ways, the general peacebuilding environment and so forth.

Against the background of the involvement of the international community in post-war Bosnia-Herzegovina, the following paragraph will outline the EU's approach to peacebuilding, which has come to take on considerable relevance for politics and society in the country. It has been suggested that, despite its potential to develop its own distinct approach to peacebuilding, the EU has tended to replicate what is referred to as the (neo-) liberal peace and, despite a more ambitious goals, it has often reproduced the failures of the international community more generally.²²³

²²³ Oliver Richmond, Annika Björkdahl and Stefanie Kappler, "The Emerging EU Peacebuilding Framework: Confirming or Transcending Liberal Peacebuilding?," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, forthcoming.

EC/EU Engagement in BiH

The European Community in Pre-War Yugoslavia

It was not only during and after the war that the European Community (EC) started to engage in the Western Balkans. Due to geo-strategic concerns about negative spillovers from geographically close countries, European states had already become involved in Yugoslav politics in the mid-70s. Cviic points to the considerable financial clout of the EU in the region as a result of the “relationship with communist-ruled Eastern Europe ever since its recognition by the Soviet Union.”²²⁴ The relationship between the EC and Yugoslavia got even closer when Tito’s regime was granted Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) concessions to move towards market liberalising reforms.²²⁵

A further step towards cooperation with the former Yugoslav countries was the creation of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). Although the bank is not an institution within the EC/EU framework, its goals were closely related to the EC’s interests in the region, namely the restructuring of Eastern Europe and its integration into Western European financial structures. The bank introduced the idea of conditional lending to BiH, but was still much more relaxed in the application of conditionalities than the EU’s follow-on projects such as *Pologne Hongarie Assistance à la Reconstruction des Economies* (PHARE) – a regional programme mainly focused on development assistance – or *Community Assistance to Reconstruction, Development and Stabilisation* (CARDS), which put emphasis on political reconstruction and reform. However, issues that were later on taken up by the EU in BiH had been addressed by the EBRD already, such as multiparty democracy, pluralism, and market economics.²²⁶ This was complemented by the approach of the Council of Europe Development Bank (CEDB) through the provision of long-term loans for social projects related to issues of refugees, displaced persons, social housing, job creation as well as environmental and educational projects.²²⁷ Such programmes were also, even though rather indirectly, believed to have a conflict-preventing dimension in terms of addressing social issues and linking them to financial incentive systems. However, they largely failed to connect

²²⁴ Christopher Cviic, op. cit., p.107.

²²⁵ Ibid., p.110.

²²⁶ Cf. William Bartlett, op. cit., p.174.

²²⁷ Ibid., p.174.

to a society shaped by its distinct socialist past and complex political structures, reflecting the degree to which EU engagement in the Western Balkans has always been driven – to a greater or lesser extent – by concerns centring on the goals of the EU itself, such as stability and security. At the same time, the focus on the EC’s own interests created a certain distance to the society in which those policy programmes were implemented, so Schierup claims that EC assistance and the associated conditionalities even represented a factor leading to conflict in terms of creating ”abnormality” by exacerbating poverty and violence through structural adjustment programmes.²²⁸ This has to be seen in connection with the approaches of other international actors, and most notably the IFIs, which were pushing for reforms of the market system. In the light of the EU’s attempts to democratise the Western Balkans in general, Schierup further argues that “if elections are held in conditions of ‘abnormality’, they are likely to reproduce and legitimise current authoritarian power structures,” while the introduction of free markets can worsen poverty and unemployment, thus reinforcing conflict lines in society.²²⁹ The breakout of the war can, thus, not be viewed in isolation from the policies of transformation in the region, which the EU has been pursuing in competition and cooperation with other actors in the field.

The EU During the War

In contrast to the attitude of the international community in general, the EC had made clear from the outbreak of the war in Slovenia that it was going to adopt a high-profile role with the ambition to even outplay the UN and other regional actors.²³⁰ This resulted in the Brioni Accords, mainly negotiated by EC diplomats and initiating a ceasefire, which, however, did not mark an end to the conflict in the region. Similarly, despite its

²²⁸ Carl-Ulrik Schierup, “The Spectre of Balkanism: Globalisation, Fragmentation, and the Enigma of Reconstruction in Post-Communist Society”, in Carl-Ulrik Schierup (ed.), *Scramble for the Balkans: Nationalism, Globalism and the Political Economy of Reconstruction*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999, pp.1-31, p.18.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.18. Regarding potentially negative effects of democratization and its relatedness to conflict, see also Roland Paris, *At War’s End: Building Peace after Civil Conflict*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004 and Jack Snyder, *From Voting to Violence: Democratization and Nationalist Conflict*, New York: W.W. Norton, 2000.

²³⁰ Ana E. Juncos, “The EU’s post-Conflict Intervention in Bosnia and Herzegovina: (re)Integrating the Balkans and/or (re)Inventing the EU?”, *Southeast European Politics*, vol.6, no.2, 2005, pp.88-108, pp.4, 5.

ambitions, the EC's involvement in the Bosnian war cannot be considered a purely beneficial one, particularly against the background that the war persisted for three years without the EC being able to bring about a solution or at least a ceasefire to stop the fighting and violence.

The main problem, as it is often argued, was the EU's lack of a coherent position. Some accuse the EU of exacerbating the repercussions of the conflict by selectively supporting actors and failing to develop a clear strategy of ending the war. This is linked to the criticism that in 1992, the EC started becoming part of the conflict by recognising the independence of Slovenia and Croatia, which became a major issue in the succeeding fighting. When the war reached BiH, culminating in the siege of Sarajevo in 1992, the EC called for a referendum for self-determination as an attempt to bring more clarity into the rather troublesome political situation in the Western Balkans. Not only did this referendum fail to calm the situation – instead it increased social polarity – but even the Vance-Owen Plan, which envisaged a decentralised Bosnian state based on strong provinces, did not find consensus on the ground, being rejected by the Bosnian Serbs. The Bosniaks rejected a later approach, the Owen-Stoltenberg proposal, which envisaged a union of the three ethno-national republics, because they perceived it as too generous to the Bosnian Serbs. So, the proposal, too, failed to win broad support among the population. These approaches, albeit well intended, mirror the lack of communication between the EC, or the international community in general, and local conflicting parties in the very early stages of peacemaking. Therefore, the failure of those proposals can be traced back to the fact that they did not respond to the needs and positions of all parties involved, while the suggested settlements tended to be based on an institutional approach similar to the ways in which the EC experienced and created its own history. The Bosnian war, however, made it clear that such solutions did not necessarily work in a different context.

EU Post-Conflict Involvement in Bosnia

It took several years until the war could be ended through the signing of the DPA, establishing the basis for post-conflict international intervention in BiH and vaguely defining the role of the EU in the bigger peacebuilding project. Not only did it establish

the constitutional framework for the Bosnian state, but it also established corresponding institutions, such as the OHR and the European Union Special Representative (EUSR).

Direct EC involvement after Dayton started in 1996 with the provision of non-humanitarian assistance through the PHARE programme and the EU support programme for the rebuilding of Bosnia, Croatia and FYROM (Macedonia) (OBNOVA) providing for trade preferences with the EU. Both programmes aimed at the provision of emergency aid and represented an important step towards the construction of a liberal state through various measures of institution-building. It was in 1997 that the EU's regional approach to peacebuilding concretely established political and economic conditionality with the aim of infrastructure reconstruction and institution-building, in cooperation with other international actors engaged in BiH.

From then on, the EU increasingly put emphasis on reconstructing the Bosnian state with the aim of eventually making it compatible with EU standards. Institution-building, economic reform, social cohesion and development became the cornerstones of the EU's involvement in the Western Balkans between 1998 and 2000.²³¹ The connectedness of the EU's peacebuilding efforts to the harmonisation with the *acquis* and eventual accession became evident in the EU's subsequent proposal of initiating a Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP) for South-Eastern Europe in 1999, which was officially endorsed a year later. This represented the period in which the EU mainly engaged with the political elites of the country, since they were assumed to be the central actors in the fields of engagement outlined above, a tendency that is, to a large extent, still prevailing today. At the same time, the EU tried to make sure not to lose control over the state-building process. When CARDS was launched in 2001 to promote political reconstruction and reform, a huge political space was opened for further conditions to be defined by the EU. Those conditions were mostly general, and hence open to interpretation, in order to give the European Commission²³² the possibility to adjust according to context over time and space. However, some policy areas remained free from conditionalities, such as financial assistance programmes, civil society, education, and significant parts of institution-building that were supposed to be treated

²³¹ European Commission, "Bosnia and Herzegovina Country Strategy Paper 2002-2006", http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/financial_assistance/cards/publications/bosnia_country_strategy_en.pdf (accessed 03/06/11).

²³² From here onwards also referred to as the "Commission".

with greater flexibility.²³³ In that respect, the CARDS approach represented a tool for the Commission to experiment with different ways of bringing BiH towards the *acquis*.

In addition to its incentive systems, the EU has embarked on local trusteeship projects taking over governance functions on the local and communal level; for instance, appointing a European Union Administrator in Mostar. This project turned out to be a failure in that it managed neither to establish a joint city administration nor to establish an adequate refugee return mechanism to counter the ethnic division of the city.²³⁴ Again, this reflects a lack of communication with the Bosnian people who had rather high expectations to EU policies, yet came to be disappointed by the EU's failure to bring about visible results.

Generally, all these approaches can be seen in relation to the physical proximity of the Western Balkans to the EU's borders, which means that, for the EU, the Balkans are "as much a domestic as a foreign policy issue."²³⁵ This also explains the increasing degree of EU involvement, partly to secure the security *within* the EU by stabilising its peripheries and border regions. Indeed, the 2003 Security Strategy of the Council of the European Union represents an attempt to create a stable and secure neighbourhood.²³⁶ This is particularly evident in the following statement of the Council of the European Union: "Restoring good government to the Balkans, fostering democracy and enabling the authorities there to tackle organised crime is one of the most effective ways of dealing with organised crime within the EU."²³⁷ Again, it becomes obvious how much EU peacebuilding goes back to the EU's own goals rather than to concerns for Bosnian society.

To deepen the EU's involvement in the Western Balkans, the Thessaloniki Summit (2003) confirmed the SAP as an official policy for the Western Balkans. The EU emphasised the strategic importance of the region moving closer to the EU and its standards with respect to democracy, institutional capacities, the rule of law and economic development, all of which were considered as necessary preconditions for the

²³³ William Bartlett, op. cit., p.201.

²³⁴ Marcus Cox, op. cit., p.19.

²³⁵ Elizabeth Pond, *Endgame in the Balkans: regime change, European style*, Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2006, p.2.

²³⁶ Council of the European Union, *A Secure Europe in a Better World - European Security Strategy*, Brussels, 12 December 2003, <http://ue.eu.int/uedocs/cmsUpload/78367.pdf>. (accessed 21/07/09).

²³⁷ Council of the European Union (2003, p.6).

creation of a stable neighbourhood.²³⁸ The Thessaloniki Summit was followed by the Commission's Feasibility Study to define 16 priority areas in need of improvement, with the Commission concluding that negotiations should start once BiH would have made progress on those priority areas.²³⁹ The main conditions underlined in this study relate to the compliance with the standards set by the international community in Bosnia (e.g. the ICTY, Council of Europe), the building of effective state institutions, the fight against organised crime, the creation of a single economic space as well as media reform.²⁴⁰ This is in line with the most common prescriptions of the (neo-)liberal peace that aim to build an effective state supported by a free market, but at the same time shows little consideration for the challenges that non-EU countries might face. In BiH, this relates particularly to the socialist past of the region, combined with a rather decentralised political system, which changes considerably the ways in which peacebuilding policies translate into the context of implementation. Yet, deploying a variety of peace- and state-building tools to facilitate eventual accession, the Commission approved the first European Partnership for BiH in 2004.²⁴¹ This represents another soft-power tool by the EU to bring potential membership candidates in line with the *acquis* and is, in combination with the SAP, a powerful mechanism for the transformation of countries ambitious to become membership candidates, even though it is less binding than the application of conditionalities.

The fact that, despite following the general lines of the international community in BiH, the EU has developed an approach to peacebuilding that is somewhat different from the UN's and NATO's became evident with the replacement of the Stabilisation Force (SFOR) by the European Union Force (EUFOR) in 2004, which represented a move towards a broader security focus. This is related to the development of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) as the military component of EU engagement in its neighbourhood.²⁴² In contrast to SFOR, EUFOR was designed to respond to increased security challenges beyond hard-core state security, such as

²³⁸ cf.

http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/enlargement_process/accesion_process/how_does_a_country_join_the_eu/sap/thessaloniki_agenda_en.htm (accessed 18/06/09).

²³⁹ Cf. <http://www.delbih.ec.europa.eu/?akcija=clanak&CID=16&jezik=2&LID=31> (accessed 18/06/09).

²⁴⁰ Cf. European Commission, "Report from the Commission to the Council on the preparedness of BiH to negotiate an SAA with the European Union" ('BiH Feasibility Study'), COM (2003) 692, Brussels, 18 November 2003.

²⁴¹ See http://www.europa-eu-un.org/articles/en/article_3346_en.htm (accessed 19/06/09).

²⁴² Ana E. Juncos, op. cit., p.96.

weapons smuggling, religious extremism or war criminality.²⁴³ The EUFOR mission has also shown concern with “providing a safe and secure environment,”²⁴⁴ with a favourable security framework being considered as the precondition for the creation of sustainable peace. At the same time, this reflects a new division of labour between NATO and the EU, with the latter taking responsibility for police reform, border and internal security.²⁴⁵ It symbolised another step towards the opening of negotiations for a Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) on the road to EU membership, which was initialled in 2007.

The Instrument of Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA), signed in 2008, was then considered to be the final facilitator of BiH’s move towards becoming a candidate for EU membership. The IPA aims to give targeted assistance to the reform of specific sectors, mainly related to transition assistance and institution-building, as well as regional and cross-border cooperation.²⁴⁶ It can therefore be considered as a tool to be implemented by the EU in BiH to eventually help the country become a candidate for membership, adopting similar norms and standards as the current EU member states. For that purpose, the European Union has a strong presence in BiH. Apart from its security presence in the form of EUFOR, as outlined above, the European Union Police Mission (EUPM), launched in 2003, has played a dominant role in the attempt to reform of the ethnically divided police forces of the country. The integration into one single police force has, in turn, been made a cornerstone and condition for further accession negotiations in the framework of the SAA, while the EUPM was assigned the task of facilitating this process.²⁴⁷ More generally speaking, the Commission can be viewed as a key player, influencing police reform mainly through the SAP as a “framework for the delivery of assistance to and the imposition of conditionality,” with police reform being a major element of EU accession negotiations.²⁴⁸ Here, the EUPM reflects the EU’s rather “state-centric law-and-order approach” by using the police force as an engine for

²⁴³ International Crisis Group, “EUFOR: Changing Bosnia’s Security Arrangements”, Europe Briefing N°31, 2004, p.1, <http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=2833&l=1> (accessed 23/04/08).

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p.4.

²⁴⁵ Elizabeth Pond, *op. cit.*, p.247.

²⁴⁶ <http://www.europa.ba/?akcija=clanak&CID=23&jezik=2&LID=33> (accessed 19/06/09).

²⁴⁷ See International Crisis Group, “Bosnia’s stalled police reform: No progress, no EU”, Europe Report N° 164, 2005, <http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=3645&l=1> (accessed 21/07/09).

²⁴⁸ Michael Merlingen and Rasa Ostrauskaitė, *op. cit.*, p.74.

democratisation and the rule of law to move BiH further towards EU membership.²⁴⁹ The aim of creating a European-like state supported by a society of which ‘problematic’ elements have been removed, is equally evident in this approach, aspiring to remove any war-related relicts.

On a more abstract level, the mandate of the EUSR complements the push towards the *acquis* in terms of coordinating policy processes and institutional mechanisms on the ground to deter potential ‘spoilers’ of the peacebuilding process.²⁵⁰ In his double-hatted function that makes him the High Representative at the same time, the EUSR can exercise considerable power through his capacity to network and coordinate various institutions and actors involved in Bosnian politics, peacebuilding, and statebuilding. He is, therefore, in the position to shape the direction in which the country is going, mainly on an institutional level, but also on a societal, economic and political level. At the same time, the physical proximity of the EUSR and the OHR²⁵¹ explains why the approach of the EUSR differs considerably from the one of the Commission, but is much more comparable to the work of the High Representative.

The Underlying Normative Principles of EU Peacebuilding in Bosnia

When talking about *EU peacebuilding*, the question arises to what extent the EU can be considered to be a peacebuilding actor at all. The EU has a long and contested history of peace and peacebuilding, particularly in relation to its internal developments and processes.²⁵² In this context, peacebuilding refers to the comprehensive package of measures, often designed and implemented by international actors in post-conflict zones.²⁵³ Tocci has put emphasis on the EU’s policies in relation to conflict resolution and transformation through specific forms of engagement with civil society actors in

²⁴⁹ Michael Merlingen and Rasa Ostrauskaitė, “Power / Knowledge in International Peacebuilding: The Case of the EU Police Mission in Bosnia”, *Alternatives* vol.30, 2005, pp.297-323, pp.305 and 314f.

²⁵⁰ Stefano Recchia, “Beyond international trusteeship: EU peacebuilding in Bosnia and Herzegovina“, ISS Occasional Paper No.66, February 2007, p.25.

²⁵¹ The OHR and EUSR are currently situated in the same building, but the EU plans to move the EUSR into the Commission building later in 2011.

²⁵² Cf. Annika Björkdahl, Oliver Richmond, Stefanie Kappler, *The EU Peacebuilding Framework: Potentials and Pitfalls in the Western Balkans and the Middle East*, JaD-PbP Working Papers Series No. 3, June 2009.

²⁵³ Cf. Boutros-Ghali, op. cit.

(post-)conflict zones.²⁵⁴ This, however, remains vague and raises the question as to whether the EU as a peacebuilding actor is mainly a theoretical abstraction, with such discourses being established in academic circles, or whether peace can be seen as a central goal of the EU and its policies, specifically in its very neighbourhood. In this context, EU documents seem to give evidence for the latter, for instance when the Council of the European Union claims that:

[t]he European Union remained a leading contributor to peace and stability across the globe. Its wide array of instruments allowed it to effectively map the risks, the rising tensions and fragile situations, and apply adequate tools to respond to them.²⁵⁵

In addition, the Lisbon Treaty specifically emphasises the importance for the EU to engage in the field of peacebuilding in the context of its external relations to:

[...] preserve peace, prevent conflicts and strengthen international security, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, with the principles of the Helsinki Final Act and with the aims of the Charter of Paris, including those relating to external borders.²⁵⁶

On the other hand, an EU official has argued that the EU is not really engaged in peace and peacebuilding, the latter being considered a secondary goal, which can only be found between the lines of its approaches. In this context, the EU is viewed as capable of supporting and assisting with major challenges occurring specifically in post-conflict countries, rather than acting as a peacebuilding actor in the first place.²⁵⁷

Specifically in the Western Balkans, the question of whether the EU engages in peacebuilding, or rather member-state building in its own interest, or both, is highly relevant, given that its perception among the people influences how EU policies are communicated to the people and actors in the region. Is the EU presenting itself as a peace actor or as focused on enlargement and the implementation of its own conditionalities? This has to be seen against a background in which EU enlargement is not just a technical dimension of EU policy, but relates to the fears and hopes of the people in the region, particularly with respect to visa issues and economic expectations.

²⁵⁴ Nathalie Tocci, *The European Union, Conflict Transformation and Civil Society: A Conceptual Framework*, MICROCON Policy Working Paper 1, Brighton: MICROCON, 2008.

²⁵⁵ Council of the European Union, “Annual Report on EU activities in the framework of conflict prevention, including implementation of the EU Programme for the Prevention of Violent Conflicts”, Brussels, 2008, p.3.

²⁵⁶ The Treaty of Lisbon, 2007, Chapter 1, Article 10A., <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/JOHtml.do?uri=OJ:C:2007:306:SOM:EN:HTML> (accessed 03/06/11).

²⁵⁷ Vladimir Pandurević, Delegation of the EU to BiH., *Personal Interview*, Sarajevo, 22/03/10.

The Commission remains vague in addressing this issue, claiming that “[w]e are a family of democratic European countries committed to working together for peace and freedom, prosperity and social justice.”²⁵⁸ However, whether those values, including peace, are in the first place viewed as values to preserve for the current members of the EU by creating a ‘friendly’ neighbourhood, or whether these norms are also designed to meet the needs of the neighbours *per se*, remains unclear. The SAP claims to put peacebuilding first, with the Council of the European Union claiming that its main aim is to promote peace and reconciliation by using regional cooperation, the promotion of good neighbourly relations and good governance as the main incentives and engines to do so.²⁵⁹ In contrast, the Commission’s Progress Reports on the Western Balkans reflect a much lower concern with peacebuilding in favour of an emphasis on thematic issues ranging from human rights issues to economic liberalisation, border security to the fight against criminality and corruption.²⁶⁰ This, in turn, mirrors the Commission’s self-understanding as a technical body rather than a political one²⁶¹ whose concern is with implementing the *acquis* rather than politicising the nature of peace and peacebuilding. The fact that different EU bodies have different emphases on the importance of peacebuilding vis-à-vis other policies, such as the creation of a stable neighbourhood, reflects the problems associated with classifying the EU as a single, coherent actor. There are very clearly differences and conflicts between the approaches and ideas of the different institutional sub-bodies that are meant to be complementing each other. This, in turn, does not mean that there are no common ideas and threads running through policies of the European Union with regards to the Western Balkans. Specifically, when taking a bottom-up perspective, the EU is often perceived as one single actor. This perception is mainly shaped by the Commission’s communications, given that it represents the most visible actor in BiH. As a result, one can argue that, despite being composed of a number of diverse institutions, actors and ideas, on the ground the EU as is often referred to as a unitary actor – this is mainly due to the way it tends to present itself. In fact, most documents and policy reports, mainly published by, funded by or in

²⁵⁸ European Commission, *Understanding Enlargement. The European Union’s enlargement policy*, European Communities, 2007, p.5.

²⁵⁹ Council of the European Union, *op. cit.*, p.21.

²⁶⁰ Cf. European Commission, “EU Enlargement. Bosnia and Herzegovina 2009 Progress Report”, Brussels, 2009.

²⁶¹ Confidential source, *Personal Interview*, Sarajevo, 24/03/10.

cooperation with the Commission, refer to the European Union as a unitary actor with certain values and standards, which BiH is supposed to adopt. Against this background and despite its inherent plurality of visions, one can speak of some common features running through EU policies. The norms that shape the EU's attitude towards peacebuilding are continuously developed and can therefore never be clearly delineated. It has been argued that such values are emerging in a nascent EU Peacebuilding Framework (EUPF), which reassembles norms merging towards a normative development of an EU foreign policy.²⁶² The different EU agencies can then be seen as harmonising in their pursuit of becoming a force for good.²⁶³

As a result, the EU's post-conflict engagement in BiH has to be seen in the context of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), which was established with the Maastricht Treaty. Its main goals range from strengthening the security of the EU to international co-operation to the promotion of the EU's core values, such as democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.²⁶⁴ In this context, Bono points to the CFSP's nature as "a set of legal rules, institutional structures, and financial, human, and knowledge-based resources, influenced by competing norms and interests, that allow Member States to partly coordinate their foreign, security, and defence policies."²⁶⁵ The search for peace in the former Yugoslav states can be viewed as a first test of a still embryonic CFSP,²⁶⁶ with peacebuilding experiences in the region contributing to the further development of EU peacebuilding strategies in other neighbouring countries.

Against this background, the policy approaches outlined above mirror the extent to which the EU has developed its own normative version of peace and peacebuilding in the region. This is not only based on the post-war experience of its members, but also on an attempt to mimic the peacebuilding project of the UN and the IFIs that relies heavily on the idea of imposing specific forms of governance and institutions to govern and of adjusting those who deviate from this blueprint. On the one hand, this is reflected

²⁶² Annika Björkdahl et al., op. cit.

²⁶³ Esther Barbé and Elisabeth Johansson-Nogués, "The EU as a modest 'force for good': the European Neighbourhood Policy", *International Affairs*, vol.84, no.1, 2008, pp.81-96.

²⁶⁴ Treaty of the European Union, *Official Journal C 191*, 29 July 1992, http://europa.eu/eur-lex/en/treaties/dat/EU_treaty.html (accessed 21/07/09).

²⁶⁵ Giovanna Bono, "The Perils of Conceiving EU Foreign Policy as a »Civilizing« Force", *International Politics and Society*, no.1, 2006, pp. 150 – 163, p.150.

²⁶⁶ Ana E. Juncos, op. cit., p.88.

by the strong focus on institutions in terms of building-mechanisms that represent a concoction of what is understood as Western European ways of dealing with social conflict and negotiation. On the other hand, there is a strong reliance on the use of conditionalities when it comes to negotiations about membership-candidate status. In this context, the Commission puts specific emphasis on the promotion of the rule of law, democratic and stable institutions and the transformation of the formerly socialist economic system into a market economy. At the same time, the failure of some reforms and the need to adjust others to local particularities have been conducive to the use of rather flexible conditions, depending on the country's progress within the SAP.²⁶⁷ With this approach, the EU is trying to gradually manoeuvre BiH towards a specific political and economic structure by using the carrot of membership as its main incentive for people, particularly local elites, to cooperate with EU institutions and requirements. This very clearly mirrors the Commission's strategy to integrate Bosnia-Herzegovina "into the economic and political mainstream of Europe" with the help of the SAP.²⁶⁸ Again, the EU's ambitions to transform the countries of the Balkans in terms of making them suitable and secure candidates for EU membership is the central goal of the EU, which tends to measure its own power against its ability to do so.²⁶⁹

The liberal colouring of this approach is evident in such policies, implying that Europeanisation, i.e. the resolution of the conflict through European standards, values and institutions, necessarily means progress in terms of becoming liberal, or even neo-liberal.²⁷⁰ The EU hopes "that increasingly transparent economic liberalization will itself eventually remedy the early abuse, by opening up competition and squeezing out those entrepreneurs who have no managerial talents beyond extortion."²⁷¹ This approach, fusing liberal with neo-liberal policies, reflects the belief in the EU's ability to bring about reconciliation with its peacebuilding and statebuilding framework, which is closely related to the notion of the possibility of conflict resolution and of

²⁶⁷ European Commission, "Bosnia and Herzegovina Country Strategy Paper 2002-2006", op. cit., p.4.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

²⁶⁹ Cf. EPC Working Paper No.31, "The Balkans in Europe: containment or transformation? Twelve ideas for action", Task Force EU Integration & Citizenship Programme, June 2008. Rapporteur: Rosa Balfour, p.15.

²⁷⁰ For a more nuanced discussion on the topic of Europeanisation, see for instance Heinz-Jürgen Axt, "Cyprus: Conflict Resolution through Europeanization? Most Recent Experiences and Perspectives", *The Cyprus Review*, vol.21, no.2, 2009, pp.69-89. See also Alun Jones and Julian Clark, "Europeanisation and Discourse Building: The European Commission, European Narratives and European Neighbourhood Policy", *Geopolitics*, vol.13, no.3, 2008, pp.545-571.

²⁷¹ Elizabeth Pond, op. cit., p.254.

transforming the structural roots of conflict.²⁷² The normative agenda of the EU becomes clear in that it builds on its own history of reconciliation through economic and political integration, from the basis of which its peacebuilding framework, the EUPF, is gradually emerging.²⁷³ This is not to argue that this framework is a coherent and stable construction, but rather to claim that the way in which national policies of member states merge and produce something new cannot be separated from the EU's history. A fragmented approach slowly emerges, which tends to comply with the central components of the liberal peace, aiming at the creation of liberal, 'peaceful' states in the European neighbourhood. Ideas about how this can be achieved are still disputed within the EU and tend to be deployed competitively, particularly when EU members have their own actors and strategies in the respective region or country. At the same time, the EUPF competes with institutions such as the UN or the IFIs, while equally representing a continuation or even extension of their policies. Juncos argues that in the search of its distinctive peacebuilding framework in Bosnia-Herzegovina, "the EU is building a new identity as a regional normative power," mainly understanding its own role as a civilian power in the Western Balkans.²⁷⁴

EU Engagement on a Sub-National Level

It becomes obvious that the EU's approaches, as they have been outlined above, place heavy emphasis on institution-building and the technical implementation of reforms for which it relies on cooperation with political elites. However, an awareness has gradually developed of the need to integrate non-state actors with the peacebuilding project. This is mainly related to the need to win legitimacy for broader structural reforms in a peacebuilding context as well as to get support when it comes to implementing projects. Here, the EUPF ties in with the rather confused approaches of non-state actors in the field of peacebuilding, while it is mainly NGOs that are funded and consulted by the Commission. In this context, it has to be mentioned that the EU has adopted a rather institutionalised approach to working with civil society. Indeed civil society represents an important cornerstone in the EUPF, which views the total of non-state actors as an

²⁷² Nathalie Tocci, *op. cit.*, p.3.

²⁷³ Oliver Richmond et al., *op. cit.*

²⁷⁴ Ana E. Juncos, *op. cit.*, p.94.

institution that can be used as transformational instruments for peacebuilding. The Commission particularly emphasises the importance of dialogue with civil society with respect to democratisation and reconciliation.²⁷⁵ It was in the framework of CARDS and the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) that the EU first put emphasis on the need to strengthen civil society actors as an important dimension of its peacebuilding mission.²⁷⁶ In pursuit of the idea of *local ownership*, the EU has promoted public campaigns, such as “Put u Evropu zavisi od vas” (“The way into Europe depends on you”), which, however, did not manage to overcome resistance to EU electoral laws in parliament (1999) and mirrors the extent to which European symbolism has sometimes been overestimated.²⁷⁷ On the one hand, the EU has realised that local ownership is needed to create and maintain the legitimacy of the peacebuilding process – at least in rhetorical terms. On the other hand, it can be observed that the concept of ownership has often failed to transcend a rather superficial approach in which processes are only handed over to locals if the latter are expected to support, rather than undermine, the EU’s policies.

Making the effort to consult a wide range of civil society actors, the Commission’s 2005 mapping study is indicative of an aspiration of engaging with civil society on a deeper level,²⁷⁸ while IPA defines the financial framework which outlines the priorities of civil society approaches.²⁷⁹ Not only does IPA support selected non-state actors, but it also provides for a dialogue between civil society and government, as well as with the EU itself. It does this by creating institutional mechanisms that are conducive to the inclusion of societal actors in high-level politics to address a variety of issues.²⁸⁰ The IPA places emphasis on “building civil society capacity to act as a

²⁷⁵ cf. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council of 5 March 2008, “Western Balkans: enhancing the European perspective”, 2008.

²⁷⁶ Iavor Rangelov and Marika Theros, “Maintaining the Process in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Coherence and Complementarity of EU Institutions and Civil Society in the Field of Transitional Justice”, Working Group on Development and Peace (FriEnt), November 2007, p.15.

²⁷⁷ Kimberley Coles, op. cit., p.262.

²⁷⁸ European Commission, “Mapping Study of Non-State Actors (NSA) in Bosnia-Herzegovina”, 2005, <http://www.europa.ba/?akcija=clanak&CID=33&jezik=2&LID=52> (accessed 21/07/09).

²⁷⁹ cf. “Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) Multi-annual Indicative Planning Document (MIPD) 2009-2011. Bosnia and Herzegovina,” <http://www.europa.ba/files/docs/en/ipa/BiHMIPD2009-2011AnnexMainEN.pdf> (accessed 20/06/09).

²⁸⁰ Cf. “Project Fiche – IPA Annual Action Programme 2007 for Bosnia and Herzegovina. Improving the development and capacity of Social Dialogue and Social Partners (SP) Project. Capacity building of Civil Society to take part in policy dialogue”, Sarajevo, 2007, p.3,

watchdog and partner of the government” as well as encouraging the NGO sector to get involved in reform politics.²⁸¹ However, due to the lack of a coherent institutional framework in which civil society can be dealt with, the EU has started to focus on the creation of such a framework to empower the further development of civil society for which an Agreement was signed in 2007 by the Council of Ministers.²⁸² Yet since this agreement failed to produce any significant policy changes, the EU gradually shifted responsibility of reform towards the state by emphasising the role of the State Office for Cooperation with Civil Society when it comes to coordinating EU civil society programmes.²⁸³ These developments are clearly related to the insight that the EU, as a huge institutional apparatus, is dependent on the support of actors that are closer to local communities in order to appear less distant and paralysed, while, at the same time, it faces institutional limits when it comes to dealing with local society by itself. The Council of the European Union therefore states that, for its own benefit, the EU needs to “improve cooperation with non-state actors including NGOs/CSOs by enhancing dialogue and improving information-sharing and cooperation in the field.”²⁸⁴ This is implemented in practice through dialogue forums, festivals, debates and conferences organised by the EU and that have the clear goal of using civil society as a means of bringing BiH closer to EU membership.²⁸⁵ In 2008, for instance, the Commission supported a Football Festival in Foča that was to bring together young people from different countries and communities within Bosnia-Herzegovina to teach them fair play and conflict resolution on a sports level.²⁸⁶ Similarly, the Commission organised a concert on the occasion of “Europe Day.” Bringing together the international community, local authorities and grassroots organisations, this concert served as a means to communicate the centrality of moving towards Europe and to show the extent

http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/bosnia_and_herzegovina/ipa/44_capacity_building_of_civil_society_en.pdf (accessed 21/07/09).

²⁸¹ Iavor Rangelov and Marika Theros, *op. cit.*, p.16.

²⁸² Goran Žeravčić, “Analysis of Institutional Cooperation between Governmental and Non-Governmental Sectors in BiH”, Sarajevo: Kronauer Consulting, 2008, p.83.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*, p.86.

²⁸⁴ Council of the European Union, “Annual Report on EU activities in the framework of conflict prevention, including implementation of the EU Programme for the Prevention of Violent Conflicts”, *op. cit.*, p.5.

²⁸⁵ cf. Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, “Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2008-2009”, Brussels, 2008, p.8.

²⁸⁶ <http://www.europa.ba/?akcija=vijesti&akcija2=pregled&jezik=2&ID=242> (accessed 09/08/09).

of the EU's presence in the country.²⁸⁷ Moreover, the EU delegation to Bosnia-Herzegovina regularly holds public debates in different parts of the country to discuss issues related to the EU integration process and to communicate the implications of this to the various stakeholders in the process.²⁸⁸ Again, the tendency to engage with civil society in an instrumental way can hardly be overlooked given that the EU uses its variety of policy tools and financial power for the legitimisation of its very goals in the region. In that respect, the Commission argues that:

[i]ncreased participation of civil society organisations in the reforms undertaken in the enlargement countries is a strong determinant for the pace and quality of the accession process, as well as in attaining public support for accession.²⁸⁹

This is the background against which one can read the introduction of a new Civil Society Facility in 2008 to enhance capacity-building among local actors. In addition, civil society activities are funded through EIDHR, which in turn points to the assumed contribution of civil society to the democratisation agenda.

The future development of the IPA is equally reflective of the importance of including local actors in the further design of the accession process. It defines *civil society* as “employer's organisations, trade unions, associations of local self-governments as well as non-governmental organisations etc.,”²⁹⁰ yet a number of competing definitions in different policy documents mirror the lack of clearness in the EU about what is meant by *civil society*.²⁹¹ At the same time, this leads to an exclusion of civil society actors when they cannot be framed in the EU's terms or when they are too difficult to deal with.

²⁸⁷ <http://www.europa.ba/?akcija=vijesti&akcija2=pregled&jezik=2&ID=237> (Accessed 09/08/09).

²⁸⁸ <http://www.europa.ba/?akcija=vijesti&akcija2=pregled&jezik=2&ID=236> (accessed 09/08/09).

²⁸⁹ Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, op. cit., p.10.

²⁹⁰ “Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) Multi-annual Indicative Planning Document (MIPD) 2009-2011 Bosnia and Herzegovina”, op. cit., Annex 4.

²⁹¹ The Commission's mapping study of non-state actors, for instance, does not talk about civil society, but about non-state actors, defined as “Non-Governmental Organisations/Community Based Organisations (NGO/CBO) and their representative platforms in different sectors, social partners (trade unions, employers associations), private sector associations and business organisations, associations of churches and confessional movements, universities, cultural associations, media”. See European Commission, “Mapping Study of Non-State Actors (NSA) in Bosnia-Herzegovina”, op. cit. This lack of clearness in terms of defining civil society is clearly recognised by the Economic and Social Committee referring to the various strands of thinking about civil society. Cf. Opinion of the Economic and Social Committee on “The role and contribution of civil society organisations in the building of Europe”, Brussels, 1999.

Generally, it becomes evident that the EU has big ambitions in the Western Balkans, and in BiH in particular. Due to the geographic proximity of the region to the EU, the EUPF has to be considered in the context of the EU's own security and stability interests, with the SAA process forming an essential part of the ESDP and CSFP. Against this background, a number of instruments are being developed, "including an institutional framework, political engagement, security presence and various forms of assistance."²⁹² This illustrates the importance of the Western Balkans as the EU's 'next frontier',²⁹³ reflecting the extent to which peacebuilding and reconciliation in the region represent major challenges for the EU's foreign policy.

The EU and Culture

As a result, culture only plays a marginal role in peacebuilding efforts, if at all, and is kept backstage despite the fact that it is, as an artist suggested, important for people's identities.²⁹⁴ The EU itself, as it seems, is not very engaged in the contents of this field, which has been a major problem particularly in earlier stages of European integration, where 'culture' – a naturally content-based area – has been treated mainly as a socio-economic market of cultural goods.²⁹⁵ Similarly, in the context of enlargement, culture continues to play a strategic and structural rather than content-based role for the European Union:

It is essential that the cultural sector contribute to, and play a role in, broader European political developments. The cultural sector is an important employer in its own right and there is, in addition, a clear link between investment in culture and economic development (...).²⁹⁶

²⁹² Council of the European Union, "Annual Report on EU activities in the framework of conflict prevention, including implementation of the EU Programme for the Prevention of Violent Conflicts", op. cit., p.21.

²⁹³ Graham Avery, "Foreword", in EPC Working Paper No.31: "The Balkans in Europe: containment or transformation? Twelve ideas for action", Task Force EU Integration & Citizenship Programme, June 2008, Rapporteur: Rosa Balfour, p.7.

²⁹⁴ Aida Bucalović, Center for Interdisciplinary Research of Visual Culture of the International Forum Bosnia, *Personal Interview*, Sarajevo, 21/04/10.

²⁹⁵ Nina Obuljen, "Assessing the Impact of EU Enlargement on Cultural Policies in Countries in Transition", *Cultural Transitions in Southeastern Europe, Collection of Papers from the Course on 'Managing Cultural Transitions: Southeastern Europe'*, 2004, pp.123-141, p.129.

²⁹⁶ European Parliament and Council, "Decision No 1855/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 2006 establishing the Culture Programme (2007 to 2013)", Brussels, 2006, p.1.

In this context, Gordon suggests that the EU tends to view culture as an “engine for social and economic innovation”²⁹⁷ and thus as a tool to structure economic processes rather than as a space of artistic expressions per se. This is associated with a view of culture as a *strategic* area of engagement, through which certain policies can be legitimised.²⁹⁸ In that sense, not only civil society, but also its associated cultural values become peacebuilding tools through which societies are assumed to be transformable according to the norms and values of the EU. This in turn neglects the ability of the cultural sphere(s) to serve as platforms of resistance to local actors and portrays culture as part of the formal political, public realm.

Having said that, in recent years, the EU seems to gradually be changing its attitude towards culture. Whilst retaining the instrumental view of culture, in the light of its potentials to create employment and to legitimise certain forms of political cooperation, the Commission is now increasingly emphasising the need to engage with the cultural sector and its role in the EU’s foreign policy more specifically.²⁹⁹ In this context, the importance of public diplomacy to enhance the legitimacy of EU policies locally has been emphasised.³⁰⁰ At the same time, although this means that funding for cultural activities has been scheduled to increase, the growing attention to cultural activities has not automatically led to a critical rethinking of the EU’s underlying concepts and strategies. On the one hand, the Commission touches upon the political nature of culture, but does not explain how this might lead to a deeper understanding of the context in which the EU operates.³⁰¹ To the contrary, rather than using culture, in both its everyday and elite understanding, as a way of understanding the diverse meanings of peacebuilding in its local implementation, the EU views intercultural dialogue as a tool

²⁹⁷ Christopher Gordon, “Culture and the European Union in a Global Context”, *The Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society*, vol.37, no.1, 2007, pp.11-30, p.14.

²⁹⁸ European Commission, “Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on a European agenda for culture in a globalizing world”, Brussels, 2007.

²⁹⁹ European Commission, “Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on a European agenda for culture in a globalizing world”, Brussels, 2007.

³⁰⁰ Ibid. This also came out of a confidential personal conversation. Confidential source, *Personal Interview*, Sarajevo, 29/04/10.

³⁰¹ European Commission, “Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on a European agenda for culture in a globalizing world”, Brussels, 2007.

to promote knowledge about itself in the world.³⁰² In terms of developing a culturally-sensitive approach to engagement with third countries, the EU remains rather vague, basing its approaches on existing policies and conventions.³⁰³

A conference organised by the Slovenian presidency in 2008 tried to concretise the role of culture in the EU's foreign policies in terms of particularly focusing on the challenges encountered in the context of Eastern Europe.³⁰⁴ In this conference, culture was outlined as a tool to improve structures of governance and promote dialogue within and between societies.³⁰⁵ However, the extent to which this has translated into policy practice has been limited, and culture is often still seen as incompatible with the EU's standards and guidelines.³⁰⁶ In that sense, the engagement with the cultural sector in BiH has been less on a level of continuous dialogue, but has rather taken place through the funding of certain cultural activities. The EU therefore considers the integration of BiH into the Commission's Culture Programme 2007-2013 a major cornerstone in its engagement with cultural actors in the country.³⁰⁷ The extent to which this will lead to more mutual engagement of the EU and local cultural actors yet remains to be seen.

Assessment

Against the background of the broader international peacebuilding project, an overview of the EU's involvement in BiH shows that, on the part of the EU, there are ambitions to make a positive impact on politics and society in the country. Indeed, the EU's peacebuilding approaches aim to promote reconciliation as well as political and economic development in the Western Balkans. However, it is questionable to what extent the EU's policies emanate from a concern about the well-being of the subjects of its policies. Rather, it can be noted that the overall motivation of engaging in peacebuilding in a variety of ways has its origins in the EU's concerns about its own

³⁰² Ibid.

³⁰³ Cf. Council of the European Union, "Council Conclusions on the promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue in the external relations of the Union and its Member States. 2905th Education, Youth and Culture Council meeting, Brussels, 2008.

³⁰⁴ Slovenian Presidency of the EU, "Slovenian Presidency Declaration based on the recommendations of the conference "New Paradigms, New Models - Culture in the EU External Relations", Ljubljana, 13-14 May 2008."

³⁰⁵ Ibid.

³⁰⁶ Confidential source, Delegation of the EU to BiH, *Personal Interview*, Sarajevo, 22/03/10.

³⁰⁷ http://ec.europa.eu/culture/news/memorandum-of-understanding-of-bosnia-and-herzegovina_en.htm (accessed 31/01/12).

security, and the creation of a stable and secure neighbourhood is one way of achieving this. Such an approach tends to lead to a situation in which local society is only partially listened to. It is only taken seriously in representation through political elites or, in a civil society format compatible with the EU's policies. In that respect, an instrumental approach to dealing with society is emerging in terms of using various actors on the ground to create the needed legitimacy for the peacebuilding project as well as to facilitate European integration. At the same time, those whose voices risk undermining this project struggle to find their space in it, given that the EU's institutional arrangements, such as civil society dialogue and conditionalities, allow for a selective use of local actors in the peacebuilding framework. Civil society can thus be viewed as a policy instrument for the EU, while the priorities of the latter seem to be relying on the usefulness of civil society for the accession process rather than on getting a more nuanced picture of the complex processes occurring on the ground. As a result, local needs and culture tend to be treated as secondary goals, or tools at best, which are only taken into consideration *after* the implementation of EU standards and accession conditionality. Since some organisational forms (mainly NGOs) appear to be convenient instruments for the implementation of certain policies, the EU tends to fund them at the expense of alternative and challenging groups. This, indeed, replicates the problems faced by the international community in general, and, despite showing greater ambitions to engage with a broad spectrum of actors, fails to make a substantial difference to peacebuilding approaches. Just as most international actors present in BiH, the EU has ambitions to spread its own norms and values in society (*Europeanisation* being the key word here) by delivering a set of policy prescriptions, mainly in the form of its carrot of membership status negotiations. The EU tries to prevent resistance to the associated conditions by strengthening the groups that are more or less supportive of the overall aims of the peacebuilding project. This, in turn, raises questions about the ways in which the EU is able to deal with the supposedly 'non-liberal' European civil society. It seems that the EU is trying to create a new middle-class in its ways of dealing with civil society, the latter predominantly being viewed as professionalised NGOs in line with the EU's idea of progress.³⁰⁸ Actors who deviate from this blueprint might not be

³⁰⁸ Cf. Adam Fagan, "Transnational Aid for Civil Society Development in Post-Socialist Europe: Democratic Consolidation or a New Imperialism?", *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, vol.22, no.1, 2006, pp.115-134, p.125.

supported, financially or ideationally, due to the EU's institutional limitations in terms of dealing with alternative or less-institutionalised organisational forms. This leads to the exclusion and marginalisation of a variety of actors who, being 'different', might enjoy a high degree of legitimacy on the ground, but cannot be framed in the EU's terms. This is not to argue that the EU does not wish to get a broader picture of society; for example, the Commission's mapping study and parts of the IPA, as outlined above, mirror an aspiration to engage with a broad societal spectrum. However, these ambitions are often not fulfilled in practice due to an institutional tendency to keep things simple and straightforward. The EU's efforts are further undermined by its ambition to gradually make BiH an EU member state, which implies a prescription of certain values and limits the space in which alternative discourses can be developed. There is, thus, a gap between the EU's aims and their actual achievements, and this gap weakens the link between EU peacebuilding and local society. The EU's engagement with civil society shows that the latter is often considered to be weak, passive and in need of external training to be able to respond to the challenges of peacebuilding and conflict transformation. In that sense, the EU seems to imagine its engagement as a one-way process, with locals lacking autonomous agency, while the EU can make use of what it perceives as its capacity to transform society according to its interests and values. Yet, much in contrast, I will continue to argue that there are spaces of local agency that often remain unseen, yet which have an impact on how peacebuilding policies play out contextually. The following chapter will provide the theoretical framework with which such spaces of agency can be investigated.

Chapter 4: The *Spaces of Agency* Concept to Frame Peacebuilding Interaction

Introduction

This chapter will develop the theoretical framework with which interactions between local cultural actors and different EU actors can be investigated. This is not based on an assumption that the ‘local’ and the ‘international’ can be clearly separated from each other as two distinct and independent spheres. The chapter rather aims to develop an approach to explain how they are interrelated, constituting each other in processes of complex interaction. To do so, I will develop a concept called *spaces of agency*, through which the influence of various actors on the emergence and relevance of different discourse clusters can be conceptualised. This framework conceptualises agency as occurring in a fluid structural environment, yet does not claim that agency is restrained by its surrounding spaces, but points to actors’ abilities to challenge and transform them. To do so, the chapter will look at the (infra-)structures, contents, and functions of such discursive spaces, aiming to investigate the ways in which different forms of agency impact upon the design of such spaces as well as the meanings created within and between them. This is a move away from the one-dimensional, visible and merely actor-centred approaches to agency as they have been outlined above. To the contrary, this thesis aims to develop a more fluid and dynamic concept of peacebuilding agency, not only looking at direct and visible interaction processes, but investigating subtler dynamics of power and agency. This framework is mainly the result of observations I made during fieldwork in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Not only did I note the centrality of thinking about *space* in public discourses (such as lectures about the quality of public space, debates about the meaning of a post-Yugoslav space, the creation of spaces free of ethnic tensions, and so forth), but I also realised that much interaction in different social spheres is not direct, but quite subtle. In fact, partly resulting from a history of state control, many controversial discussions are held outside the public, political sphere and, therefore, only impact indirectly on that sphere. The *spaces of agency* concept will take account of this.

Methodologically, institutional ethnography (IE) will serve as a useful technique for gaining access to these complex interactions between actors and their discursive spaces in a nuanced way. In order to acknowledge the agency of the peacebuilding institutions, local agencies and those in between, institutional ethnography will be used as a two-way tool in order to investigate mutual (rather than one-sided) influences of those spheres. Combined with participatory research techniques, this will allow for a contextualised analysis of different spaces of agency. This will provide the background against which the interaction between EU and local cultural actors can be analysed. Considering different discursive spaces as manifestations of agency, this framework will not confine itself to looking at the ways in which the EU treats local cultural actors. Rather, will I take actors into account who are seemingly marginalised by the EU's peacebuilding framework, and this will be done by emphasising their impact on the ways in which agency is constituted. The latter can be seen as constantly materialising in different responses to the policies imposed or promoted by peacebuilding actors, as well as in the creation of new spaces on the part of local actors. This takes account of what Doreen Massey has observed in more general terms, namely that:

[t]here is an overwhelming tendency both in academic and political literature, and other forms of discourse, and in political practice to imagine the local as the product of the global urged to neglect the counterpoint to this: the local construction of the global.³⁰⁹

In that respect, this thesis looks at a process of mutual interaction, suggesting that the choices that actors have in terms of how their own spaces of agency respond to peacebuilding programmes reflects their power, potentially subtle and hidden, and sheds light on the feedback loop in which Bosnian agencies transform the EU's projects, rather than exclusively looking at how the EU transforms BiH. This in turn will help one to understand the negotiation processes during the course of which different actors use a wide variety of strategies to conceptualise and translate their own.

³⁰⁹ Doreen Massey, *for space*, London: Sage, 2005, reprinted 2007, 2008, p.101.

Spaces of Agency

This section introduces the *spaces of agency* concept. Spaces of agency are abstract spaces that actors create and use to display their agency *vis-à-vis* other actors' spaces. Figuratively speaking, those spaces can be thought of as bubbles or discourse clusters centred on a core issues, with many actors contributing to the creation of different layers of meaning to the bubble, thereby enhancing it and making it relevant to a wider audience. Linking processes related to the production of meaning to processes of "othering", Said has claimed that "space acquires emotional and even rational sense by a kind of poetic process, whereby the vacant or anonymous reaches of distance and convert it into meaning for us here."³¹⁰ Said, therefore, points to the power of spaces to create certain meanings and representations for the benefit of those engaged in such spaces.

Although spaces of agency are not strictly geographical in terms of describing locations or locales, I call them *spaces* due to their analogies to geographical spaces, which similarly helps us understand the interrelationship between structural environments and the ways in which actors challenge and build on them. There are also parallels between the metaphor of abstract space and material, geographic space such as a given infrastructure as well as social/physical dynamics such as inclusion and exclusion, the display of power structures, boundaries, bridges and so forth. Yet in this thesis, *space* is dissolved from its strict denotations of geographical locality and instead the concept is used as an instrument to investigate which discursive spheres have an influence on specific social groups and how those groups engage in their recreation. This is not to argue that geographical spaces do not matter – it has indeed been suggested that transformation requires both material and conceptual spaces in which it can develop³¹¹ – but this chapter first and foremost points to the conceptual and ideational processes that are necessary elements of agency and change *before* these take a geographical dimension. Those spaces certainly connect to geographical spaces, which I will illustrate below, but the primary concern of this chapter is to investigate the ways in which meaning is created in conceptual spaces to make change thinkable in the

³¹⁰ Edward Said, *Orientalism*, New York: Vintage, 1978, p.55.

³¹¹ Mike Kesby, "Rethorizing Empowerment-through-Participation as a Performance in Space: Beyond Tyranny to Transformation", *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, vol.30, no.4, 2005, pp.2037-2065, p.2054.

first place. Agents may connect their ideational spaces of agency to a locale, and indeed they often do so, while the main substance of the space remains in the ideational and imaginary sphere of meanings.

Since spaces of agency dig deep into the needs of society and its forms of communication – expressing what concerns, connects and divides people – they contain meanings that give access to deeper structures of a society, yet often in a hidden or disguised form. According to Geertz, those meanings can give deep access to cultural processes within a society since “meaning varies according to the pattern of life by which it is informed.”³¹² In that sense, spaces of agency can be viewed as filled with meanings, which in turn reflect socially and culturally informed patterns, and thus penetrate societal spheres and discourses in various ways. Those meanings, in turn, represent the structural context of action on the one hand, in terms of impacting upon how actors perceive and make sense of their environment, while, on the other hand, they also point to actors’ ability to challenge this structural context by creating new meanings.

Lefebvre’s theory of space can help conceptualise those spaces of agency, at the same time acknowledging crucial differences in the ways in which abstract space is framed. Lefebvre points to the active nature of space, which can be both operational and instrumental.³¹³ Although Lefebvre does not emphasise agency as a cause for the emergence of spaces (he has indeed been criticised for treating space as a product rather than a process driven by human agency³¹⁴), his work still reflects how spaces are, albeit implicitly, manifestations of agency due to their potential strategic impact on discourses and surrounding structures. In that sense, actors might find it a good strategy to create a new space, or they might help to perpetuate and strengthen an existing space. In this context Lefebvre claims that “space relies on the repetitive,”³¹⁵ referring to the need for the structure and content of a space to be repeated so it will stay alive.

Lefebvre outlines a trilogy, i.e. three moments of space, which are:

a) spatial practice, or *espace perçue*: the space of perception which is the fluid (re)production of spatial sets and their connection to people’s everyday lives;

³¹² Clifford Geertz, op. cit., p.14.

³¹³ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1991, p.11.

³¹⁴ Tim Unwin, “A waste of space? Towards a critique of the social production of space”, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, vol.25, no.1, 2000, pp.11-29, p.24.

³¹⁵ Ibid., p.396.

- b) representations of space, or *espace concue*: conceived space as tied to relations of production and related to a notion of planning, and
- c) representational spaces, or *espace vécu* :³¹⁶ lived and experienced space.

Representational spaces consist of complex symbolisms, which are potentially coded and derive their logic from the symbolic use of objects in space. Not only does the notion of representational spaces connect to imaginary spaces, but, according to Lefebvre, it is also linked to the underground side of social life, with arts potentially serving as a code for this space. Indeed, certainly in its connection with spatial practice and representations of space, as they stand in mutual tension and constantly inform each other, representational space seems to be able to give access to a deeper level of society. It constitutes a “space as directly *lived* through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of ‘inhabitants’ and ‘users’” as well as a “space which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate”.³¹⁷ Not only does this point to the abstract and symbolic character of space, but at the same time reminds us that space is not a stable construct, but changeable once the actors involved start thinking about changing it. In that sense, representational space is alive;³¹⁸ possibly, but not necessarily instrumental to actors; and it harbours certain contradictions.³¹⁹ Due to those contradictions, Lefebvre points out that abstract space is never homogeneous, but deploys its centripetal forces to *render* its contents homogenous.³²⁰ This in turn points to the contradictions inherent in any space as it is both created by the diversity of actors creating, perpetuating and challenging it, yet at the same time these actors are pursuing homogeneity with the goal of keeping the space stable.

In this respect, it becomes obvious that space is not isolated from the society it emerges from, but closely connected to it and mirroring the quantity and quality of social relationships that have created and shaped it.³²¹ Lefebvre views change as catalysed through spaces, so every change takes place via the creation of an appropriate space.³²² Spaces of agency are spaces that impact on social developments and change, given that actors use them to make newly emerging needs and interests heard, thereby

³¹⁶ Ibid.

³¹⁷ Ibid., p.39.

³¹⁸ Ibid., p.42.

³¹⁹ Ibid., p.52.

³²⁰ Ibid., p.287.

³²¹ Ibid., pp.82f.

³²² Ibid., p.59.

instilling new visions and ideas in society via a certain space. It thus becomes clear that spaces and agency cannot be separated, which contradicts Lefebvre's statement that "[e]very space is already in place before the appearance of its actors."³²³ Lefebvre's statement understates the power of actors to create such spaces, while this chapter aims to develop an integrated concept of spaces and agency. At the same time, although building to a certain extent on his concept of abstract/representational spaces, this challenges Lefebvre's claim that agency emerges within a space,³²⁴ rather arguing that spaces are manifestations and products of agency as opposed to merely providing the boundaries within which agency can unfold.

I argue that actors define the boundaries of action themselves by using their agency to constantly challenge existing boundaries and frameworks on their own terms. Along those lines, spaces of agency reflect actors' capacities to influence their environment, i.e. other spaces of agency and actors who both reproduce and challenge one another's ideas. Therefore, in order to assess the power of such spaces, it is important to investigate which actors create them, and who determines their further development. The creators and the perpetuators may be the same group of actors, but they may also diverge so that spaces become co-opted, used, negotiated, manipulated or resisted by other actors who then influence their further development. In that sense, spaces of agency are in constant development as hybrid constructs emerging in the encounter between different actors in social interaction. This ties in with Gupta and Ferguson's argument that calls for "understanding social change and cultural transformation as situated within interconnected spaces."³²⁵ In a similar vein, Robinson suggests that "the imaginative spatialities with which we describe processes of transformation shape our sense of political possibilities and hence our political choices."³²⁶

This stands in contrast to Foucault's conception of space as an enclosed, segmented unity that serves as a disciplinary mechanism and a locus where power can

³²³ Ibid., p.57.

³²⁴ Ibid., p.412.

³²⁵ Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, "Beyond 'Culture': Space, Identity, and the Politics of Difference", in Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson (eds.), *Culture, power, place: explorations in critical anthropology*, Durham: N.C.: Duke University Press, 1997, pp.33-51, p.35.

³²⁶ Jenny Robinson, "Feminism and the spaces of transformation", *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, vol.25, no.3, 2000, pp.285-301, p.286.

be exercised.³²⁷ On the other hand, Foucault refrains from using *power* as a one-way concept, arguing that “[a]nyone who exercises power has to place himself in a field of complex relations where he occupies a transition point.”³²⁸ In this context, Butler suggests that:

[t]he Foucauldian subject is never fully constituted in subjection [...]; it is repeatedly constituted in subjection, and it is in the possibility of a repetition that repeats against its origins that subjection might be understood to draw its inadvertently enabling power.³²⁹

This points to the enabling dimensions of subjection, and thus the power of resistance as “an effect to the very power that it is said to oppose.”³³⁰ Along those lines, it may very well be the case that spaces impose limits and boundaries on people, but one must not neglect the latter’s ability to resist and challenge those spaces based on their own ideas and conceptions. In this context, Cresswell suggests that “[t]he unintended consequence of making space a means of control is to simultaneously make it a site of meaningful resistance.”³³¹ Therefore, space cannot exclusively be considered as a restraining and limiting force – which it certainly can be – but it is equally an enabling force, a concept in which individuals and collectivities can communicate their needs and interests to different target audiences. What needs to be acknowledged is the ability of people to create spaces in which they rid themselves of forms of control. Those spaces depend on the creativity of actors to find spheres in which they can escape control mechanisms, often in hidden forms. The fact that many artists in BiH have decided to occupy spaces that are beyond the range of the state, both physically and ideationally, is illustrative of that. What the respective space of agency addresses, and whether it is hidden or not, depends on what the producers think is most suitable to voice their needs and interests. In that sense, spaces of agency always have to be seen in a contextualised manner, with respect to the actors involved, their (changing) goals and their strategies in relation to a wider social environment. Again, this ties in with debates about the role of structure in

³²⁷ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, New York: Vintage, 1995.

³²⁸ Michel Foucault, *The history of sexuality. Vol.3, The care of the self*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1990, p.88.

³²⁹ Judith Butler, *The psychic life of power: theories in subjection*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997, p.94.

³³⁰ *Ibid.*, p.98.

³³¹ Tim Cresswell, *In place/out of place: geography, ideology, and transgression*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996, p.163.

relation to agency as well as the constraints of autonomous action, which will be addressed below.

Against this background, the following section will examine in more detail the ways in which such spaces operate. This, in turn, necessitates a focus on the (infra-) structures and the processes developing within such spaces as well as their functions and reasons for existence.

How Do Spaces of Agency Operate?

(Infra-)structure

As it has been suggested above, spaces of agency bear resemblance to geographical, i.e. material, spaces. In that sense, abstract spaces can be said to have an infrastructure that shapes the ways in which those spaces are structured and operate.

The following characterisation of spaces of agency reflects the analogies to material space. It alludes to the structural properties of space as well as its processual nature that allows for constant change and transformation.

Inclusion and Exclusion

Spaces have boundaries and therefore always include and exclude actors and issues. In this context, Massey suggests that places and spaces are “open only to a particular set of practices and to similar others.”³³² Since, according to Lefebvre, spaces aim to render their contents homogenous, actors who are open to becoming part of the respective space are most likely to be included if it is in their interest to be part of it and if they are willing to adapt to it to a certain extent. This is dependent on the extent to which a space connects to actors’ needs as actors will only become part of a space if they see it in their interests to do so. In that sense, the exclusion of actors is not necessarily an act of force, but it can be a voluntary decision of those who do not feel

³³² Massey, op. cit., p.178.

affected by a space, or by those who do not believe themselves capable of bringing about change.

At the same time as spaces have distinct boundaries, they also centre on certain issues. Again, only issues that appear worth addressing due to their connection to people's needs and interests will become part of a space. This, however, does not mean that one space focuses on one issue exclusively. To the contrary, actors can add new layers of meaning around the core issue that sparked the creation of a space and they can retrospectively add issues to the space that had been previously excluded by linking them to its core discourse cluster. A similar process may happen with respect to actors involved with the space – some may decide to join the space, thus modifying it, while others may want to abandon their involvement and turn to other spaces and discourses more relevant to them.

Open and Closed Spaces

Spaces of agency can be seen as located on a spectrum somewhere between being open and closed. This depends on the extent to which they are open to new members and issues, which therefore serves as an indicator of the degree to which they are open to change and internal transformation. Indeed, the fluidity of a space can be investigated by looking at the turnover of active participants and issues on the one hand, and also by the speed with which those participants and issues change their goals and strategies. There are different mechanisms that serve as 'gates' preventing undesirable actors from accessing the space such as the creation of a physical or ideational distance, processes of "othering", the use of coded language or jargon within a space and so forth. The closure of a space may reflect resistance to change, while spaces that are open to new participants and issues tend to transform more quickly and are more adaptable to their environment.

Top-down or Bottom-up Mechanisms

Different spaces of agency have different hierarchy structures. Their development and transformation can be directed from the top, i.e. from a relatively

small number of people who try to keep control of the space. They can also derive their processes from the broad range of people participating in them, without strict control structures or steep hierarchies. People from different societal strata may then be able to impact upon the space either implicitly or explicitly. If that is the case, change from below is very likely. Again, these are crucial factors for the ways in which change within a space of agency may take place as well as for the scope of relevance of such change.

Hybridity

Spaces of agency have no fixed boundaries and never stand in isolation, but have to be seen in relation to the other spaces with which they interact. They are always products of interrelations even should the actors involved in a space wish to delineate themselves from the spaces around.³³³ Even if the respective response is nothing more than an ignorance of other spaces, this still means that spaces of agency respond to others indirectly. In that sense, interaction has different qualities and may be limited or extensive, particularly when different spaces speak to each other, or even have a conversation about an issue. If such forms of interaction get very close to each other, they may merge into a single space of agency. There is certainly a risk of dichotomising or categorising actors/spaces, which would, however, neglect the power of hybrid spaces. I was made aware of this during a discussion in the cultural centre OKC Abrašević in Mostar. During a discussion in the centre, the users of that space remarked that the people from the town were confused by the location of the centre since they expect every actor to be situated either east (on the Bosniak side) or west (on the Croat side). However, since Abrašević is directly on the border, on the frontline, it constitutes a space of hybridity, transgressing existing boundaries. The imaginary transgression of boundaries materialises in practice, resulting in a hybrid space, both physically and symbolically.

The boundaries between spaces are certainly blurred and hard to distinguish, but once there is a tendency to homogenise, we can see a common space of agency emerging. At the same time, following Bhabha's thought, there may also be complex

³³³ Massey, op. cit., p.9.

situations “where ‘previously unrecognized spiritual and intellectual needs’ emerge from the imposition of ‘foreign’ ideas, cultural representations, and structures of power”.³³⁴ BiH has indeed a long history of hybridity, having been subject to various external interventions, which all shaped the country’s identity in different ways. The norms and values brought into the country by those interventions have in turn been accommodated, modified, challenged or resisted. Resistance to, or incorporation of colonial structures then points to the power of hybrid spaces.³³⁵

There is always hybridisation between spaces of agency, whether it be direct or indirect. This creates the option for spaces not only to merge, but also to split when actors and their views drift apart and new issues or needs become relevant. This also means that there are no purely ‘local’ or ‘international’ spaces, since there is constant interaction between them. However, spaces differ with respect to their connection to certain, subjective ‘everyday contexts’.

Structured and Improvised Spaces

Again, in analogy to geographical spaces, spaces of agency tend to develop substructures, particularly when they grow big and involve a high number of participants. This goes hand in hand with a high reliance on existing structures within the space, while smaller spaces are potentially more flexible and open to improvisation. Therefore structured spaces might be more efficient in communication the needs of the actors involved and thus actors might benefit from a higher degree of visibility, whereas smaller spaces can be more flexible and might find it easier to connect to a changing environment and address the needs of their members.

Hidden and Public Spaces

Spaces of agency have different degrees of visibility in the public sphere. While one would assume that actors would strive to make the spaces they created as publicly visible as possible, there are also reasons for actors to deliberately keep their spaces

³³⁴ Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, London; New York: Routledge, 2004, p.17.

³³⁵ Cf. Rumi Sakamoto, “Japan, Hybridity and the Creation of Colonialist Discourse”, *Theory, Culture & Society*, vol.13, no.3, 1996, pp.113-128.

hidden, or at least restrict access to a specific audience. This can be out of fear that the respective space may become co-opted or challenged by uncomfortable actors; and in BiH this fear particularly involves a certain degree of scepticism towards state censorship. At the same time, the strategy of keeping a space hidden means that the pool of potential new members is rather small, which slows the pace of change down and reduces both the number and intensity of direct interactions with other spaces.

Spaces Reflecting Society

As Gupta and Ferguson claim, “space itself becomes a kind of neutral grid on which cultural difference, historical memory, and societal organization is inscribed.”³³⁶ Equally, spaces of agency have to be viewed in relation to their active members as well as to those whose spaces they respond to. According to Harvey, who reminds us of the social dimensions of space, “[t]here can be no politics of space independent of social relations. The latter give the former their social content and meaning.”³³⁷

Interestingly, spaces often reflect cleavages and bonds as they exist in their host societies, but at the same time such structures can be challenged by the users of the respective space of agency and be transformed into something new. Spaces of agency thus reflect a certain social state as well as the possibility to transcend and transform it into something new.

Identities, Representations and Power within Spaces of Agency

The previous section has outlined the different (infra-)structures that spaces of agency can develop to pursue their goals. Against this background, the following section will shed light on the contents of such spaces, looking at different processes that form their very substance. This accounts for the fact that spaces are constantly under construction in the transformation of their political meanings³³⁸ and relates to the interaction of actors active within one space, thus referring to the quality of their

³³⁶ Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, *op. cit.*, p.34.

³³⁷ David Harvey, *The condition of postmodernity: an enquiry into the origins of cultural change*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990, p.257.

³³⁸ cf. Massey, *op. cit.*

interplay. Identity and difference, as well as representation and power, can be seen as the foundation of such processes and will thus be looked at in more detail.

Identity formation has often been considered as a more or less passive concept, while its contested and conflictual dimension has been neglected, in that it incorporates negotiation processes during the course of which actors with different identities interact and develop spaces in which they negotiate their identities. This may involve complex differentiation processes, so that one group of actors might define their identity in competition with another group and, thus, deliberately choose to engage in different spaces of agency. Massey reminds us that power structures and their associated political meanings reshape identities and, therefore, also reshape spatial relations.³³⁹

What is crucial when looking at *identity* is its potential to orientate a person or group/space in several different ways. For example, identity could be related to a concrete physical position in the world; and, as such, Appadurai claims that identity formation occurs via the staging of locality.³⁴⁰ In that sense, people's identity can be said to give them a concrete space in a location to which they belong. On the other hand, identity can also give the actor a position in an ideational sense by linking people to the world as well as establishing a qualitative relationship with their social environment.³⁴¹ Here, *difference*, as an essential element of relational identity, becomes salient in terms of assigning the actor an imaginary space in society and relating that person, through processes of inclusion and exclusion,³⁴² to other specific actors and spaces of agency. Hall suggests that one should view identity as a construction and a never-ending process,³⁴³ so that we might speak of the *process of identification* rather than of *identity* as a more accurate way of alluding to the active dynamics of identity formation. The deliberate "marking of symbolic boundaries"³⁴⁴ then leads to the acknowledgement of identity politics, during the course of which identity and difference are affirmed and contested, both within a space of agency as well as between spaces. What matters here is, according to Jenkins, how we identify ourselves as well as how

³³⁹ Massey, op. cit., p.183.

³⁴⁰ Arjun Appadurai, "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy", op. cit., p.306.

³⁴¹ Cf. Kathryn Woodward, "Introduction", in Kathryn Woodward (ed.), *Identity and Difference*, London: SAGE, 1997, pp.1-6, p.1.

³⁴² Cf. *ibid.*, p.2.

³⁴³ Stuart Hall, "Introduction: Who Needs 'Identity'?", in Stuart Hall and Paul Du Gay (eds.), *Questions of Cultural Identity*, London: SAGE, 1996, pp.1-17, p.2.

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p.3.

we are identified by others.³⁴⁵ Identity is always created in relation to surrounding actors and structures, with the social construction of ethnic or gendered identities being only two examples of how people might choose to situate themselves in a specific structural environment.

Jenkins claims that “[i]dentity is produced and reproduced by individuals interacting in institutionalized contexts”³⁴⁶ and, therefore, alludes to the contextual nature of identity as well as to its relation to the institutionalised structures that are found on all levels of society. This ties in with Barth’s argument that boundaries between identities are constructed, open to transformation and social.³⁴⁷ No actor nor space ever has a ‘single’ identity, but identities tend to be multiple and contextual. Sen has argued that everyone has many parallel identities, and people choose how much importance they attach to each of those identities in a given context.³⁴⁸ He suggests that “identities are robustly plural”,³⁴⁹ therefore, people are not just victims of identities constructed by the very structures around them, but they play an active part in their identity construction. As such they decide, consciously or subconsciously, which identities they consider to be salient and, thus, which they will perpetuate. In that sense, people can be part of various spaces of agency, focus on a variety of different issues and play multiple roles associated with the different needs and interests of those spaces.

For this thesis it will be of particular relevance to look at what kinds of identity become relevant to people in the peacebuilding context. This could range from compliance to what Sen terms a “reactive identity,” describing how non-Western societies think of themselves as the ‘other’ in their encounter with the international sphere.³⁵⁰ The concept of *reactive identity* reflects the extent to which identity is dialogical and hybrid in terms of expressing a relationship with others, close or distant,³⁵¹ as well as how such relationship is created in response to a specific context. It is worth looking at Castells’ conceptualisation of identity, which he also uses as a

³⁴⁵ Richard Jenkins, “Categorization: Identity, Social Process and Epistemology“, *Current Sociology*, vol.48, no.3, 2000, pp.7-25, p.7.

³⁴⁶ Ibid., p.14.

³⁴⁷ cf. Fredrik Barth, “Introduction”, in Fredrik Barth (ed.), *Ethnic groups and boundaries: the social organization of culture difference*, Prospect Heights, Ill.: Waveland Press, inc., 1998, 1969, pp.9-38, p.15. In the context of ethnicity, Barth claims that boundaries of ethnic groups are social boundaries.

³⁴⁸ Amartya Sen, *Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny*, London: Allan Lane, 2006, p.19.

³⁴⁹ Ibid., p.19.

³⁵⁰ Ibid., p.91.

³⁵¹ Dorothy Holland et al, *Identity and Agency in Cultural Worlds*, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1998, p.172.

relational concept, as it provides an interesting basis for investigating the ways in which different identities may respond to each other. He distinguishes between three kinds of identity, namely: legitimizing identity, resistance identity and project identity. While *legitimizing identity* describes the ambitions of institutions to introduce an identity that rationalises their domination over other actors, resistance identity challenges current discourses by developing alternative principles of social interaction. Project identity can be considered an attempt of social actors to build a new identity by transforming existing social structures to redefine their own position.³⁵² This conceptualisation emphasises the relational nature of identity and frames resistance as an element that is relevant to identity formation. At the same time, this distinction takes into account how new identities can emerge from processes during the course of which actors challenge existing structures. *Identity* is considered to be a fluid and changeable category, while it is also situational and relational. At the same time, despite being ‘socially constructed’, the connection to resistance and reaction to contemporary identities considers the concrete implications of identity (re)formation in peacebuilding theory and practice, which has perpetuated certain identities of the ‘self’ and the ‘other’.³⁵³

Representation is, as Spivak points out, an ambiguous concept. It is often used as a way of describing a political process during the course of which some speak on behalf of others (*vertreten*), while the term also refers to techniques of re-presenting as in portraying something or someone (*darstellen*).³⁵⁴ Yet, even though those terms are complicit in each other,³⁵⁵ the latter element is of particular interest here, relating to the ways in which actors view themselves as opposed to how others perceive them. Such representations can either coincide or conflict. Indeed, the ability to categorise and label things, people or collectivities reflects power and is a form of control.³⁵⁶ In this context, Woodward points to the power of representation, i.e. the power to exert social control in terms of being able to establish categories and to label those that transgress them as

³⁵² Manuel Castells, *The Power of Identity*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004.

³⁵³ Cf. Ikechi Mgbeoji, “The Civilised Self and the Barbaric Other: imperial delusions of order and the challenges of human security”, *Third World Quarterly*, vol.27, no.5, 2006, pp.855-869.

³⁵⁴ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?”, in C. Nelson and L. Grossberg, (eds.), *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, Macmillan Education: Basingstoke, 1988, pp.271-313.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁶ Richard Harvey Brown, “Cultural Representation and Ideological Domination”, *Social Forces*, vol.71, no.3, 1993, pp.657-676, p.658.

'outsiders'.³⁵⁷ This is why classifications are highly contested,³⁵⁸ especially in relation to the boundaries that are drawn between social categories³⁵⁹ and the concrete social implications of boundary-drawing. In that respect, the ability to label a space reflects a high degree of power in terms of defining its core issue as well as issues and actors that become excluded from the space. In this context, Harvey speaks of the "command over space,"³⁶⁰ arguing that "the production of space is an important means to augment social power."³⁶¹ For instance, the creation of an ethnicised space of agency may possibly become a self-fulfilling prophesy if it introduces a certain ethnic language and associated patterns of behaviour to that space. The increasing ethnicisation of public space before the outbreak of the war in the former Yugoslavia was mostly driven by political leaders that used their power of representing ethnicity as a crucial category in public life and, as such, it is illustrative of ethnicised spaces of agency.

Miles views spaces as sites of display of power,³⁶² thus pointing to the agency of actors to appropriate a space and make it 'theirs' by representing it in a specific way. Against this background, it becomes clear that representation is closely connected to power, with hegemonic forces of (cultural) representation evoking struggles for authority as well as being implicated in the establishment of social and political hierarchies.³⁶³ This issue has been of particular interest to a number of postcolonial thinkers who have focused on the ways in which the 'subaltern' or 'other' is being represented by powerful actors, mainly in the West. Said, for instance, argues:

In any instance of at least written language, there is no such thing as a delivered presence, but a re-presence, or a representation. The value, efficacy, strength, apparent veracity of a written statement about the Orient therefore relies very little, and cannot instrumentally depend, on the Orient as such. On the contrary, the written statement is a presence to the reader by virtue of its having excluded, displaced, made supererogatory any such real thing as "the Orient."³⁶⁴

³⁵⁷ Kathryn Woodward, "Concepts of Identity and Difference", in Kathryn Woodward (ed.), *Identity and Difference*, London: SAGE, 1997, pp.7-61, p. 33.

³⁵⁸ Pierre Bourdieu, "The Social Space and the Genesis of Groups", *Theory and Society*, vol.44, no.6, 1985, pp.723-744, p.734.

³⁵⁹ Richard Harvey Brown, op. cit., p.659.

³⁶⁰ David Harvey, op. cit., p.226.

³⁶¹ Ibid., p.233.

³⁶² Malcolm Miles, "After the Public Realm: Spaces of Representation, Transition and Plurality", *Journal of Art & Design Education*, vol.19, no.3, 2000, pp. 253–261, p.256.

³⁶³ Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, op. cit., p.245.

³⁶⁴ Edward Said, *Orientalism*, op. cit., p.21.

This statement reflects the extent to which re-presentation is a technique to ascribe values to the represented, as well as establishing power relations in the social sphere. Representation serves to create groups by speaking on their behalf.³⁶⁵ This in turn allows for shaping the represented collectivity in the language and value hierarchies of the one who represents. In BiH specifically, this has often resulted in representations of ‘Balkanism’, which, according to Bjelić, characterises the Balkans as a backwards-oriented discursive locality in order to establish a hierarchy in which the Balkans and its people are viewed as inferior to the West.³⁶⁶

Holland et al. suggest that people’s everyday lives consist of many complex representations “that are neither bounded, stable, perduring, nor impermeable.”³⁶⁷ The mode in which ‘otherness’ is represented can then be considered as one that aims to establish coherency in the image of the ‘other’ to make it compatible with the representers’ categories and views.³⁶⁸ At the same time, this reflects an ambition to keep images simple and stable, so they can be referred to in certain ways and may potentially be instrumentalised. Bhabha suggests that colonial representations are characterised by their tendency to ascribe fixity to the ‘other’, representing a paradox which “connotes rigidity and an unchanging order as well as disorder, degeneracy and daemonic repetition.”³⁶⁹ As a result, neither difference in time nor difference in space are taken into consideration in such discourses, which instead tend to disavow diversity and fail to represent complex and incoherent structures.

However, this does not mean that those who are being represented are powerless victims of the discourses imposed onto them. In this context, Said points out that, albeit late, Westerners have become aware that their discourses of representation can be challenged by those that are represented.³⁷⁰ Indeed, labelling can provoke resistance when it stretches too far.³⁷¹ When Spivak asks whether the subaltern can speak she is, in fact, implying that it cannot as a result of its definition as a homogenous mass of ‘other’

³⁶⁵ Cf. Pierre Bourdieu, op. cit., p.740.

³⁶⁶ Dušan I. Bjelić, “Introduction: Blowing Up the “Bridge””, in Dušan I. Bjelić and Obrad Savić (eds.), *Balkan as metaphor: between globalization and fragmentation*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002, pp.1-22, p.5.

³⁶⁷ Dorothy Holland et al., op. cit., p.29.

³⁶⁸ Cf. Homi K. Bhabha, “The Other Question... Homi K Bhabha Reconsiders the Stereotype and Colonial Discourse”, *Screen*, vol.24, no.6, 1983, pp.18-36, p.19. Bhabha talks about the “*mode of representation of otherness*”.

³⁶⁹ Ibid., p.18.

³⁷⁰ Edward Said, *Culture & Imperialism*, op. cit., p.235.

³⁷¹ Richard Jenkins, op. cit., p.9.

people.³⁷² Yet to expand on this reasoning, one can argue that the subaltern can speak when it re-defines and re-presents itself in all its complexity, fluidity and diversity. It is worth quoting Bhabha again at this stage, who claims that “[t]he social articulation of difference, from the minority perspective, is a complex, on-going negotiation that seeks to authorize cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical transformation.”³⁷³ Therefore, culture can neither be considered a homogeneous and unitary entity, nor a dualism between self and other.³⁷⁴ In that sense, representation and cultural identification have to be considered reciprocal processes playing out in interactions between different actors and, thus, between different spaces of agency.

Against this background, I argue that representations emerge at different levels. On the one hand, actors moving within those spaces are constructing images of each other as distinct or similar, nuanced or simple. On the other hand, actors within and between the spaces develop representations of each other in order to establish their very identity in similarity to or difference from other actors. These processes of representation are linked to power in terms of who is being heard by whom and who has the power make those representations relevant in discourses and in relation resource distribution. However, it has to be taken into account that those representations, despite their potential fixity, can always be challenged in different ways from any side or position.

Functions of Spaces of Agency

Spaces of agency do not emerge by coincidence, but they fulfil functions that are crucial for the actors involved in their creation and perpetuation. Their main function is the articulation of actors’ needs and interests in either open or disguised ways. The articulation of needs is processed through the attachment of meanings to the core issue of a space which, in turn, reflects a certain perspective and its associated needs and interests.

³⁷² Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?”, op. cit.

³⁷³ Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, op. cit., p.3.

³⁷⁴ Ibid., p.52.

Melucci has suggested that social mobilisation is related to the desire to express emerging needs.³⁷⁵ In that sense, spaces of agency can be seen as fulfilling this desire in terms of communicating needs and interests in a variety of ways. In many instances, needs and interests cannot be clearly distinguished, but are merely two ways of referring to the same issue, yet giving a different subjective priority to it, with needs usually referring to something more essential than interests. Whether something should be referred to as a *need* rather than an *interest* is a highly subjective judgement, which is why this chapter does not aim to draw a clear distinction between needs and interests as most literature on human needs aims to do. Thus, this chapter avoids essentialising human needs as universal and biological necessities of life.³⁷⁶

As it has been contended in a variety of contexts, human needs manage to reach to a deep level of both individuals and groups in terms of reflecting uncompromisable requirements of human beings.³⁷⁷ What is problematic is that while needs are often considered to be universal and biological givens, their social and cultural context is marginalised or even ignored. In addition, human needs have often been treated as stable across cultures. Despite acknowledging the lingual dimension of needs, Galtung, for instance, concludes that there are four basic things people cannot live without, namely survival, wellness, freedom and identity.³⁷⁸ This reflects the extent to which culture and context tend to be treated as secondary and the neglect of the inherent subjectivity and contextuality of human needs. The cultural insensitivity of the human needs approaches has been criticised from a number of perspectives with Väyrynen, specifically, blaming Burton's human needs theory for rejecting perspectivism and, hence, underestimating the impact of cultural differences.³⁷⁹ Avruch and Rubenstein

³⁷⁵ Alberto Melucci, "Liberation or Meaning? Social Movements, Culture and Democracy", *Development and Change*, vol.23, no.3, 1992, pp.43-77, p.44.

³⁷⁶ Cf. Mary E. Clark, "Symptoms of cultural pathologies: A hypothesis", in Dennis J. D. Sandole and Hugo van der Merwe (eds.), *Conflict Resolution Theory and Practice. Integration and Application*, Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press; New York: St Martin's Press, 1993, pp.43-54.

³⁷⁷ See, for instance, Michelle Maiese, "Interests, Positions, Needs, and Values," *Beyond Intractability*, Conflict Research Consortium, University of Colorado, Boulder, 2004, <<http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/interests/>> (accessed 03/06/11).

³⁷⁸ Johan Galtung, "Meeting basic needs: peace and development", in Felicia A. Huppert, Nick Baylis and Barry Keverne, (eds.), *The Science of Well-being*, Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005, pp.475-502, p.481.

³⁷⁹ Tarja Väyrynen, *Culture and International Conflict Resolution: A Critical Analysis of the Work of John Burton*, Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 2001, pp.109 and 80.

share these observations, pointing to the cultural blindness of human needs theories.³⁸⁰ Such approaches illustrate the tension of human needs concepts between universalist and particularist ethics,³⁸¹ with a clear tendency to rely on universalist values when *the particular* is unknown or distanced.

Yet, the approach taken here will aim to view human needs as contextual, relational, open to transformation and as expressions of human agency. This is in line with Castoriadis's affirmation that human needs are necessarily socially and culturally created in terms of being inseparable from their objects.³⁸² Castoriadis claims that "it is the culture in which [...] [human beings] live that teaches them that they 'need' one or the other".³⁸³ Therefore, needs cannot be isolated from the context in which they develop given that they incorporate power structures, cultural influences and processes of socialisation and representation. Not only must the meaning of needs be seen as socially constructed,³⁸⁴ but so too must their very emergence and development. As a result, it would be problematic to consider needs to be stable entities. This is not to neglect the biological dimension to certain needs, but if we argue that needs develop according to context, we also need to acknowledge that, with changing contexts, needs will gradually change, and therefore also the way in which actors frame needs. In spaces of agency, needs can be seen as communicated through the meanings attached to the core issue of the space.

One of the problems with human needs research so far has often been the tendency to regard individuals and groups as passive victims to their very needs, which in turn neglects people's agency in defining their own needs, rights and representations. Against this background, this thesis combines a study of needs, as they are expressed within spaces, with theories of agency to account for actors' abilities to make a difference to their own lives and the social world. This applies not only to individuals, but also to collectivities, who create the space to define a set of priorities that they

³⁸⁰ Cf. Kevin Avruch, *Culture and Conflict Resolution*, Washington, D.C: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1998 and Richard E. Rubenstein, "Basic Human Needs: The Next Steps in Theory Development", *The International Journal of Peace Studies*, vol.6, no.1, 2001.

³⁸¹ cf. Michael Ignatieff, *The Warrior's Honor: Ethnic War and the Modern Conscience*, London: Vintage, 1999, p.6.

³⁸² Cornelius Castoriadis, *The Imaginary Institution of Society*, Cambridge: Polity, 1987, p.171.

³⁸³ *Ibid.*, p.25.

³⁸⁴ Allister McGregor, "Researching wellbeing: from concepts to methodology", in Ian Gough and Allister McGregor (eds.), *Wellbeing in Developing Countries. From Theory to Research*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, pp.316-350, p.332.

consider as important. White and Ellison point to the importance of agency for people's understanding of their needs as well as for the ways in which this relates to their goals and the ability to access the resources required for achieving those.³⁸⁵ To turn this argument on its head while at the same time reflecting the complexity of element interaction, Holland et al. suggest that the "autonomy of the self, or self-agency, depends upon one's capacity to produce the means that organize one's activity."³⁸⁶

Through spaces of agency, actors convey their needs in coded ways. An issue around which a discourse develops and starts to matter to a number of people contains and derives from unsatisfied needs. By centring their energies on a discursive area that the actors feel needs to be discussed publicly or semi-publicly, they decide to communicate their needs in a specific way to a specific audience. Depending on the space, the associated discourses of need(s) and interest(s) may not be accessible to a general public, but only to a smaller section of the population. At the same time, the actors involved in the space are not always and necessarily its target audience, but they establish a target audience that they think the best fit for addressing their unsatisfied needs. Along those lines, it may often not make sense for actors to voice their needs openly, so hidden spaces would be used instead. Although the use of hidden spaces results in accessing a smaller target audience, this approach can still be a powerful strategy in terms of developing discourses in a subtle manner.

Agency in Spaces

It has been argued that spaces have to be seen in relation to the agency of those who create, shape and challenge them. Perhaps most famously, de Certeau has pointed to the strategies and tactics of the users of certain spaces as "an art of the weak" and as a form of anti-discipline emerging through the creativity of actors on an everyday basis.³⁸⁷ This suggests a close and subtle connection between spaces and agency. It also outlines the necessity to refrain from a narrow view on power that only takes its

³⁸⁵ Sarah White and Mark Ellison, "Wellbeing, livelihoods and resources in social practice", in Ian Gough and Allister McGregor (eds.), *Wellbeing in Developing Countries. From Theory to Research*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, pp.157-175, p.158.

³⁸⁶ Dorothy Holland et al., op. cit., p.192.

³⁸⁷ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984, esp. p.37.

institutionalised forms into account. Much more in a Foucauldian understanding of power, the thesis views power and agency as possibly diffuse. It focuses on the marginalised and excluded on the one hand, and on power as emerging from creative processes on the other hand.³⁸⁸

What Melucci frames as creation and expansion of public spaces³⁸⁹ is what Deeds Ermarth calls “our power to revise social codes rather than merely to repeat the same old exclusions and emphases, the same, same, old stories.”³⁹⁰ Both statements tie in with a concept of agency as the ability to create new relevant spaces and transcend existing ones, yet there is no consensus about the extent to which agency can transgress structural constraints. For instance, while Melucci views human action as the “construction of possibilities within boundaries,”³⁹¹ Cresswell emphasises the possibility of transgressing old spaces to create new ones, which can in turn be transgressed again.³⁹² The latter mirrors the close connection between structures and the agency to transform them into something new; and, when taken as such, agency cannot be seen in isolation from the surrounding structures and vice versa. This has been emphasised by a number of scholars who have conceptualised the relationship between structure and agency in qualitatively different ways. There are controversies about what kind of agency matters: is it individual or collective, capability or intention, formal or informal and so forth. Gupta and Ferguson argue for a strong conception of agency in relation to spatial structures, suggesting that the “ability of people to confound the established spatial orders, either through physical movement or through their own conceptual and political acts of re-imagination, means that space and place can never be ‘given’.”³⁹³ This points to the ability of actors to create structures, such as contexts and boundaries of neighbourhood, by engaging “in the social activities of production, representation, and reproduction.”³⁹⁴ It also recognises the importance of agency in its structural setting. In that sense, despite its ability to transcend structural boundaries

³⁸⁸ Brent L. Pickett, “Foucault and the Politics of Resistance”, *Polity*, vol.28, no.4, 1996, pp.445-466, p.458.

³⁸⁹ Alberto Melucci, “Vie quotidienne, besoins individuels et action volontaire”, *Sociologie et sociétés*, vol. 25, no.1, 1993, p. 189-198.

³⁹⁰ Elizabeth Deeds Ermarth, “Agency in the Discursive Condition“, *History and Theory*, vol.40, no.4, 2001, pp.34-58.

³⁹¹ Alberto Melucci, “Liberation or Meaning? Social Movements, Culture and Democracy”, op. cit., p.52.

³⁹² Tim Cresswell, op. cit., p.176.

³⁹³ Ibid., p.17.

³⁹⁴ Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* , p.185.

agency cannot be viewed as isolated from its surrounding structures given that agency is always situational and contextual rather than existing in a vacuum. It always connects to its points of reference from which it emerges in the first place. Hence, the meanings created in a space influence the ways in which actors perceive that space and how they (inter)act within it. Kesby claims that “agency is also partial, positioned, and informed by a situated consciousness of one’s location and interests within an evolving constellation of powers.”³⁹⁵ Pile suggests that agency and resistance are closely connected to the structures of oppression that made them emerge, thus contradicting the notion that resistance is necessarily in opposition to power.³⁹⁶ Pile also points to the ambiguity of tactics of resistance, which have an element responding to the power structures that stirred them, while there is another element of resistance that projects more invisible and hidden dynamics, which reflect underlying desires, fears, and hopes and is thus more autonomous from oppressive structures.³⁹⁷

The relationship between structure and agency has been the main focus of Giddens’s theory of structuration, defining agency in relation to capability. Agency is thus seen as a way in which individuals can potentially make a difference to current structures,³⁹⁸ while structures are analytically to be seen as subject-less, but situated in time and space.³⁹⁹ Structuration then frames the ways in which structures are transformed and how this contributes to the reproduction of social systems,⁴⁰⁰ while the context in time and space, as well as the actors involved, are crucial in such processes.⁴⁰¹ The essence of structuration views structures not as external to individuals, but rather constraining and enabling actors in the social system.⁴⁰² Thus, the intricate mutual implications of structure and agency become clear, with Giddens claiming that:

[s]tructural constraints [...] always operate via agents’ motives and reasons, establishing (often in diffuse and convoluted ways) conditions and consequences affecting options open to others, and what they want from whatever options they have.⁴⁰³

³⁹⁵ Mike Kesby, op. cit., p.2046.

³⁹⁶ Steve Pile, “Opposition, political identities and spaces of resistance“, in Steve Pile and Michael Keith (eds.), *Geographies of resistance*, London, New York: Routledge, 1997, pp.1-32, p.1.

³⁹⁷ Ibid., p.16.

³⁹⁸ Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society. Outline of the Theory of Structuration*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1984, p.9.

³⁹⁹ Ibid., p.25.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid., p.25.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid., p.282.

⁴⁰² Ibid., p.25.

⁴⁰³ Ibid., p.310.

The recursiveness of human action, to which Giddens points, has been taken up by Jabri, who suggests that actors reproduce social and institutional continuities over time, so behaviours and acts need to be seen in relation to those surrounding structures that consist mainly of social norms and values.⁴⁰⁴ This underlines the importance of the institutional settings and frames of reference in which a decision is made,⁴⁰⁵ yet at the same time claiming that structures of legitimation and domination can always be contested in the very social context from which they have emerged.⁴⁰⁶ This recognises the transformative capacity of agents operating within structural constraints and frames the public space as space of contestation and conflict.⁴⁰⁷ Jabri's and Giddens' approaches can be considered valuable in that they outline the ways in which structure and agency are not only mutually constitutive, but also situational and contextual. In addition, these approaches take away the structural determinism often found in sociological approaches and yet situate social actors in their social context to question the notion of autonomous agency. In this thesis, I will assume the possibility of acting and transforming structures, while agency is guided – to a certain extent – by surrounding structures. In that respect, certain meanings may constitute the essence of a space of agency, but they may also constantly be modified and questioned by actors engaging with that space. This is in line with Wight's approach, stating that "agency is embedded in a complex relational network of positioned practices, but does not reduce those that practise to the positions they occupy."⁴⁰⁸ The possibility to transcend structures to be able to transform them has also been investigated by Holland et al., who identifies improvisation as a tool of agency in terms of reflecting the space of authoring that agents have in creating the social world.⁴⁰⁹ Agency hence arises out of episodes in which a deviation from routines and engrained structures takes place, while this very agency is formed dialectically and dialogically in imagined worlds.⁴¹⁰ Individuals can

⁴⁰⁴ Vivienne Jabri, *Discourses on Violence*, Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 1996, p.54.

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p.67.

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.83f.

⁴⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p.145 and 158.

⁴⁰⁸ Colin Wight, "They Shoot Dead Horses Don't They? Locating Agency in the Agent-Structure Problematique", *European Journal of International Relations*, vol. 5, no.1, 1999, pp.109-142, pp.134f.

⁴⁰⁹ Dorothy Holland et al., *op. cit.*, p.40 and 210.

⁴¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.49.

improvise and act in these imagined worlds to transform actual social structures just as much as collectivities and groups who have the same capacity.

The *spaces of agency* concept refers to changes in imagined and discursive worlds and shows how such ideational changes are translated into social practice. When spaces of agency change, which they constantly do to a greater or lesser extent, social relations inevitably change as well due to the fact that spaces respond to each other and are mutually linked. In that sense, bringing about change is possible not only from the position of dominance, but also from more marginalised segments in society. Bhabha argues that “a subaltern or minority agency may attempt to interrogate and rearticulate the ‘interest’ of society that marginalizes its interests” by resorting to discourses challenging the dominant order.”⁴¹¹ This reflects a rather broad conceptualisation of power, pointing to its invisible dimensions. In fact Spivak’s suggests that “the agency of change is located in the insurgent or the ‘subaltern’”.⁴¹² At the same time, Robinson reminds us that spaces are never securely ordered and achieved, but may constantly be reshaped.⁴¹³

The creation of new or the modification of existing spaces of agency may therefore appear to be an appropriate strategy to make one’s voice and needs heard, even from a marginalised position. This, however, does not imply a coherent set of needs among marginalised actors, but it is essential to deconstruct unity in terms of asking who acts (for whom), who speaks (on behalf of whom), as well as by which forces a common space is established.⁴¹⁴ At the same time, Melucci reminds us that collective actors are never in complete control of their actions,⁴¹⁵ yet without denying their agency to consciously modify and resist the structures surrounding them. Those structures may link to cultural processes, which can serve “as a set of control mechanisms [...] for the governing of behavior.”⁴¹⁶ Indeed, cultural structures play an essential role in the ways in which spaces of agency are shaped and are in themselves constantly modified by actors exercising their transformational powers. Being tied to

⁴¹¹ Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, op. cit., p.274.

⁴¹² Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography”, in Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (eds.), *Selected Subaltern Studies*, New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988, pp.3-32, p.3.

⁴¹³ Jenny Robinson, op. cit., p.297.

⁴¹⁴ Cf. Alberto Melucci, “Liberation or Meaning? Social Movements, Culture and Democracy”, op. cit., p.49.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid., p.66.

⁴¹⁶ Clifford Geertz, op. cit., p.44.

ideas, the power of culture then depends on its social relevance, since “[i]deas [...] must [...] be carried by powerful social groups to have powerful social effects.”⁴¹⁷ In that sense, cultural processes represent both a platform for agency as well as providing the structures of social life.

This results in a complex interplay of agency and structure, with structures impacting on how responses to power and oppression are formed. At the same time, I refrain from using a deterministic notion of agency. Following Pile’s and Bhabha’s arguments about the ambivalence of power and resistance, there is this second side to the concept of agency that is not purely a direct response to existing power structures, but which also involves a consideration of what agents bring to discursive spaces as their needs, hopes and fears. This, in turn, allows for a modification of structures and thus represents a space in which interactions between different spaces, as well as within them, may lead to change. As a result, agency is not viewed here as merely inherent, but as constructed in relation to surrounding structures, while retaining a certain notion of autonomy and space for the projection of human needs, associated interests and emotions. Agency is thus manifested by filling spaces with new meaning as well as creating new spaces with a particular meaning. Such processes do not happen in isolation, but draw on existing resources. Kesby puts it as follows: “If ordinary people are to deconstruct existing structures and then hold them at bay [...], they require new powers to provide some guidance for alternative living.”⁴¹⁸ There are various sources, both internal and external, that may contribute to this process and from which guidance of spaces may emerge.

Peacebuilding Agency

Agency can be exercised in various ways and with various purposes. It must not be romanticised, since agency is not necessarily constructive, but may at the same time be destructive in terms of undermining the foundations on which people build their lives. In that sense, agency may be diverse and nuanced, whether it be constructive or destructive, related to peace or war, and so forth. However, what this thesis is interested

⁴¹⁷ Ibid., p.314.

⁴¹⁸ Mike Kesby, op. cit., p.2049.

in, and looks at in closer detail, is a particular form of agency that, which I call *'peacebuilding agency'*. It refers to the manifestations of agency as they are voiced by actors that are, implicitly or explicitly, interested in peacebuilding in the broader sense. This means peacebuilding agency as not exclusively liberal or neo-liberal in nature,⁴¹⁹ but in relation to any action carried out in relation to peace. This may be rather indirect and does not only refer to actors representing themselves as peacebuilding actors. In fact, some of the cultural actors I interviewed, such as museums or musicians, do not refer to themselves as peacebuilding actors. Yet, in the wider sense of the term, *peacebuilding agency* refers to processes and reflects actions undertaken in order to improve societal co-habitation and to create change in the everyday, thus comprising a transformative potential. At the same time, this does not imply that this idea of 'improvement' is necessarily a *good* form of agency from a normative point of view as it refers to the subjective perceptions and strategies of a certain actor. Rather than alluding to desirable forms of agency in the peacebuilding context, it relates to the social practices of actors in the light of their transformative *ambitions*. The artists' association *Ambrosia*, based in Sarajevo, illustrates the fact that it is impossible to distinguish between 'good' and 'bad' agency. Their ambition is to create a better society by challenging its traditional values commonly associated with 'raja', with the latter representing principles of egalitarianism and communal belonging.⁴²⁰ While the value system linked to 'raja' may be a desirable form of social behaviour for large parts of the population who identify with its underlying norms, *Ambrosia* is considering it as oppressive and limiting creativity as a result of its collective nature.⁴²¹ This example reflects the extent to which peacebuilding agency is not inherently consensual and cosy, but contested and linked to competing norm systems. The concept does therefore not refer to selected normative systems, but instead refers to constructive social practices; or, if they have destructive elements, to practices that still represent an attempt to make space to build new foundations on which spaces of agency can emerge that are meant to lead to a transformed society. The peacebuilding element is not exclusively measured by the impacts it causes, since peacebuilding agency can cause new conflictual processes or revive old ones, though, mostly, this is unintentional. *Peacebuilding*

⁴¹⁹ Boutros Boutros-Ghali, op. cit.

⁴²⁰ Nebojša Šavija-Valha, *Ambrosia*, *Personal Interview*, Sarajevo, 23/03/10.

⁴²¹ Ibid.

agency thus relates to the constructive ambition and associated action of actors aiming to change society and its ways of dealing with conflict. It can thus be seen as a social practice. This thesis includes actors from a variety of backgrounds who compete over the meaning of *peace* as well as the ways in which to achieve it. Yet, what they have in common is an ambition to deal with conflict, and to create spaces in which peace can unfold.

Interactions between Spaces of Agency

Going back to the image of spaces of agency as bubbles, the following section explores different outcomes when two ‘bubbles of meaning’ approach or touch each other. Do they destroy, merge, coexist or shape each other?

Lefebvre has claimed that “[c]onflict is not rare between representational spaces and the symbolic systems they encompass.”⁴²² At the same time, looking at the interaction between spaces, not only in conflictual terms, but also with respect to cooperation and symbiosis, we need to consider Gupta’s and Fergusons’ argument that socio-cultural change and transformation can be understood as being located within interconnected spaces.⁴²³ In that sense, if we want to understand change within the peacebuilding context, we need to look at the interactions of those spaces that are relevant to the peacebuilding context. When agency meets other forms of agency, how do they transform each other, and what happens to the associated spaces? How do those spaces newly emerging from encounters between EU and local spaces impact on the overall peacebuilding process, its actors and core issues? Such questions will help us understand changes in meanings as they are relevant in the peacebuilding process, as well as to understand the different forms of agency that come into play.

Methodologies: Institutional Ethnography and Participatory Research Techniques

Investigating the interaction between imaginary spaces of agency requires an adequate methodology. In combination with participatory research techniques, the

⁴²² Henri Lefebvre, *op.cit.*, p.213.

⁴²³ Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, *op. cit.*, p.8.

methodology that appears to be most useful for this purpose is based on institutional ethnography (IE), a technique developed during the American women's movement in the 1970s, which aimed to critique the prevailing sociological discourse that often ignored the everyday.⁴²⁴ In that context, traditional sociology was mainly critiqued for its tendency to focus on "the constructed realities of privileged experts over the lived realities of its subjects,"⁴²⁵ thus neglecting the recipients of the policies of those experts. This is the background against which institutional ethnography, in the first place promoted by Dorothy Smith, was developed as an approach that privileged the experiences of the 'people on the ground' by creating "a sociology *for* rather than *of* people."⁴²⁶ For this purpose, IE is interested in the ways in which people are affected by institutional discourses in terms of how their daily lives are influenced by the latter. This means locating a perspective in a specific institutional order, which allows for investigating the relationship that is established between an institution and people's everyday lives. In that sense, people are viewed as embedded in an everyday life context in which "they are hooked into relations that connect them beyond scope of experience."⁴²⁷ Here, the contexts in which people's activities are deployed, organised and contribute to social organisation are relevant for the analysis of the social world,⁴²⁸ while social relations and their connection to the organisation of experience matter. IE is conducted from the perspective of exclusion, given that it focuses on the perspectives of those who have been excluded from the making of institutional discourses,⁴²⁹ such as cultural actors excluded from the institutionalisation of peacebuilding. In that sense, the ambition of IE is to see what has been overlooked by mainstream sociology to bring hidden agencies back into the political and social world. Therefore, the main emphasis of analysis lies on the ways in which people's everyday lives are externally regulated by the very institutional and social settings in which they are situated. In this context, IE is particularly interested in the discursive influence of institutions on those everyday situations in terms of looking at texts (in a broad sense) and how those reflect power

⁴²⁴ Dorothy E. Smith, "Institutional Ethnography", in Tim May (ed.), *Qualitative Research in Action*, London: SAGE, 2000, pp.17-52, pp.17f.

⁴²⁵ Peter R. Grahame, "Ethnography, Institutions, and the Problematic of the Everyday World", *Human Studies*, vol.21, 1998, pp.347-360, p.348.

⁴²⁶ Dorothy E. Smith, op. cit., p.19.

⁴²⁷ Ibid., p.21.

⁴²⁸ Ibid., p.18.

⁴²⁹ Peter R. Grahame, op. cit., pp.356f.

relations, regulation and social organisation.⁴³⁰ Not only are texts revealing in terms of reflecting a specific institutional position, but they also reflect the ways in which labelling and counter-labelling matter in the discursive construction of social spaces.⁴³¹ With a slightly stronger focus on discourses within institutions in such processes, Escobar argues that IE allows for investigating how local (historical) spaces are influenced by non-local practices of institutions.⁴³² This argument can be extended in terms of claiming that at the same time, textual practices can reveal the extent to which non-local spaces are shaped by local discourses and practices. As a result, the ways in which ‘local’ and ‘non-local’ spaces overlap and impact on each other can be grasped by looking at their mutual influences, given that the nature of daily life in either of those spheres is not exempt from external influences.⁴³³ In that sense, the impacts of institutional discourses on the everyday mirrors the extent to which those institutions structure people’s lives and thoughts.⁴³⁴ The organising power of texts mirrors the extra-local management of local settings through texts and discourses,⁴³⁵ reflecting back on the dynamics of social structures and processes outlined above. This is the background against which Wright characterises IE “as an effective research tool useful for investigating oppressive ruling relations that intersect institutional and cultural boundaries.”⁴³⁶ At the same time, IE manages to situate people in the complexities of their everyday worlds,⁴³⁷ which are rather disorganised and fragmented as a result of transversal processes related to state agencies, institutions, the market and so forth.⁴³⁸ Indeed, local ideas and ideologies as well as discourses, such as liberalism and neo-liberalism provide the master-frames of institutional ethnographies in terms of how they impact on the everyday.⁴³⁹

⁴³⁰ Cf. Dorothy E. Smith, op. cit., p.34.

⁴³¹ Cf. Arturo Escobar, *Encountering Development. The Making and Unmaking of the Third World*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995, p.110.

⁴³² Ibid., p.108.

⁴³³ Cf. Peter R. Grahame, op. cit., p.350.

⁴³⁴ Arturo Escobar, *Encountering Development*, op. cit., p.107.

⁴³⁵ Marjorie L. Devault, “Introduction: What is Institutional Ethnography?“, *Social Problems*, vol. 53, no.3, 2006, pp. 294–298, p.295.

⁴³⁶ Ursula T. Wright, “Institutional Ethnography: A Tool for Merging Research and Practice“, 2003 Midwest Research to Practice Conference in Adult, Continuing, and Community Education, p.244, <https://scholarworks.iupui.edu/bitstream/handle/1805/353/Wright.pdf?sequence=1> (accessed 03/06/11).

⁴³⁷ Kevin T. Walby, “Institutional Ethnography and Surveillance Studies: An Outline for Inquiry“, *Surveillance & Society*, vol.3, no.2/3, 2005, pp.158-172, p.164.

⁴³⁸ Peter R. Grahame, op. cit., p.351.

⁴³⁹ Cf. Majorie L. Devault, op. cit., p.296.

Thus, I will use IE as a method to look at the interactions between different spaces of agency. It will be a useful methodology to investigate the ways in which the EU's discourses influence local spaces of agency. This, in turn, allows for an investigation of how such spaces are shaped and transformed by institutional spaces. However, this represents a one-way approach that fails to look at the feedback loop in which local (counter-)discourses respond to those discourses imposed by institutions. Instead, a two-way approach of investigating discourses will be necessary. Examining not only how institutions shape people's everyday lives, but also how the latter shape the former, will allow for an investigation of the extent to which people challenge those institutional structures in terms of how they modify, co-opt, take over or resist them. In addition, using IE as a two-way process will help understand how institutional spaces are impacted upon by responses emerging from the everyday and how discourses keep emerging in the encounter of those spheres. Using IE as a two-way process will then help create an investigation of the dynamics of interaction between local needs and those of the EU whilst acknowledging that institutional discourses are not immune from resistance from the ground. By turning IE on its head, it will be possible to investigate the different responses of local agencies to EU peacebuilding policies and how they impact on the latter. As a result, those agencies will not be considered as passive victims of imposed spaces, but be looked at with regard to their capacities to re-transform those spaces on their own terms.

For this purpose, the investigation of texts as manifestations of discourse has to be understood in a very broad sense, not only encompassing written texts, but at the same time investigating non-written texts such oral discourses and symbolic language. This is particularly important in order to focus on the everyday lives of people, which, in most cases, are not written, but rather consist of verbal responses as well as acts and reactions to imposed discourses. Those responses feed back into institutional discourses, for instance by challenging their legitimacy or by modifying them on their own terms. As far as the EU is concerned, there is a large body of written texts available in the form of policy papers and documents. However, to fully comprehend the dynamics and processes of interaction between the EU's spaces and local spaces, it will not be sufficient to rely on those written texts. Instead, it is essential to take into account the verbal communication of people working in EU agencies in order to concretely account

for the ways in which policy changes are thought through (informally) and possibly modified, thus creating specific spaces of agency. As a result, both the quantity and quality of interaction are of crucial importance in using a two-way approach to IE, which will then help understand how different spaces interact in (re)producing conceptualisations of peace and various actors' needs associated with it. In that sense, IE will serve as a method for understanding the relationship between local actors and the EU in their engagement in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Not only will this methodology allow for an analysis of the EU's impact on Bosnian society, but at the same time it will be possible to investigate the feedback loop during the course of which local agencies are capable of transforming EU peacebuilding spaces. This is why semi-structured interviews coupled with participatory research techniques have formed the cornerstone of the research upon which this thesis is based.

Due to its emphasis on local agency, the methodological approach this thesis takes is built on participatory research techniques. As Cahill has pointed out, such techniques relate to personal experiences and concerns, taking into account the emotional experiences of the participants in the research process.⁴⁴⁰ It aims to take the perspective and visions of the 'subjects' of research into account, yet without claiming to provide a full representation of their ideas. This thesis rather implies that, while it is never possible to be representative in terms of speaking on behalf of a group of actors, this cannot serve as an excuse to avoid listening to them. Against this background, research undertaken for this thesis builds on a number of elements taken from participatory research techniques in the belief that different voices, even if they are biased, can make an important contribution to the research process. In this vein, this project builds on the following participatory elements:⁴⁴¹

First, I have undertaken several field trips to BiH and thus maintained ongoing contact with many participants. Conversations and interviews were partly followed up by phone or email to allow for a more dialogical view on the research process. This, in turn, made it possible to constantly revise and rethink the findings with a low degree of

⁴⁴⁰ Caitlin Cahill, "Participatory data analysis", in Sara Kindon, Rachel Pain and Mike Kesby (eds.), *Participatory Action Research Approaches and Methods. Connecting People, participation and place*, London; New York: Routledge, 2007, pp.181-187, p.186.

⁴⁴¹ This is based on Mike Kesby, Sara Kindon and Rachel Pain, "Participatory approaches and diagramming techniques", in Robin Flowerdew and David Martin (eds.), *Methods in Human Geography*, 2nd ed., Harlow; New York: Prentice Hall, 2005, pp.144-166.

distortion. To check whether the findings correspond to what people in BiH think of themselves, findings have also been presented at conferences. One was organised in the framework of “Just and Durable Peace by Piece,” a project situated in the EU’s Seventh Framework Programme, and aimed to gathering together researchers and local participants from different societal sectors. It thus created the opportunity for academics to get feedback from those addressed by their writings. Another conference took place in Brussels, where I presented some of my research findings at a meeting in the framework of the People-to-People programme to participants from the Western Balkans.

Second, in the process of interviewing participants, I put emphasis on not dictating the conditions and topics, but was eager to leave space for what the interviewees wanted to talk about and considered important. This sometimes took the conversation in unexpected directions, and these directions then constituted the most central part of the research in terms of pointing to central aspects of agency. It was those findings that led to a complete revision of the theoretical framework *after* the field work, taking into consideration the views of the participants – not only from interviewees, but also gathered through random conversations ‘on the street’, in more social environments with friends as well as semi-public spheres such as museum exhibitions, theatre performances, gatherings in youth centres and so forth. These experiences were crucial in how the theoretical framework of this thesis was developed and this research can thus claim to draw on a certain degree of participatory knowledge. At the same time, those techniques do not claim to be comprehensive in terms of allowing the researcher to gain access to all aspects of agency, since such agency might be partly unconscious and thus not communicable, or actors might deliberately want to hide some of their strategies to keep them from losing their strategic power. After all, as Rose has suggested, there can be more meaning in silence than in interviews and communication.⁴⁴²

Finally, as far as participatory techniques are concerned, there was also a certain extent of reciprocity involved, with the author supporting and assisting in some

⁴⁴² Gillian Rose, “Performing Inoperative Community. The Space and the resistance of some community arts projects,” in Steve Pile and Michael Keith (eds.), *Geographies of resistance*, London, New York: Routledge, 1997, pp.184-202, p.184.

organisational activities on the ground. However, due to issues of confidentiality, these activities cannot be outlined in detail.

Although these research strategies are participatory in nature, this does not mean that the *entire* research process has been participatory. Some elements, such as the preparation of semi-structured interview questions and the writing up process, have been less participatory. The actual choice of interviewees has not been participatory in all cases, with the purpose of not just hearing the ‘loudest’ voices, but instead to actively find more silent and less networked voices that may not have considered themselves as participants to such a research project. Furthermore, there have been critiques of participatory techniques, and in particular concerns regarding the dilemma of researchers who may get involved in the very power relations they are studying and, thus, risk their research becoming co-opted.⁴⁴³ Whilst acknowledging such dangers, I still believe that, since power and co-optation cannot be avoided, even biased participation can still wield important insights as long as it does not claim to be representative. Indeed, different manifestations of agency can only be discovered when the researcher deliberately departs from the claim to be neutral or unbiased in favour of an approach that aims to discover purposeful agency in different spheres. For this purpose, a sensitive methodology is crucial in order to take into account the everyday context in which the research project is situated. Therefore, this thesis does not claim to give a complete account of spaces of agency, but rather intends to point to some selected manifestations of peacebuilding agency as well as its associated interaction processes.

Participatory research techniques integrate well with IE. They manage to shed light on discursive relationships between different actors that might not necessarily be visible to ‘outsiders’ and mere observers. In that sense, participatory research can enhance the scope and quality of IE by giving a more nuanced account of what matters to the participants of discourses rather than just observing and assessing from an outside perspective, which often fails to see the roots of discourses. Participatory techniques can therefore help to gain access to the everyday dimension of peacebuilding, which is also an essential element of IE.

⁴⁴³ See, for instance, Bill Cooke and Uma Kothari (eds.), *Participation: The new Tyranny?*, op. cit.

Taking these methodological considerations into account and reflecting on the hybridity and interaction between agencies, the variety of ways in which local agencies can impact on EU peacebuilding policies, and vice versa, will be outlined in the following paragraph.

Types of Interaction Between Spaces

As far as the interaction between local and international actors is concerned, a fair amount of research has been conducted on the ways in which local society is impacted upon and transformed by peacebuilding agencies. This has often been investigated from a biopolitical perspective in terms of uncovering the techniques by which social engineering is used to govern societies rather than liberating them from structures of domination.⁴⁴⁴ On the other hand, the extent to which these diverse forms of governance have led to the emergence of new spaces, in which local agency can unfold, has hardly been conceptualised. Against this background, I want to argue that much research on the governing power of peacebuilding has ignored the ability of local actors to make a difference to their everyday lives in the peacebuilding context in a variety of ways. It is essential to look not only at the ways in which societies are externally governed, but also how they feed their own ideas back into political processes and transform discourse on their own terms. Investigating this feedback loop helps find alternative spaces in which the seemingly powerless suddenly manage to acquire forces that often remain unaccounted for. At the same time it becomes obvious that in many cases smaller agencies have a variety of options at their disposal when choosing how to respond to official policies, even though this might not be so evident on the surface. However, one could even argue that it is through the ignorance of peacebuilding policies on a superficial and official level that local actors uncover spaces that internationals tend to turn a blind eye to – mostly because such spaces are difficult to access, complex and disguised. By ignoring or underestimating local agency, international actors may thus even contribute to the emergence of new spaces in which actors claim their agency back. Focusing on such spaces allows for a conceptualisation of various local responses as people shape their structural environment on their own

⁴⁴⁴ Cf. Roland Paris, “Peacebuilding and the Limits of Liberal Internationalism”, *op. cit.*

terms. In this context, marginalised agency comes to the fore when actors develop their own spaces of agency. This, in turn, illustrates the complexity of interaction and control. Control is not only exercised from the top down, but it develops in the interaction between spaces, while spaces indirectly regulate each other. This results from the fact that spaces respond to each other, suggesting certain patterns of behaviour that are most promising in satisfying the needs at stake. To do so, actors aim to influence others through the discursive spaces they create, for instance by controlling them and emphasising their agency vis-à-vis their environment. By acting *together*, people are able to emphasise what they consider important for their own lives and to choose from a variety of strategies to communicate their identities and needs. The latter are illustrative of culturally and socially shaped conditions in which specific needs are stressed by the respective actor and/or collectivity. Those contextually-emerging needs have often been neglected by peacebuilding institutions, although it is in those spheres that local actors develop their own visions of peace and create alternative responses to what is being imposed upon them.

As alluded to above, this is not to essentialise the local or the international as spheres clearly distinguishable from or opposed to each other, but to imply that there is always some kind of hybridity in the constitution of local and international agency.⁴⁴⁵ In that sense, this framework does not make the claim that the EU or ‘the local’ are coherent and clearly distinguishable realms, but argues that they keep reconstituting themselves, drawing on internal and external sources and processes. Regarding the EU, I have shown above that its sub-institutions differ considerably in their mandates and self-representations. At the same time, those institutions also change according to the people working in them. For instance, with respect to culture, some EU officials that I interviewed ascribed no importance to it while others identified it as one of the fields that the EU should engage with most in the near future. This certainly depends on the identity, engagement and professional role of the respective interviewee.

The variety of actors that identify themselves as ‘local’ in turn emphasises the wide range of possible reactions and responses to the policies of the peacebuilding agencies, whose power is visible on the surface, but may be viewed differently from a bottom-up perspective. Local agencies in different positions choose (not always

⁴⁴⁵ Cf. Oliver Richmond, “De-romanticising the Local, De-mystifying the International”, op. cit.

consciously) from different reactions to official policies, such as accommodation and assimilation, acceptance and tolerance, complicity, compliance, conformity and obedience, ambiguity, negotiation, modification, co-optation, ignorance, rejection and resistance. Those patterns represent a breakdown derived from Castells' 'resistance identity' as described above⁴⁴⁶ and reflect the modes in which local agencies relate to the frameworks the EU has been proposing. In a similar vein, Barnett and Zürcher point to the dependence of peacebuilders on local elites and introduced four different results of interaction between the former and the latter.⁴⁴⁷ Those results range from cooperative to conflictive peacebuilding, yet the authors fail to develop a more nuanced and contextualised approach to peacebuilding interactions, instead relying on what comes close to a behaviouralistic notion of agency. Therefore, the following section aims to provide a more detailed typology of processes as they can be observed in the interaction between the EU and local society. In this context, Richmond has encouraged a distinction between different responses to liberal peace and peacebuilding on the part of its subjects.⁴⁴⁸ Those categories are equally applicable to the EU's ways of dealing with Bosnian society and can thus be considered a two-way process. They do not stand in isolation, given that in many cases, several forms of responses are at play at the same time. However, the following typology provides a point of departure from which various responses to the EUPF can be investigated.

Accommodation and Assimilation

When (EU) norms and policies are deeply internalised, they are can be accommodated with local society in terms of connecting to local spaces of agency. This might mean that society or a group of agents are willing to assimilate to institutional requirements due to a deep, inner conviction that it is the right thing to do. Such an internalised accommodation of spaces is usually not linked to material incentives, but

⁴⁴⁶ Manuel Castells, op. cit.

⁴⁴⁷ Michael Barnett and Christoph Zuercher, "The Peacebuilder's Contract: How External Statebuilding Reinforces Weak Statehood", in Roland Paris and Timothy Sisk (eds.), *The dilemmas of statebuilding : confronting the contradictions of postwar peace operations*, Abingdon; New York: Routledge, 2008.

⁴⁴⁸ Oliver P. Richmond, "Resistance and the Post-Liberal Peace", *Millennium*, vol. 38, no.3, 2010, pp.665-692.

reflects a normative attitude that considers the destined changes to be beneficial. Accommodation requires active choices in terms of making social dynamics compatible with the underlying norms of the policy to be implemented. With respect to the EU, this ties in with what Diez et al. have outlined as the “constructive impact” of EU engagement, during the course of which “underlying identity-scripts of conflicts” are transformed, while new discursive frameworks emerge.⁴⁴⁹ However, this represents a one-way approach and needs to be complemented with a perspective that takes the inverse direction into account as well. Not only can EU values be accommodated with a society, but we also need to investigate the extent to which the EU has accommodated local needs and values as they emerge from various spaces of agency. In that respect, accommodation and assimilation are not only results of actions, but they equally represent ongoing processes of interaction between actors.

Acceptance and Tolerance

The acceptance and tolerance of a space are somewhat weaker responses than accommodation. They still reflect a general approval of its contents and structures, but do so less out of inner conviction. Rather, such responses come from a perspective that views a reform or the measure linked to it as necessary (maybe even a necessary evil), without necessarily enjoying the concrete adoption of the values of the space. This is similar to accommodation in as far as it does not call for measures against the policies to be implemented, but it is a less active form of acceptance, given that it is a mere reception of measures that are considered necessary for progress and development according to the space in question. This can be the case when certain benefits are attached to policies and such benefits are seen as outweighing any disadvantages or painful elements of the policy. In this context, Menkhaus has argued that acceptance of peacebuilding policies can also be the result of a longer-lasting process which may have

⁴⁴⁹ Thomas Diez, Stephan Stetter and Matthias Albert, “The European Union and Border Conflicts: The Transformative Power of Integration“, *International Organization*, vol.60, 2006, pp.563-593, p.574.

started with initial resistance to those policies.⁴⁵⁰ Therefore, acceptance and tolerance are both an attitude and a result of that attitude.

Complicity

Bourdieu views complicity as closely linked to symbolic power, arguing that:

For symbolic power is that invisible power which can be exercised only with the complicity of those who do not want to know that they are subject to it or even that they themselves exercise it.⁴⁵¹

Schaffer contends that in the senses that Bourdieu and Sartre use the word, *complicity* refers to the reproduction of certain structures and hierarchies, whilst leaving possibilities for acting against such possibly oppressive structures.⁴⁵² Complicity can thus be overcome through the agency of each actor.

In the context of this thesis, *complicity* is viewed in a similar vein: a manifestation of agency and reflection of a process in which agencies become involved with the design of a discourse within a space of agency. This means that specific actors are actively engaged in designing a process of change, while they may represent a broad societal view or only a sectional interest. However, it does not mean that this complicity has to be public and obvious, although it can. In other cases, complicit agencies may refuse to take responsibility for, or to admit to, their involvement in the process publicly. This might be because they are aware of possibly facing resistance by other societal or institutional factions. Complicity is, therefore, a mode of interaction that is processual in nature.

Compliance, Conformity and Obedience

Actors may want to comply with certain contents of a space without agreeing with them for a number of reasons. On the one hand, a certain degree of control and

⁴⁵⁰ Kai Menkhaus, "Impact Assessment in Post- Conflict Peacebuilding. Challenges and Future Directions", interpeace, 2004, http://pdf2.hegoa.efaber.net/entry/content/643/3_Impact_Assessment_in.pdf (accessed 12/05/11).

⁴⁵¹ Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, Cambridge: Polity, 1991, p.164.

⁴⁵² Scott Schaffer, *Resisting Ethics*, New York, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan: 2004, pp.106.

governance which domineering actors of spaces may strive to exercise may make other actors conform to the requirements put on them. This can even take the form of coercion, during the course of which an outside agency overtly forces a space into a specific direction, while the nature of the respective measures may vary. This category also comprises what is often referred to as the *carrot and stick approach* where either incentives or punishments impact upon actors' attitudes and behaviour. The EU's policy of imposing conditionalities on potential member states is a prevalent strategy of incentivising and punishing certain types of behaviour and making actors comply.⁴⁵³ Having said that, one has to be aware that compliance and conformity are often only faked, and actors may find other channels through which they can circumvent structures of obedience. As a result, they may still get the benefits linked to compliance, yet without getting totally absorbed by the spaces that contain the imposed structures and norms. At the same time, the EU may be forced to play by the rules of some local actors on whose compliance the implementation of a policy may depend.

Ambiguity

Ambiguity as a concept has often been ascribed to the actual peace process and provided a basis for critiquing it.⁴⁵⁴ Yet this can also be seen as an attitude of actors towards a specific peace process and is, according to Lefebvre, "a category of everyday life."⁴⁵⁵ Collective actors hardly ever have a clear and precise opinion about their goals and values. Rather they might have an ambiguous attitude towards certain spaces. This might be because the contents and implications of those spaces cannot be fully estimated, because they consist of diverse individuals or because they do not directly concern the agencies in question. Moreover, actors may not have enough information to be able to assess the space fully, which can be a deliberate policy of the participants of the respective other space. This is because ambiguity may be a factor inhibiting resistance due to a lack of a clear position. To a certain extent, ambiguity is present in

⁴⁵³ There have been long debates about the usefulness of the carrot and stick strategy. See, for example, Dimitar Bechev, "Carrots, sticks and norms: the EU and regional cooperation in Southeast Europe", *Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans*, vol.8, no.1, 2006, pp.27-43.

⁴⁵⁴ See, for instance, Béatrice Pouligny, op. cit.

⁴⁵⁵ Henri Lefebvre, *Critique of everyday life*, vol.1, op. cit., p.18.

most positions, but it is often linked to other forms of responding, such as ignorance or negotiation.

Negotiation

In most academic work on negotiation, the term *negotiation* refers to actions taken by political elites who decide the conditions and contents of a certain peace agreement.⁴⁵⁶ However, negotiation can take place on a much more subtle level as well. In this thesis, *negotiation* reflects a process during the course of which actors try to get actively and visibly involved in the design of a space of agency. There is no complete rejection of the space in the first place, but an attempt to modify its contents, needs and associated meanings. This aims to make the space of agency compatible with the respective actor's ideas by exerting influence in an early stage of the creation process. However, the extent to which alternative ideas are integrated with the 'draft' varies considerably.

Modification

The modification of spaces represents both an active process and a possible result of negotiations that may occur when local or EU agencies have been successful in bringing in their specific and alternative ideas and visions of the policy design into a pre-existing space. If, through a selection of various strategies (such as cooptation or negotiation), a space of agency changes, then we can see a modified space as a result. It is important to be aware that such modifications happen constantly. Yet, again, the degree to which alterations are possible is highly variable.

⁴⁵⁶ See Jacob Bercovitch (ed.), *Resolving international conflicts: the theory and practice of mediation*, Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner, 1996.

Co-optation

The core issue of a space can be taken over, but during the course of that process, be co-opted, when the layers of meaning that are cocooned around it are changed for the benefit of the co-opting actor(s). As a result, the space might appear as the same on the surface in terms of the issues it addresses, but since the meanings attached to it are changing it reflects different needs and serves different interests. This ties in with Barnett and Zuercher's notion of "captured peacebuilding," during the course of which both peacebuilders and local elites shape assistance in a way that it is consistent with their interests.⁴⁵⁷ With respect to the liberal peace, Franks and Richmond have illustrated how the entire liberal state has become co-opted by local elites in Kosovo.⁴⁵⁸ Those elites have built on the rhetoric of the peacebuilding community, at the same time attaching new meanings to it to make it their own. Similar dynamics are also at work at the level of a certain space of agency, the meanings of which may become co-opted by certain actors.

Ignorance

With a different strategy, actors can ignore spaces to minimise their impact. This can either happen when a space does not appear to matter for one's own space, or because the actors engaged with the space do not want to be affected by another space. Indeed, if spaces are ignored they tend to lose their power. In that sense, when the target audience ignores the space a revision of it may follow, possibly involving some members of the target audience in the re-designing process. Ignorance can therefore be a very conscious decision, a strategic option and deliberate withdrawal to reduce the impact of a certain space. It can also be the result of not knowing the other space through a lack of contact with it. Either way, ignorance may be a very powerful tool in terms of impacting on discourse clusters.

⁴⁵⁷ Michael Barnett and Christoph Zuercher, op. cit., pp.24, 25.

⁴⁵⁸ Jason Franks and Oliver P. Richmond, "Coopting Liberal Peace-building : Untying the Gordian Knot in Kosovo", *Cooperation and Conflict*, vol.43, no.1, 2008, pp.81-103.

Rejection

When spaces and their contents are deemed unacceptable, they risk being rejected by their target audience. The latter can show their disagreement in different ways, for instance by circumventing it, again, to minimise its impact. Rejection is generally accompanied by a conviction that the space in question is harmful to one's own needs and interests and should therefore not be in place. Rejection, however, does not necessarily imply active behaviour, but, unlike resistance, reflects a certain state of mind.

Resistance

Resistance goes beyond rejection and involves active behaviour and a sense of opposition.⁴⁵⁹ Not only does it represent a negative attitude towards the space of agency in question, but, beyond that, it also attempts to transform it. In that context, Richmond has linked resistance to peacebuilding and its pitfalls⁴⁶⁰ by drawing on Scott's conceptualisation of resistance in terms of powerful small-scale processes as *infrapolitics*.⁴⁶¹

Resistance is mostly no centralised process, but happens on “multiple and intersecting sites of struggle.”⁴⁶² Since those spaces can be more and less hidden, acts of resistance are diverse in their visibility⁴⁶³ and are exercised by different actors, in different places and with different purposes. This is the background against which Scott uncovers resistance in hidden transcripts that are beyond the control of powerholders, although those transcripts are within the spheres of both the powerholders and subordinates.⁴⁶⁴ Scott argues that those transcripts are often deliberately kept hidden to create a sheen of complicity with the dominators, while at the same time creating spaces

⁴⁵⁹ Jocelyn A. Hollander and Rachel L. Einwohner, “Conceptualising Resistance“, *Sociological Forum*, vol.19, no.4, 2004, pp.533-554, p.538.

⁴⁶⁰ Oliver P. Richmond, *A Post-Liberal Peace*, op. cit.

⁴⁶¹ Cf. James Scott, *Domination and the arts of resistance: hidden transcripts*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990.

⁴⁶² Lucy Healey, “Gender, power and the ambiguities of resistance in a Malay community of peninsular Malaysia“, *Women's Studies International Forum*, vol.22, no.1, 1999, pp.49-61, p.50.

⁴⁶³ Jocelyn A. Hollander and Rachel L. Einwohner, op. cit., p.540.

⁴⁶⁴ James Scott, op. cit., pp.15, 86.

outside the control of the dominators.⁴⁶⁵ In some cases, open resistance is forced into clandestine channels.⁴⁶⁶ Hence, Scott suggests that in order to find those spaces one must go beyond the public and official spheres and look at gossip, linguistic tricks, metaphors, folktales, rituals, and local codes and dialects.⁴⁶⁷ Those are the spaces in which resistance manifests itself in the subtleties of everyday life. Healey points out that identity construction can become a form of resistance (even unintentionally) when identities are used to counter a label imposed from outside.⁴⁶⁸ However, there are various ways in which resistance can be voiced, whether it be via identity creation, rumours, alternative discourses or the deliberate ignoring of policies. Hollander and Einwohner make this point by suggesting a typology of resistance that takes into consideration the diverse manifestations of resistance, ranging from overt resistance to missed resistance and many more nuances in between.⁴⁶⁹ The authors claim that resistance can be distinguished according to whether it is intended, whether it is recognised as resistance by its target audience and whether recognised as resistance by observer.⁴⁷⁰ This sheds light on the complexity of resistance acts without even taking into account the divergent *forms* that resistance can take, which Scott puts emphasis on.

This is not to argue that ‘subalterns’ can be reduced to their reactivity to the spaces imposed on them.⁴⁷¹ Yet, it is to take into consideration the hybridity that emerges from the interaction in both official and unofficial spaces between local and international agencies. At the same time, the limitations of resistance cannot be neglected, such as social pressures and material factors.⁴⁷² Healey has suggested that agencies can become complicit in power and domination through expressions of resistance,⁴⁷³ so acts of resistance can never be seen in absolute terms.

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid., pp.86, 118.

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid., p.192.

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid., p.137f.

⁴⁶⁸ Lucy Healey, op. cit., p.49.

⁴⁶⁹ Jocelyn A. Hollander and Rachel L. Einwohner, op. cit., p.544.

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid., p.544.

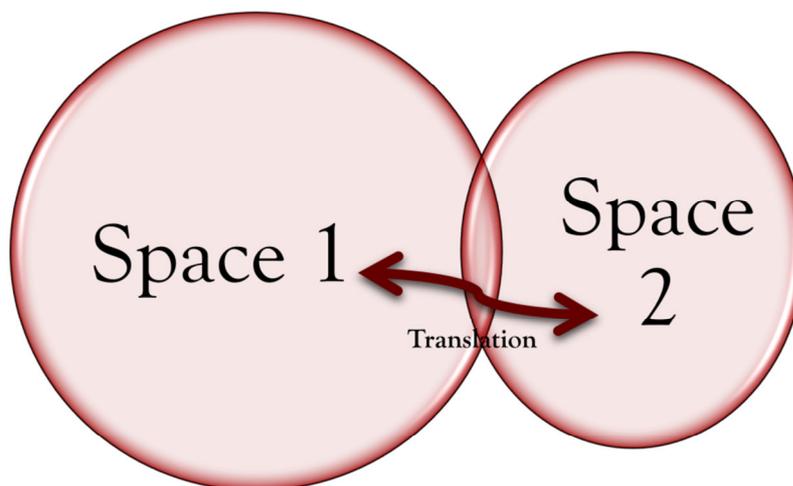
⁴⁷¹ Cf. Sherry B. Ortner, “Resistance and the Problem of Ethnographic Refusal“, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol.37, no.1, 1995, pp.173-193, p.180.

⁴⁷² Cf. Lucy Healey, op. cit., pp.56f.

⁴⁷³ Ibid., pp.59f.

The variety of reactions on the part of different (local) agencies mirrors the impact that actors can have on each other's spaces, although they are often portrayed as powerless and marginal. However, it becomes evident that actors tend to have certain options from which they can choose (to different degrees), to demonstrate their agency and power, often deployed in more hidden spaces. This list of reactions does not claim to be able to clearly separate those responses, which tend to be overlapping and nuanced. In many cases, several of these reactions are deployed simultaneously by different agencies and even from within one specific agency. What is recognised as a local response generally depends on the perspective of the observer as well as on the depth of focus. Yet, even marginal agencies can have an impact on bigger policies in terms of pushing for change, ignoring those policies, becoming complicit in or resisting them. This is the background against which the ways in which EU agencies' impacts upon local spaces can be investigated, yet also how local agencies transform EU peacebuilding spaces by feeding back into policies through their own power and agency.

Translation between Spaces



This raises the following questions: How are the preceding reflections relevant for the study of peace and peacebuilding? And, how do spaces of agency affect peacebuilding processes?

I argue that an investigation of spaces of agency allows for the development of a perspective on the complexity of voices and their infrastructures in the day-to-day negotiation of peace, thereby taking the subjectivity of peace into account. Focusing on the social processes through which a space is shaped, constantly reproduced and modified sheds light on the dynamics of social interaction. In this context, it is important to investigate what can be said in which spaces, with respect to the prevailing logics of inclusion and exclusion. Spaces of agency reflect people's everyday discourses as they are performed and circulated within various spaces, and thus sheds light on underlying societal processes and concerns. Such an approach involves questions about who participates in a certain space in specific ways, as well as who is excluded from its (re)production as far as the creation of meanings is concerned. This, in turn, relates to power relations as they are constructed in a space and between spaces through mechanisms of mutual control.

It suggests itself that the crucial point in investigating the power of the interaction between spaces of agency lies in the potential of discourse translation between spaces. This means that spaces not only control each other, but they are also capable of instilling discourses into one another, thus shaping each other. Bhabha has spoken of "cultural translation" as a strategy of resisting the colonisers and their discourses through the imitation and manipulation of the colonial discourses when those are moved to a different context.⁴⁷⁴ Lefebvre also hints at the capacity of translation, yet in a constructive rather than resisting capacity. He points to the power of the everyday to translate 'sign systems' into what is more accessible to people by recoding bureaucratic language.⁴⁷⁵ Translation may also happen when there is a common audience to two spaces, which carries meanings from one to the other. For instance, a staff member of the EU may, at the same time, be involved in cultural activities and will therefore be able to carry meanings back and forth between the spheres of cultural activity and the EU's policy spaces. Another option is that one space creates attracts the audience of a different space who, in turn, carry meanings across spaces. It is important to note that the mere size of a space does not determine its power to influence another space. Rather, it is important to look at the overlaps between two spaces, their common

⁴⁷⁴ Homi Bhabha, "The Third Space", in Jonathan Rutherford (ed.), *Identity, Community, Culture, Difference*, London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990, pp.207-221, p.210.

⁴⁷⁵ Henri Lefebvre, *Critique of everyday life, vol.3*, op. cit., p.68.

audience and their potential to translate their own discourses and meanings into the language of another space, or have those translated by interested actors from another space. This raises questions such as: How can relatively small and invisible actors, as are often found in the cultural sector, make a difference to peacebuilding? How do such actors instil their discourses and meanings into other spaces? And, at the same time, how are the EU's own spaces changed when its actors translate discourses into other spaces?

The ability to translate meanings from a space to another is, thus, a central sign of the capacity of an actor, which is why even marginalised and small actors may be more influential than often assumed. Indeed, they may, in more or less disguised ways, be able to slightly change meanings in spaces and exercise their power without other actors necessarily realising it. This is due to the fact that this power does not emerge from direct interaction between actors, but rather through a modification of a space of agency, both within as well as between each other. The central power-holders of a particular space may not even realise these subtle changes. However, giving a chance to actors traditionally considered as weak or powerless to impact on the peacebuilding process, this ties in with Bhabha's objectives:

My purpose in specifying the enunciative present in the articulation of culture is to provide a process by which objectified others may be turned into subjects of their history and experience.⁴⁷⁶

Conclusion

This framework suggests investigating encounters between local actors and the EU by establishing the *spaces of agency* concept. This is based on the idea that core issues in debates make discursive spaces emerge in which meanings are cocooned around a core issue and in which there are corresponding layers of meaning reflecting underlying needs, identities and interests. This approach claims that spaces are clearly reflective of agency, serving as a tool to make one's voice heard, whether it be official or informal.

⁴⁷⁶ Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, op. cit., p.255.

To investigate the ways in which different spaces respond to and shape each other can best be analysed by using IE, combined with participatory research techniques, as a two-way method for looking at the mutuality of space-constitution. Rather than exclusively investigating the EU's ways of dealing with spaces in Bosnian society, a variety of local responses and attempts to transform EU peacebuilding spaces will be taken into account. In that sense, the agency of marginalised actors will be acknowledged without implying that local and EU spaces are always oppositional to each other, but instead claiming that those spaces are hybrid and reconstitute each other in complex ways. In that sense, the ability to translate meanings between spaces can be seen as an indicator of agency, pointing to disguised forms of power that emerge in the interaction between spaces rather than directly between individual actors

Chapter 5: The EU's Spaces of Agency in the Bosnian Peacebuilding Context

The previous chapter has shed light on the processes of how spaces of agency emerge. It has also investigated the tensions between different spaces and their mutual interaction, pointing to their interactive potential in relation to the manifestation of agency. Based on Castells' notion of *legitimizing identity* as the inclination of institutions to justify their interventions, this chapter will look at concrete spaces of agency as they are shaped by the EU as a peacebuilding actor in its interaction with politics and society in BiH.

The EU and its Peacebuilding Spaces in BiH

As outlined above, there are very clearly differences and conflicts between the approaches and ideas of the different sub-bodies of the EU. While these different sub-bodies are meant to be complementing each other, at times they contradict each other as well. This is why I do not represent the EU's spaces as closed unities and will not claim that those represent its discourses in their entirety. The following section, rather, aims to illustrate a number of spaces that have become important for the EU's identity with respect to its peacebuilding ambitions in BiH. The spaces that matter most to the EU can be viewed as derived from those that have shaped the liberal peace and its actors. Indeed, the spaces that emerge from the EU's discourses on peace in BiH, as well as from personal interviews, largely seem to concur with the literature on liberal peace, although they slightly deviate from it.⁴⁷⁷ Thus the EU's spaces of agency that will be outlined below can be seen in close relation with elements of liberal peace outlined in the work of Richmond and Franks,⁴⁷⁸ but also combined with Manner's analysis of a set of EU core values and ethics.⁴⁷⁹ In addition, Richmond et al. have pointed to some particular characteristics of the emerging EU peacebuilding framework.⁴⁸⁰ However,

⁴⁷⁷ cf. Oliver Richmond, Annika Björkdahl and Stefanie Kappler, op. cit.

⁴⁷⁸ Oliver P. Richmond and Jason Franks, *Liberal peace transitions: between statebuilding and peacebuilding*, Edinburgh : Edinburgh University Press, 2009.

⁴⁷⁹ Ian Manners, "The normative ethics of the European Union", *International Affairs*, vol. 84, no.1, 2008, p.46.

⁴⁸⁰ Oliver Richmond et al. op. cit.

rather than merely building on the work of those academics, this thesis expands them contextually in the light of the EU's peacebuilding ambitions in BiH. This context has not only influenced the ways in which the EU develops its values and interests further, but has also resulted in the emergence of some specific patterns that are of lesser importance in the EU's other spheres of influence.

The selection of the spaces of agency analysed in this thesis tie in with the participatory research methods as outlined above. Against this background, the spaces that were selected were the ones that interviewees kept mentioning without specifically being asked to talk about. They therefore represent the red threads running through the conversations and thus the data gathered for this study. Those spaces were not preselected, but responded to the discourses encountered both in Brussels and in BiH, mirroring the discursive *leitmotifs* that not only the interviewees kept mentioning, but additionally derived from what discourses in local communities emphasised, and the cultural sector more specifically. As a result, the selection criteria of the spaces outlined below focused on the extent to which a specific topic was mentioned *both* in the EU and in cultural discourses. This in turn was necessary in order to be able to establish relations of interaction between the two. As discourses in the ways in which they are conceptualised in this thesis do not stand in isolation, but are shaped, accommodated, and resisted by different actors, this selection procedure helped to understand the processes through which different sets of actors modify and (re-)create discursive fields. The fact that both EU actors and local cultural actors often mentioned certain topics and issues without specifically being asked to talk about them in turn reflects the extent to which subtle interaction through spaces of agency take place. In that sense, to be able to uncover the varied processes of interaction between discursive spaces, I am focusing on those spaces that recurred through the discourses that were analysed for the purposes of this thesis. Those spaces may seem somewhat surprising as some of them deviate to a certain extent from what one might expect when investigating the policies of the EU. However, those spaces were the ones that seemed most relevant for the context this thesis focuses on. At the same time, this reflects the extent to which the EU is not a coherent actor, but adopts its discourses according to context. The specific case study investigated here then mirrors how EU institutions are developing and adapting their policies in the Bosnian peacebuilding context. I argue that some of the most relevant and

current EU spaces of agency are civil society, democratisation, regional cooperation, human rights, institutions/control, the state and politics, the travel and the future. Since the list could be extended to include even more spaces, the spaces outlined above should not be viewed as representative, but as examples through which we can better understand the *processes* of the constitution of such spaces as well as their dynamics and flexible nature. The analysis below is, therefore, a snapshot of the spaces listed above and is intended to shed light on their fluid nature and infrastructures, and yet it refrains from claiming to be able to draw clear boundaries around those spaces. Instead, those spaces are viewed as translocal and transversal, isolated neither from their environment nor from the actors that constitute and constantly challenge them. Therefore, this chapter will identify discourse clusters in order to show how those assemble and constitute specific spaces of agency. Against this background, the following sections will look in closer detail at the quality of the eight spaces listed above.

Civil Society

The EU tends to frame social relationships as situated within civil society, as this space is one on which it relies heavily for the implementation of its peacebuilding agenda. In the 2000's this connection between civil society and peacebuilding was instrumental in shaping the EU's engagement in different areas and contexts, and ran like a red thread through most of its policies. As a result, the Commission and the High Representative identified NGOs as central not only to conflict prevention, but also to the promotion of democracy and conflict resolution.⁴⁸¹ The Commission and the European Parliament have stated, for instance, that “[i]ncreased participation of civil society organisations strengthens the quality of democracy and contributes to reconciliation.”⁴⁸² In that sense, the EU has been using civil society partners to help implement specific policy agendas, the latter mainly relating to the *acquis* and the

⁴⁸¹ “Improving the Coherence and Effectiveness of the European Union. Action in the Field of Conflict Prevention”, Report Presented to the Nice European Council by the Secretary General/High Representative and the Commission, 2000.

⁴⁸² Communication from the Commission and the European Parliament and the Council, “Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2009-2010”, p.8, <http://ec.europa.eu/ceskarepublika/pdf/press/ks5strategy.pdf> (accessed 04/06/11).

Copenhagen Criteria in the light of prospective future membership. Indeed, the Commission has emphasised the importance of cooperation with civil society particularly in cases where governments do not represent satisfactory partners and where political processes on the state-level turn out to be too complex to work with.⁴⁸³ Under such circumstances, the EU believes civil society to be capable of assisting in EU efforts to foster good governance, institution-building, establishing a rule of law and poverty reduction.⁴⁸⁴ The Commission has put particular emphasis on the links between a flourishing civil society, democratisation and reconciliation. Democratisation and reconciliation are then considered a result of civil society organisations familiarising with “structures and procedures of the EU”.⁴⁸⁵ Thus, to be able to maximise its influence in BiH, the EU is ideally looking for a situation in which a healthy and free civil society sector acts as a watchdog to the government.⁴⁸⁶ This, in turn, enables the EU to work more efficiently, since this situation creates the conditions under which EU policies have been developed and are viable and implementable. In fact, the EU views civil society in the Western Balkans as weak and in need of training,⁴⁸⁷ a perspective that is used to justify its intervention in the region in the name of democracy and reconciliation.

Not only does civil society act as a subcontractor for EU policy implementation (i.e. democratisation and reconciliation), but at the same time it serves as a legitimating device through which the EU claims local legitimacy and ownership of peacebuilding processes rather than portraying those processes as an imposition.⁴⁸⁸ In addition, an EU official has pointed out that the EU resorts to partnering with civil society actors as the

⁴⁸³ Confidential source, Delegation of the EU to BiH, *Personal Interview*, Sarajevo, 22/03/10.

⁴⁸⁴ Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament of 8 May 2001, “The European Union's role in promoting human rights and democratisation in third countries”, Brussels, 2001, http://www.initiativeforpeacebuilding.eu/resources/Communication_on_Promoting_democracy_and_HR.pdf (accessed 04/06/11).

⁴⁸⁵ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council of 5 March 2008, “Western Balkans: enhancing the European perspective”, op. cit. See also Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council, “Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2009-2010”, op. cit., p.8.

⁴⁸⁶ Xavier Oleiro Ogando, Delegation of the EU to BiH, *Personal Interview*, Sarajevo, 08/03/10.

⁴⁸⁷ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council of 5 March 2008, “Western Balkans: enhancing the European perspective”, op. cit.

⁴⁸⁸ See “Non-paper expanding on the proposals contained in the communication to the European parliament and the council on “Strengthening the ENP” – COM (2006) 726 Final of 4 December 2006, Strengthening the civil society dimension of the ENP”, http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/non-paper_civil-society-dimension_en.pdf (accessed 13/01/11).

political structures of BiH are too complex for effective collaboration, while civil society actors, on the other hand, are easier to deal with.⁴⁸⁹ As a result, the EU still builds on civil society structures in its peacebuilding ambitions despite being aware of some issues with civil society as a policy partner. However, due to the highly politicised nature of such structures, the EU risks becoming complicit in local power struggles by reinforcing the legitimacy of those actors that have the power to make their voices heard while neglecting those that are not able or willing to be classified civil society actors. It is somewhat surprising that the EU has only minimally modified its civil society approach despite a growing awareness in the EU that civil society in the Western Balkans is highly politicised. An EU official has indeed suggested that considerable amounts of EU funds are spent on civil society partners with only minimal impact on quality of life.⁴⁹⁰

At the same time, it is unclear what the EU means when it speaks of *civil society*. The Commission, despite admitting that there is no agreed definition of *civil society*,⁴⁹¹ has promoted a rather broad definition in 2005 with respect to EU candidate countries:

Civil society would thus include: the labour-market actors, i.e. the social partners (trade unions and employers federations); organisations representing social and economic players at large (consumer organisations for instance,); non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community-based organisations, i.e. organisations at grassroots level through which citizens participate in local and municipal life (e.g. youth or family associations); religious communities and media.⁴⁹²

At the same time, it can be observed that definitions of *civil society* vary according to the circumstances in which they are created as well as the institutional context in which they are used. The Council of the European Union, for instance,

⁴⁸⁹ Confidential source, Delegation of the EU to BiH, *Personal Interview*, Sarajevo, 22/03/10.

⁴⁹⁰ Confidential source, Council of the European Union (Western Balkans Unit), *Personal Interview*, Brussels, 09/09/10.

⁴⁹¹ See http://ec.europa.eu/civil_society/apgen_en.htm#4 (accessed 13/01/11).

⁴⁹² Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, "Civil Society Dialogue between the EU and Candidate Countries", 2005, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/Notice.do?mode=dbl&lang=en&ihmlang=en&lng1=en.de&lng2=de.en.fr.mt.pl.pt.sl.sv.&val=403615:cs&page=> (accessed 04/06/11).

emphasises NGOs as central civil society actors⁴⁹³ and thus relinquishes the Commission's slightly broader approach to civil society.

There are indeed a number of competing definitions of *civil society*, while the Economic and Social Committee clearly recognised this lack of clearness in terms of defining civil society, referring to the various strands of thinking about civil society.⁴⁹⁴ This is evident in the Commission's approach to the concept. Initially, it promoted a broad notion of civil society as illustrated above, but is now emphasising the need for 'quality standards' of civil society organisations.⁴⁹⁵ Thus, only actors that manage to live up to the EU's expectations in terms of professionalisation are considered part of civil society. Again, this can be seen as linked to the agenda of the respective institution, for which a certain selection of actors may be needed at a certain point of time. Slightly modifying the definition of *civil society* ensures the EU's agenda can be changed, yet the overall rhetoric (i.e. legitimacy through cooperation with local civil society) remains the same. This approach to definition and policy rhetoric reflects the extent to which the actual meaning of *civil society* can be constantly recreated, whereas this may not be clearly visible given that the EU has more broadly been speaking in favour of civil society cooperation for a long time. Changes in meaning have occurred in more subtle ways, namely the nuances that have been given to the term *civil society*. In this context, it was interesting to observe that when asked about whether cultural actors/artists were part of the EU's approach to civil society, many EU officials both in Brussels and Sarajevo stated that culture was not a real priority in their programmes. However, a few officials emphasised the need to include cultural actors more often in the EU's civil society programmes; and one EU official also asserted that, despite

⁴⁹³ Council of the European Union, "Council Regulation (EC) No 1658/98 of 17 July 1998 on co-financing operations with European non-governmental development organisations (NGOs) in fields of interest to the developing countries", <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:1998:213:0001:0005:EN:PDF> (accessed 13/01/11).

⁴⁹⁴ Cf. Opinion of the Economic and Social Committee on "The role and contribution of civil society organisations in the building of Europe", op. cit. For competing definitions and ideas of civil society, see for instance Council Regulation (EC) No 1658/98 of 17 July op. cit.; "Improving the Coherence and Effectiveness of the European Union Action in the Field of Conflict Prevention", op. cit.; Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament of 8 May 2001, "The European Union's role in promoting human rights and democratisation in third countries", op. cit.; Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, "Civil Society Dialogue between the EU and Candidate Thematic programme", op. cit; Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, "Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2008-2009", op. cit., etc.

⁴⁹⁵ Delegation of the European Union to BiH, "Civil Society", News Archives, 23/12/10, <http://www.delbih.ec.europa.eu/?akcija=vijesti&akcija2=pregled&jezik=2&ID=817> (accessed 16/01/11).

representing an excellent event, the Sarajevo Film Festival cannot be funded because “they do not send anything written within the proper procedure.”⁴⁹⁶ This, in turn, reflects how contested the field of culture is even within the EU, while culture is often viewed as hardly compatible with EU standards and norms. In fact, another EU official stated that the different EU agencies in the field are unable to engage with culture due to the lack of a ‘cultural mandate’, so the only way for the EU to engage with culture in BiH is through civil society programmes.⁴⁹⁷

Cooperation with civil society has also served as a way for the EU to polish its reputation. The Commission has, for instance, suggested that particular countries that have not yet entered into a contractual relationship with the EU tend to have weak civil society structures and their citizens are often subject to repression.⁴⁹⁸ This implies that the EU is superior in its ways of dealing with civil society, and thus legitimises EU intervention as saving those other, non-EU societies from such problems.

In the context of Bosnia-Herzegovina, while the Delegation understands its role in a more technical manner – in terms of winning civil society as a partner to implement certain agendas – the EUSR is more political, aiming to help civil society develop and implement ideas locally.⁴⁹⁹ The latter represents a more content-oriented approach to peacebuilding; and, although it is not a guided process with boundaries set by the EUSR, there is a certain interest in ideas developed locally. The Commission, in contrast, takes a more technical approach to civil society cooperation. It conceives of a triangular relationship between the EU, local authorities and local civil society, which it then takes as a point of departure⁵⁰⁰ and as a way to create a balance between those three elements that is suitable to facilitate eventual EU accession. In line with their membership criteria, the Commission expects civil society actors to be able to work without restrictions and to be responsive to the EU’s needs.⁵⁰¹ The latter is a vital criterion for organisations who wish to influence EU policy-making. Furthermore, it has

⁴⁹⁶ Confidential source, Delegation of the EU to BiH, *Personal Interview*, Sarajevo, 22/03/10.

⁴⁹⁷ Confidential source, Council of the European Union (Western Balkans Unit), *Personal Interview*, Brussels, 09/09/10.

⁴⁹⁸ Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, “Thematic Programme for the promotion of democracy and human rights worldwide under the future Financial Perspectives (2007-2013)”, 2006, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2006:0023:FIN:EN:HTML> (accessed 04/06/11).

⁴⁹⁹ Confidential source, *Personal Interview*, Sarajevo, 24/03/10.

⁵⁰⁰ Xavier Oleiro Ogando, Delegation of the EU to BiH, *Student Presentation*, Sarajevo, 15/03/10.

⁵⁰¹ Xavier Oleiro Ogando, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

been admitted that the EU tends to resort to partnering with professional NGOs that respond to its needs when it comes to looking for policy inputs from civil society.⁵⁰² This is in line with the Ljubljana Declaration,⁵⁰³ which was adopted in 2008. The declaration points to the need to listen more to civil society actors by integrating them in policy-making processes. The EU takes this into account, but only on its own terms. Developing a certain meaning for *civil society* and drawing boundaries of inclusion and exclusion, the EU can maintain both the apparent legitimacy of the peacebuilding discourse and a certain degree of instrumentality. The latter, especially, relates to issues of EU enlargement, a process during the course of which civil society is a necessary player in social and political transition. Recently, the Commission has also made it clear that the participation of civil society actors is crucial in determining the success of the accession process, both in terms of the quality and the pace of integration.⁵⁰⁴

What becomes obvious here is that the space of civil society is an exclusive one. There is a tendency to fund mainly NGOs that are already professional and able to implement big projects, while smaller and less professional organisations are neglected. As a staff member of the Commission in Brussels pointed out, this is because the EU is unable to effectively conclude smaller contracts due to its cumbersome institutional procedures, which require the same reporting procedures for every project, no matter how small it is. As a result, it takes more effort for the EU to fund many small projects than it does to fund a few larger projects.⁵⁰⁵ As a result, smaller and *ad hoc* social movements, although being quite common in the Bosnian context, withdraw from the space of civil society – a space in which they do not feel welcome anyway. In practice, this means that EU funds repeatedly go to nearly the same group of larger NGOs that have the financial, linguistic and organisational ability to work through the complex application process.⁵⁰⁶ This reflects the extent to which the civil society space is closed and difficult for new actors to enter.

⁵⁰² Ibid.

⁵⁰³ Ljubljana Declaration, International conference Brdo, Slovenia, 2 April 2008.
http://www.trialog.or.at/images/doku/ljubljana_declaration.pdf (accessed 29/11/10).

⁵⁰⁴ Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, “Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2008-2009”, op. cit.

⁵⁰⁵ Confidential source, European Commission, DG ELARG, *Personal Interview*, Brussels, 09/09/10.

⁵⁰⁶ Adam Fagan, op. cit., p.125.

Although *civil society* often implies the presence of bottom-up social processes and a certain connection to the ‘grassroots’, there are some strong top-down mechanisms at play in the EU’s civil society space. This results from the EU’s power to use financial means in order to act as a gatekeeper to the space, and it is thus able to frame actors to be included in the space in certain ways. This type of gatekeeping leaves little room for ‘grassroots’ organisations to modify the space, and, furthermore, it reflects a tendency for the EU to shape the content and participants of civil society through financial means and processes of categorisation.

As a result, civil society appears to be a structured rather than an improvised space. Its meaning has certainly changed over time, but its contents and structures have been discussed in Brussels – and in Sarajevo only to a limited extent – so that local actors willing to become part of this space have had to adapt to the structures defined by the EU. Along those lines, the EU’s civil society space presents itself as a public one, of which, theoretically, all actors can become part if they agree to adjust to the conditions created in the space. On the other hand, its meaning and content are not discussed in public, but tend to be defined by the EU sub-institutions, with various meanings in constant re-negotiation. The difference between the Commission’s approach and the EUSR’s is rather obvious. The former takes a technical approach to civil society, viewing it as a dialogue partner for the EU,⁵⁰⁷ while the latter takes a more political approach in terms of calling for a broader notion of civil society that includes artists and religious leaders.⁵⁰⁸

Such differences reflect the EU’s own split identity in terms of conceptualising civil society structures as they are imagined within the EU, relatively free from threats, and acting as watchdogs of neoliberal governments. In its engagement with Bosnian civil society the EU then projects these elements of its own identity onto Bosnian society. Therefore, representing society as ‘civil’ is an important instrument for the EU and a way of viewing BiH on the move towards ‘civilised’ European standards. Eventually, an active civil society is believed to make rapprochement to the EU possible.⁵⁰⁹ At the same time, by characterising Bosnian societal structures that lay

⁵⁰⁷ Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, “Civil Society Dialogue between the EU and Candidate Countries”, op. cit.

⁵⁰⁸ Confidential source, EU official, *Personal Interview*, Sarajevo, 29/04/10.

⁵⁰⁹ Confidential Source, Delegation of the EU to BiH, *Personal Interview*, Sarajevo, 11/03/09.

outside of civil society as ‘deficient’, the latter becomes glorified and rhetorically superior. This is coupled with a rather negative view of Bosnian society and local conditions, which results in both often being considered incompatible with EU standards.⁵¹⁰ Such dynamics of identity and representation of the ‘self’ and the ‘other’ characterise the space of civil society in which differences and processes are framed in relation to the EU’s internal structures. At the same time, as far as the functions of the space of civil society are concerned, the EU emphasises its enlargement needs which are predicated on potential member states possessing ‘healthy’ civil societies. Using the space to create a specific meaning of civil society, i.e. as ‘civil’, ‘functional’, and a watchdog of government, then responds to the EU’s need for a reliable partner (a functional civil society) in the absence of coherent, reliable government structures.

Democratisation

Democracy can be viewed as one of the cornerstones of the EU, both in its internal structures and in its foreign policy. The Treaty of Maastricht has put particular emphasis on the internal importance of democratic governance, claiming that:

[t]he Union is founded on the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law, principles which are common to the Member States.⁵¹¹

Not only in its internal affairs, but also in its external relations, the EU has come to put emphasis on the importance of democratic governments. However, there seems to be a general mistrust towards governments in third countries outside the EU, with the suspicion that they might not be as committed to democratic governance as countries within the EU, a suspicion used to justify intervention in the neighbourhood on the part of the EU.⁵¹² This is also the result of a rather wide conceptualisation of *democratic*

⁵¹⁰ Mark Wheeler, OHR, *Personal Interview*, Sarajevo, 10/03/09.

⁵¹¹ Treaty of the European Union, *Official Journal C 191*, 29 July 1992, article 6, http://europa.eu/eur-lex/en/treaties/dat/EU_treaty.html (accessed 21/07/09).

⁵¹² Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, “Towards an EU response to

governance, which the Commission links to issues of needs, dialogue, service delivery and institutional capacities.⁵¹³

Democracy has become one of the main cornerstones in the EU's engagement in BiH, which has to be seen in relation to the Copenhagen Criteria and more specifically to the EU's Eastern enlargement. The Commission emphasises that "[t]he fifth enlargement of the EU has helped to consolidate democracy and the rule of law in Europe,"⁵¹⁴ referring to enlargement as an instrument of democracy promotion. This has, however, not remained without criticism, even from within the EU institutions. A Senior Policy Advisor to the EUPM Head of Mission pointed out that democracy promotion is viewed as part of the Copenhagen Criteria and reflects the EU's introspective peace agenda rather than a merely altruistic concern for the people and their rights in neighbouring countries.⁵¹⁵ However, it can be observed that the emphasis on democratisation in EU policy documents related to BiH has declined over the recent years, which is somewhat surprising given the great enthusiasm with which democracy was promoted, at least rhetorically, from Dayton onwards. This can be seen in relation to two issues: first, as a staff member of the Delegation Enlargement in Brussels suggested, the accession process (and with it the issue of democratisation) has to be made with local political actors.⁵¹⁶ As suggested above, the latter tend to be considered to be corrupt and problematic partners, which means that unless local politicians cooperate with the EU's policies, democratisation according to the EU's norms and ideas will not be possible. Indeed, the EU does not have the capacity to intervene against the will of the local political actors but has to rely on its sticks and carrots.⁵¹⁷ Second, to a certain extent this takes into account the critiques of the international community, which is accused of being undemocratic and unaccountable.⁵¹⁸ This particularly relates to the ways in which the OHR operates in terms of being able to impose laws or remove democratically elected politicians from office. From this stance,

situations of fragility. Engaging in difficult environments for sustainable development, stability and peace", Brussels, 2007.

⁵¹³ Ibid.

⁵¹⁴ Communication from the Commission and the European Parliament and the Council, "Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2009-2010", op. cit., p.2.

⁵¹⁵ Tobias Flessenkemper, EUPM, *Personal Interview*, Sarajevo, 20/04/10.

⁵¹⁶ Confidential source, European Commission, DG ELARG, *Personal Interview*, Brussels, 09/09/10.

⁵¹⁷ Vladimir Pandurević, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

⁵¹⁸ See, for instance, David Chandler, *Bosnia: Faking democracy after Dayton*, London; Sterling, Va: Pluto Press, 1999.

it is hard for international actors who are part of this system to credibly force a country to become democratic.

As far as the EU is concerned, the existence, or rather creation, of civil society is viewed as an important indicator for the development of a liberal democracy and serves as an instrument for implementing the basic tenets of the EU's version of liberal peace. Civil society is often referred to as a "school for democracy,"⁵¹⁹ which, in turn, means that once a strong and stable civil society has been established, then democracy will automatically arise due to the fact that democratic values are inherent to civil society dynamics.⁵²⁰ Civil society and democracy are thus perceived as mutually constitutive, so that transformation in BiH is achieved via the creation of democratic civil society structures. As a result, financial assistance under IPA is primarily intended to support those civil society actors that contribute to the 'democratic stabilisation' of the country.⁵²¹ In that sense, a democratically organised civil society is expected to act as a watchdog that holds the government accountable to its citizens⁵²² and has, therefore, been made a cornerstone of the EU's conditionalities towards BiH. This mirrors the fluid connections between different spaces of agency – in this case civil society and the spaces of democratisation. Certainly, as pointed out above, the EU has started to promote a rather wide understanding of democratisation, which involves a dialogue between the EU's different sub-institutions with civil society. Yet on the other hand, most central decisions regarding the bigger framework of engagement in BiH are made in Brussels, from a distance. As a staff member of the Delegation External Relations in Brussels suggested, they are in touch with civil society, although not directly; rather, this contact is made through the EU's specific Delegation to the country.⁵²³ Given that an EU Delegation is based only in a country's capital city, and does not have field offices in other parts of the country, there is clearly a filtering process at work in which it is decided, in the capital, what local organisations are heard by the EU and,

⁵¹⁹ Opinion of the Economic and Social Committee on "The role and contribution of civil society organisations in the building of Europe", op. cit., p.8.

⁵²⁰ Cf. Robert D. Putnam, *Democracies in Flux: The Evolution of Social Capital in Contemporary Society*, Oxford: Oxford University Press: 2002.

⁵²¹ "Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA)", op. cit.

⁵²² European Commission, "Mapping Study of Non-State Actors (NSA) in Bosnia-Herzegovina", op. cit., p.74, and "Project Fiche – IPA Annual Action Programme 2007 for Bosnia and Herzegovina", op. cit., p.1. See also Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council, "Western Balkans: Enhancing the European perspective", op. cit., p.11.

⁵²³ Olga Baus-Gibert, EC Relex, *Personal Interview*, Brussels, 10/09/10.

particularly, by Brussels. This, in turn, represents a considerable limit to the extent to which the EU can incorporate a variety of organisations within its terms of engagement and can thus be considered another obstacle to the EU's ideas about the promotion of democracy. This situation also reflects the limits of the democratisation space in terms of who is included or excluded. We can observe an ambiguity of the space at this point: on the one hand, the democratisation space aims to be rather broad and inclusive, with both politicians and civil society (believed to represent local society) as actors therein. On the other hand, the limits of geographical access to a wider array of civil society actors represents an obstacle to this ambition and, thus, unintentionally excludes a large number of actors. Hence, despite aiming to be an open and public space, it tends to be closed to those groups that are too distant from the EU, either geographically or in terms of ideology and/or interest.

Similar to the civil society space, the democratisation space essentially builds on bottom-up processes. At the same time, those processes are filtered through the paradigms and policies of the EU and given a specific direction so that local actors can only modify minor parts of the space. The main discursive authority rests with the EU, who has the carrot of accession and can thus insist on the fulfilment of the Copenhagen Criteria. These conditions make the space a highly structured one, as one staff member at the EU Delegation to BiH explained, since the Copenhagen Criteria cannot be compromised.⁵²⁴ Improvisation and change are thus rather difficult to achieve for local actors. This is partly due to the EU's desire to present itself as a democratic entity, with democracy being one of the cornerstones of intra-European cooperation. By casting non-members as less democratic, the EU emphasises its own legitimacy and justifies its own moral imperative to intervene, teach and transform those neighbouring countries. At the same time, the EU is set up to deal with democratically elected governments, so that the democratisation of government structures is in its own interest and thus represents a need on the part of the EU.

⁵²⁴ Xavier Oleiro-Ogando, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

Regional Cooperation

Similar to democracy, the EU has decided to make regional cooperation a cornerstone of its engagement based on the assumption that there is still not sufficient reconciliation between BiH and its neighbours. In 2005, the Enlargement Delegation and External Relations Delegation put emphasis on regional cooperation as one of the EU's policy priorities.⁵²⁵ As a result, regional cooperation has been made "a key priority of the European Partnership."⁵²⁶ Against this background, the SAA and SAP put particular emphasis on regional cooperation; however, according to a staff member on the EU Delegation to BiH, this is a difficult process.⁵²⁷ On the other hand, the Commission is not only interested in regional cooperation for its own sake, but also because this has an impact on the EU itself with regards to politics, economics and issues of security.⁵²⁸ These issues are at the basis of the guidelines according to which regional cooperation is meant to work in the Western Balkans, and they mirror the EU's self-image as a geographical space of regional cooperation. This particularly ties in with the internal market and its associated free movement of goods, capital, services and people. Against, this background, the EU has enhanced its engagement in the area of regional cooperation, with the Commission becoming a member of the Regional Cooperation Council in 2008, a regional framework for cooperation that addresses regional cooperation from a political and economic point of view.⁵²⁹ This seems to be a perspective widely shared by the EU's different sub-institutions, given that not only the Commission is involved, but also the European Council. Van Rompuy, the President of the European Council, only recently emphasised the importance of regional cooperation for the creation of peace in the Western Balkans.⁵³⁰ At the same time, regional cooperation cannot be seen as a stand-alone policy, but is linked to the EU's wider

⁵²⁵ European Commission, "Regional cooperation in the western Balkans. A policy priority for the European Union", Brussels, 2005.

⁵²⁶ Communication from the Commission and the European Parliament and the Council, "Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2009-2010", op. cit., p.30.

⁵²⁷ Confidential source, Delegation of the EU to BiH, *Personal Interview*, Sarajevo, 11/03/09.

⁵²⁸ European Commission, "Regional cooperation in the western Balkans", op. cit., p.3.

⁵²⁹ See http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/projects-in-focus/regional-cooperation/index_en.htm (accessed 13/12/10).

⁵³⁰ Herman Van Rompuy, " Western Balkans: fulfilling a European destiny", Video Message, Brussels, 18 Oct 2010. http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/117114.pdf (accessed 13/12/10).

ambitions such as the desire to fight against organised crime and to promote regional reconciliation.

In this context, the EU has identified the lack of reconciliation, mainly between the different ethnic groups, as a major problem in BiH and in the wider region.⁵³¹ In terms of fostering cross-ethnic cooperation, the Commission emphasises its ambition to initiate a dialogue with churches and religious groups across the region as they have the potential to help the EU promote reconciliation. Dialogue forums, festivals, debates and conferences organised by the EU are illustrative of such an approach. This approach is related to the ways in which the EU imagines its own role of dealing with internal conflict, so regional cooperation is closely linked to rapprochement to the EU. It can thus be understood not only as regional reconciliation, but also as a movement of the entire region towards its north-west in terms of adopting its institutional structures to those of the EU.

The space of regional cooperation seems to be comparatively diverse and inclusive given that it addresses a variety of actors on the political, economic and societal levels; however, it only does so as long as the EU considers them relevant to the regional peacebuilding process and as long as the actors are prepared to cooperate with the EU's programmes. As a result, the space of regional cooperation tends to be rather open, though is still operated through top-down mechanisms. Regional cooperation is directed by the EU's rules and, although local actors may use communication with the EU institutions to influence the discourse to a certain extent, this communication seems to be rather limited as it is structured by the needs and interests of the EU. Nonetheless, it represents a public space that is both visible to the people in BiH and that responds to local dynamics. This can be seen in relation to the EU's own history of regional cooperation and thus reflects a deeper understanding of the underlying dynamics and stakes involved. The Balkans are viewed as having not yet achieved the level of regional cooperation mastered by the EU, while there seems to be a belief that reproducing the EU's own history of cooperation will bring positive results to the Balkan region. The Balkans, in turn, would be a test case for the EU and a means of ascertaining whether countries in the region might be potential EU members. This approach responds to the EU's need to integrate only members that are capable of

⁵³¹ Confidential Source, Delegation of the EU to BiH, *Personal Interview*, Sarajevo, 11/03/09.

regional cooperation and engaging in normative processes of peacebuilding, which the EU, based on its own identity as a peace union through regional cooperation, associates with a logic of regional integration.

Human Rights

The EU has, since its foundation, put strong emphasis on the promotion of human rights as one of its own core values. Human rights are generally linked to democratisation,⁵³² which also points to the link between those two elements established in the Copenhagen Criteria. In this context, the EU has suggested that both human rights and democratisation can be seen as “universal values,”⁵³³ an emphasis that, in turn, legitimates the EU’s engagement in third countries’ internal politics. Democracy is, thus, considered by the EU as a precondition for the promotion of human rights and vice versa: Therefore, those two elements are essential parts of any contractual relations between the EU and third countries.⁵³⁴ This is particularly important in the enlargement context, with the EU External Action Service (EEAS) claiming that

[c]ountries seeking to join the EU must respect human rights. And all trade and cooperation agreements with third countries contain a clause stipulating that human rights are an essential element in relations between the parties.⁵³⁵

Yet, although the Commission tends to view *human rights* as a universal concept and as a necessity for its engagement in third countries, there is a call for more local ownership of concrete processes such as bringing justice to victims and so forth.⁵³⁶ However, this does not mean that the concern with human rights on a localised basis is a purely

⁵³² See, for instance, European Commission, “European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) Strategy Paper 2011 – 2013”, April 2010, http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/what/human-rights/documents/eidhr_strategy_paper_2011_2013_com_decision_21_april_2011_text_published_on_internet_en.pdf (accessed 13/12/10).

⁵³³ http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/what/human-rights/index_en.htm (accessed 17/12/10).

⁵³⁴ “Regulation (EC) No 1889/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 December 2006 on establishing a financing instrument for the promotion of democracy and human rights worldwide”, 2006.

⁵³⁵ http://eeas.europa.eu/human_rights/index_en.htm (accessed 17/12/10).

⁵³⁶ European Commission, “European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) Strategy Paper 2011 – 2013”, April 2010, http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/what/human-rights/documents/eidhr_strategy_paper_2011_2013_com_decision_21_april_2011_text_published_on_internet_en.pdf (accessed 13 December 2010).

altruistic undertaking since, as the Commission has pointed out, it is also about making the EU visible through its human-rights-related policies.⁵³⁷

Specifically in BiH, the Commission has suggested that its main emphasis is on “[t]he pursuit of common agendas for human rights and democratic reform”, “[b]uilding towards consensus on disputed or controversial areas of policy in deeply divided societies” as well as “[e]nhancing political representation and participation.”⁵³⁸ Currently the EU’s engagement in BiH in the context of human rights is mainly channelled through EIDHR, which entered into force in 2007. The principle actor identified as responsible for the defence of human rights is civil society.⁵³⁹ The Commission has made clear that, indeed, the EIDHR instrument builds on a *strength* of the EU, which lies in its ability to circumvent third-country governments and other public authorities in terms of directly supporting civil society actors in their activities related to human rights and democracy.⁵⁴⁰ In that sense, civil society is expected to act as “an effective force for positive change” in its capacity to combat discrimination, fight for “peaceful conciliation of group interests” and generally working towards a higher degree of social cohesion.⁵⁴¹

This, in turn, suggests a certain quality to the human rights space as the EU promotes it. Although the space has widened in terms of gradually including more societal actors, it still draws on processes of exclusion. What can be observed in the above-mentioned policies is that the space tends to include actors labelled as, or labelling themselves as, *civil society*. At the same time, governments are not directly included within this space, nor are more fragmented actors included as those groups that lack a clear organisational basis are not viewed as (professional) civil society actors by

⁵³⁷ European Commission, “European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) Strategy Paper 2011 – 2013”, op. cit.

⁵³⁸ Delegation of the European Commission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, “European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) Bosnia and Herzegovina’s Country Based Support Scheme 2008. Guidelines for grant applicants Budget line 19.04.01 Restricted Call for Proposals”, 2008.

⁵³⁹ http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/what/human-rights/documents/eidhr_strategy_paper_2011_2013_com_decision_21_april_2011_text_published_on_internet_en.pdf (accessed 17/12/10), p.5. See also Delegation of the European Commission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, “European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) Bosnia and Herzegovina’s Country Based Support Scheme 2008”, op. cit.

⁵⁴⁰ http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/what/human-rights/documents/eidhr_strategy_paper_2011_2013_com_decision_21_april_2011_text_published_on_internet_en.pdf (accessed 17/12/10), p.10.

⁵⁴¹ Delegation of the European Commission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, “European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) Bosnia and Herzegovina’s Country Based Support Scheme 2008”, op. cit.

the EU. In fact, professionalism is an important aspect in the EU's peacebuilding policies as its calls for proposals do not really target smaller, more *ad hoc* organisations; rather, they target organisations who have the power to act as a counter-balance to the government.⁵⁴² Those calls also require the recipient of the funds to be able to provide match funding. This, in turn, results in a rather closed space, despite the EU's ambitions to address the grassroots and, through the inflexible Copenhagen Criteria, means that top-down processes outweigh bottom-up mechanisms. As a result, the human rights space is highly structured, and BiH has to fulfil human rights standards according to the Thessaloniki agenda of the European Council. In particular, BiH has to live up to EU standards with respect to refugee return, the provision of justice relating to war crimes and resolving the issues of internally displaced persons.⁵⁴³ If this is not being followed in addition to harmonising the constitution with the ECHR, EU accession becomes impossible. The human rights space relies on the public space to a certain extent: it aims to make human rights freely and publically accessible to everyone, yet refrains from giving the public ('everyone') the option to re-negotiate the meaning of *human rights*. In that sense, the human rights space reflects the EU's self-confidence in its own values, legitimising their underlying normative agenda elsewhere. Along those lines, the EU imagines itself as a bearer of human rights (whether those rights are implemented internally is certainly a different story) and imagines BiH as a student that can learn from the EU's idealised example. Again, this self-image on the part of the EU is used to legitimise intervention in the name of human rights.

Institutions/Control

Since the Dayton Peace Agreement concluded in 1995 with the close involvement of the EU as a member of the PIC, the EU has become part of the international community's peace- and state-building ambitions. In this context, the EU has built its own institutions in the BiH: EUFOR, EUPM, EUSR and the Delegation of

⁵⁴² Confidential source, European Commission, DG ELARG, *Personal Interview*, Brussels, 09/09/10.

⁵⁴³ European Union, "EU-Western Balkans Summit Declaration", Thessaloniki, 21 June 2003, http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/enlargement_process/accesion_process/how_does_a_country_join_the_eu/sap/thessaloniki_summit_en.htm (accessed 16/01/11).

the Commission. It is through these institutions that a space of institutional control has started to emerge. The EU's diverse institutions serve as tools through which the EU exerts a certain degree of control over the directions in which BiH is developing. For the EU, institutions (as governing bodies), control (as a process) and institutional control (as the process that those governing bodies pursue) mainly consist of bringing the Western Balkans politically, economically and socially closer to the EU through political and economic measures.⁵⁴⁴ In that sense, institutional control as exercised through the EU is associated with the goal of stabilising BiH and guiding the country into steady EU integration with the help of the SAA and its control mechanisms, such as integration conditionalities and benchmarks.⁵⁴⁵ An adviser to the EU Delegation to BiH emphasised the necessity of strengthening institutions in BiH so that they are able to cope with the EU agenda and with the European Partnership priorities.⁵⁴⁶ This certainly reflects the extent to which institution-building is a priority for the EU as a political entity rather than exclusively for the good of BiH. In this context, the main objective is the stabilisation of the country to allow for eventual European integration according to the SAA.⁵⁴⁷ The main instrument for achieving this is the European Partnership, and its principle objective is to bring the Western Balkans closer to EU integration. Thus, the EU has been prescribing political and economic criteria for BiH's ills in order to bring it in line with the *acquis*.

The EU claims to pursue a 'soft' approach to enlargement and its associated conditionalities. The Commission, for instance, has pointed out that "[f]or the EU's enlargement process to succeed, it is essential to listen to citizens and address their concerns and questions."⁵⁴⁸ Indeed, there is a huge emphasis in EU policy on citizens' participation in the enlargement process. However, on the other hand, voices from within the EU's institutions have observed that, from a more realistic viewpoint, European integration tends to be elite driven.⁵⁴⁹ This is considered as particularly problematic in a country such as BiH where people view the political elite as corrupt and distanced from the needs of the vast majority of citizens. In this context, there are

⁵⁴⁴ Confidential Source, Delegation of the EU to BiH, *Personal Interview*, Sarajevo, 11/03/09.

⁵⁴⁵ Confidential source, *Personal Interview*, Sarajevo, 29/04/10.

⁵⁴⁶ Elisabet Tomasinec, EU Delegation to BiH, *Personal Interview*, Sarajevo, 03/03/11.

⁵⁴⁷ *Ibid*.

⁵⁴⁸ Communication from the Commission and the European Parliament and the Council, "Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2009-2010", *op. cit.* p.10.

⁵⁴⁹ Confidential source, *Personal Interview*, Sarajevo, 29/04/10.

critical voices within the EU claiming that their engagement in BiH mainly represents a politics of self-interest rather than a concern for the people living in the country.⁵⁵⁰ In that sense, the value preamble tends to be a rhetorical tool in the first place, but is in reality only secondary to the EU's policies.⁵⁵¹ Against this background, one can argue that even though there might be a general ambition to include people and citizens in the EU enlargement process, this ties in with the exclusive practices of the civil society space and fails to work in practice. This is because the EU seems to go for a more pragmatic approach that negotiates its conditions of accession negotiations with the elites rather than wider societal groups. To justify this, it is sometimes argued that people might want to become part of the EU, but they do not know how to politically articulate it. This points to a possible issue with translation of 'different languages' in spaces, where translation between spaces may fail if the languages used represent a divisive force.

However, this is not to suggest that the EU does not make any efforts to engage with local society. There are a number of ways in which the EU engages with civil society, as outlined above, while those ways reflect a high degree of institutional governance and control. The Delegation of the EU in Sarajevo employs Bosnians as one way of including 'locals'. Yet civil society has been found to be an increasingly useful tool for the efficient implementation of EU models of governance, both within and outside the EU. Crucially, civil society is assumed to be a promoter and manifestation of good governance, which is increasingly conflated with peace in the EU framework.⁵⁵² As such, the elements of transformative civil society that are thought most conducive to effective governance are emphasised within EU discourses on peacebuilding. Smismans claims that both the European Commission and the Economic and Social Council use civil society discourses as a source of institutional legitimisation, banking on civil society's role as a platform for functional participation and representation, politicising and mobilising social capital as well as decentralising

⁵⁵⁰ Tobias Flessenkemper, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

⁵⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵⁵² Audra Mitchell, "Transforming a deeply divided society? NGOs and peacebuilding in Northern Ireland, 1997-2006", in M. Hilton, N. Crowson and J. McKay (eds.), *NGOs in Contemporary Britain*, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2009, pp.242-60.

politics by taking over functions of central public authority.⁵⁵³ In addition, the EU maintains control over how the country is governed by empowering some actors more than others. This is mainly achieved through funding mechanisms. As a staff member of the Delegation of the Commission pointed out, this is subject to regulations from Brussels, following a strict numerical system. In this system, the achievement of a high score in the evaluation scheme is necessary to be considered for funding at all, while the final decision is made according to the applicant organisation's capacities and whether their strategies are in line with the EU's call for applications.⁵⁵⁴ These procedures clearly favour stronger and more professionalised organisations, many of which are also able to take over control functions over societal sectors due to their relative strength.

In that sense, the EU exercises institutional control on two different paths: first, negotiations are made with the political elites, who can then be guided and directed by the EU's needs. Second, through selective empowerment of certain actors the EU contributes to the establishment of social hierarchies, and thus controls societal processes in the country. Again, this suggests a partly inclusive and open approach and the ambition to localise institutional control, but only to the extent to which this is in line with the EU's structural constraints, norms and values. In that sense, top-down processes still dominate impulses coming from the grassroots, since the latter need to fit the institutional background accordingly if they want to be taken into consideration. As a result, a structured approach is predominant over improvisation and modification, while one can equally still speak of a space that is based on the public sphere in that the EU tries to make itself publicly visible. This is truer for the Commission than for the EUSR, with the EUPM being in the middle of the two, but, in general, one can observe a tendency for the EU to make its benefits very visible in BiH. Such benefits are more noticeable in the cities than in the countryside, and, thus, can only be deemed semi-public. In terms of identity, power and representation, the space of institutional control relates to a perception that BiH has to be governed and controlled to be able to face the EU as a partner and, thus, represents a belief in the superiority of the EU. The latter is only prepared to integrate BiH if the country follows EU instructions. In addition, the

⁵⁵³ Stijn Smismans, "European Civil Society: Shaped by Discourses and Institutional Interests", *European Law Journal*, vol.9, no.4, 2003, pp.473-495, pp.484-8.

⁵⁵⁴ Vladimir Pandurević, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

EU makes the closure of the OHR a precondition of eventual accession,⁵⁵⁵ which, in turn, reflects an interest in enhancing the influence of the EU at the expense of other international institutions. This suggests a European future for BiH and represents a control mechanism on the part of the EU in terms of prescribing a certain direction to which the country is supposed to move. Through its institutional control mechanisms, the EU is thus able to enhance its influence over local actors with its power of persuasion and promise of future EU assertion. Yet, this does not necessarily imply a linear enhancement of EU control mechanisms. It had indeed been suggested that now, “it is high time to stop baby-sitting BiH”.⁵⁵⁶ This suggestion has also been linked to a call to ease off on the pressure to implement reforms quickly in BiH.⁵⁵⁷ As we can see, there are clearly ambivalent attitudes towards the necessary intensity of EU engagement as well as tensions between what different institutions believe is feasible for the EU’s future involvement in BiH. The space of institutional control is, therefore, contested and there are strong centrifugal tendencies at play.

State and Politics

As far as the state, its structures and the political system are concerned, an EU space seems to crystallise in which its different sub-institutions cluster their needs with respect to the entity- and state-level and their cooperation with it.

The most prominent need for the EU seems to be a centralisation of BiH’s structures of governance. Brussels’ requirement to centralise governing structures is a basic pre-requisite for BiH to become a member of the EU.⁵⁵⁸ In that context, the EU particularly struggles to reform the complex governmental structures in the country.⁵⁵⁹ The biggest issue seems to be the lack of one central voice of political authority given that BiH is divided into a number of different political (cantons, municipalities) and ethnic groups. In addition, the constitution of BiH entitles every one of the ‘constituting

⁵⁵⁵ Olli Rehn, “Towards A European Era for Bosnia and Herzegovina: The Way Ahead”, speech delivered to the Parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo, 24/07/09, <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/09/349&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en> (accessed 03/08/11).

⁵⁵⁶ Elisabet Tomasinec, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

⁵⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁸ Xavier Oleiro Ogando, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

⁵⁵⁹ Vladimir Pandurevic, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

nations' the right to veto any legislation they feel threatens their interests as a nation.⁵⁶⁰ This, in turn, often leads to the EU receiving contradictory messages from local authorities,⁵⁶¹ which creates an obstacle to entering into proper accession negotiations. Interestingly enough, the failure to come to a coherent, nation-wide consensus on issues tends to be blamed on the Bosnian state and people rather than on the international powers (such as the EU) who helped devise the problematic constitution in the first place. In fact, an EU official has argued that the DPA may have been a useful tool for ending the war, but now it needs revision given that it represents an obstacle to European integration.⁵⁶² Yet, although there now is a call to revise the DPA, an in-depth revision seems impossible due to the veto powers of the national groups; therefore, it has been suggested that only the parts of the DPA that are vital to EU integration be revised for now.⁵⁶³ It remains to be seen whether this will be feasible given that numerous aspects, such as the constitution, would have to be harmonised with the ECHR. Furthermore, such revision would require that the OHR be closed down⁵⁶⁴ before BiH could get candidate status in the EU.⁵⁶⁵ The different sub-institutions of the EU are indeed alert about these issues, pointing to the high degree of fragmentation between the country's majorities as well as to the possibilities this situation allows for in terms of political change.⁵⁶⁶ As some have suggested, the EU's main issue seems to be the fact that its institutions are not decision-makers, but, rather, it is the local authorities that make the major decisions.⁵⁶⁷ At the same time, the EU tends to view those local authorities as unreliable,⁵⁶⁸ so change from the perspective of the EU seems unlikely.

On the other hand, this situation is a double-edged sword, given that there are voices within the Commission claiming that it is the BiH government's responsibility to act and work for peace, while the EU should only support and assist rather than repeat

⁵⁶⁰ See Annex 4 of the Dayton Peace Agreement, available at http://www.ohr.int/dpa/default.asp?content_id=372 (accessed 17/01/11).

⁵⁶¹ Xavier Oleiro Ogando, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

⁵⁶² Confidential source, *Personal Interview*, Sarajevo, 29/04/10.

⁵⁶³ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁴ European Commission, "Commission staff working document Bosnia and Herzegovina 2009 Progress Report, accompanying the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council", Brussels, 2009.

⁵⁶⁵ Xavier Oleiro Ogando, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

⁵⁶⁶ Jadranka Mihic, Delegation of the EU to BiH, *Student Presentation*, Sarajevo, 15/03/10.

⁵⁶⁷ Xavier Oleiro Ogando, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

⁵⁶⁸ Ibid.

the mistakes of the much-involved international community.⁵⁶⁹ Against this background, the Council of the European Union articulates a hope that the political class in BiH will show a greater sense of responsibility and leadership to achieve reforms.⁵⁷⁰ This is meant to lead to a more functional state and successful constitutional reform in line with the ECHR and which will eventually lead to EU integration.⁵⁷¹ Such an approach goes hand in hand with the EU's need to establish efficient bureaucratic systems in BiH with which they can work.⁵⁷² To facilitate this, staff members of the Commission have suggested that progress could be achieved via the improvement of coordination among ministers⁵⁷³ and that the wider perspective of the international community be made use of in order to improve the current political deadlock impeding constitutional reform.⁵⁷⁴ Yet these perspectives have not gone unchallenged. In this context, a senior EUPM official has suggested that this approach of the EU is centralising, biased and imposing.⁵⁷⁵ As a better alternative, he suggested to prescribe only final objectives, while Bosnians get the choice of means to achieve these.⁵⁷⁶

As we can see, the state and politics space is a very centralised and exclusive one. It mainly centres on elites and their (in)ability and (un)willingness to consolidate the Bosnian state into a unit that the EU is able to deal with. This approach neglects the multidimensional debates around the topic of centralisation in relation to (national) identity, economic concerns and so forth. As a result, the state and politics space can be viewed as closed with little room for negotiation due to the EU's need for unified state structures to work with as well as the EU's focus on governmental actors. A structured, top-down approach is the main feature of this space that is mainly interested in making the country compatible with the EU's structures rather than vice versa. At the same time, it is a public space, given that the EU keeps emphasising its need for cooperation with the elites for a more strategic engagement in public: an approach often framed as *political cooperation* or *dialogue*.⁵⁷⁷ The state and politics space represents BiH as

⁵⁶⁹ Vladimir Pandurevic, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

⁵⁷⁰ Confidential source, Council of the European Union, *Personal Interview*, Brussels, 9 Sept 2010.

⁵⁷¹ Ibid.

⁵⁷² Vladimir Pandurevic, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

⁵⁷³ Jadranka Mihic, *Student Presentation*, op. cit.

⁵⁷⁴ Xavier Oleiro Ogando, *Student Presentation*, op. cit.

⁵⁷⁵ Tobias Flessenkemper, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

⁵⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁷ "Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament. The Western Balkans and European Integration", Brussels, 2003.

fragmented and different from EU member states, which is yet a contestable issue due to divisions within EU countries such as Belgium and Spain. Again, this mirrors the power of representation through which the EU is able to claim a certain degree of superiority and to prescribe a certain course of action to the Bosnian authorities. Simultaneously, this discourse serves as a facilitating device for the EU in terms of making the accession negotiations less complex and more straightforward for the EU, while maintaining its claims to be representative of the people.

Travel

One of the EU's central foci of engagement in BiH presents itself as the possibility for Bosnians to travel more easily, which has long posed a major problem for people, particularly for those living outside the capital city. Creating a space of free travel can be said to be one of the EU's fields of expertise due to its internal experiences with visa-free travelling.

In this context, the Visa Facilitation Agreements, which entered into force in 2008, represented an important symbolic step towards an opening of a geographical travel space for Bosnians and also towards opening a political dialogue and roadmap towards a visa exemption for Bosnian citizens.⁵⁷⁸ The big move towards visa exemption was made towards the end of 2010, thus also representing a major political breakthrough. Yet, this move only signifies that travelling for Bosnians in the EU is still not possible for more than 90 days per period of 180 days.⁵⁷⁹ In fact, there is a growing acknowledgement on the part of the EU about the importance of working on this issue given that Europe still appears to be a very distant entity to Bosnian citizens.⁵⁸⁰ In that sense, visa liberalisation has become a very effective short term motivating force that the EU can use in order to encourage BiH to fulfil EU conditionalities such as the revision of passports, police cooperation, the combating of illegal migration as well as tackling human rights issues and discrimination.⁵⁸¹

⁵⁷⁸ http://www.delbih.ec.europa.eu/files/docs/news/Visa_Agreement.pdf (accessed 14/10/10).

⁵⁷⁹ See <http://www.schengenplus.eu/visafacilitation.html#Bosnia> (accessed 31/05/11).

⁵⁸⁰ Confidential source, Delegation of the EU to BiH, *Personal Interview*, Sarajevo, 11/03/09.

⁵⁸¹ Xavier Oleiro Ogando, *Student Presentation*, op. cit.

For the EU, a common travel space as part of the accession conditionalities mainly represents a way to ensure that the political leadership fulfils other benchmarks. In that sense, progress within the travel space is highly dependent on political action and mainly includes political elites as central actors in the engagement with the EU. On the other hand, though, the space is more inclusive as far as ‘passive’ participation is concerned. Grassroots actors are not necessarily consulted with respect to their needs in that context, but they are considered recipients of the space and included in the role of an audience. The travel space is, therefore, rather closed in terms of who can directly impact upon it, but, on the other hand, it is open to those who are interested in using its benefits. The dynamics within the space are still mainly top-down, reflecting the EU’s ambitions to make BiH work to become a member of the EU by preparing it for the free travel dimension of accession. At the same time, this preparation helps improve the public image of the EU – indeed, it may indeed be part of its PR strategy⁵⁸² – being one of its most public and visible spaces of action. With the travel space, the EU puts emphasis on its identity as an open and tolerant entity, while it also attaches conditions to this, suggesting that BiH is not ready yet for a final opening and needs to be reformed/educated before the travel space can be opened up. At the same time, this conveys the EU’s need for a safe neighbourhood of “Fortress Europe”⁵⁸³ in terms of having put pressure on BiH *before* having abolished the visa requirement.

Future

There is a tendency to focus on the future as the EU’s main time reference in the context of peace- and institution-building. This is most clearly articulated with the accession process, which implies a clear direction for BiH and represents an option without alternatives – at least from the perspective of the EU. Ashton’s speech in Belgrade is illustrative of a future-centred perspective for the bigger region: “Let me begin by saying something about the foreign country that is the most important of all.

⁵⁸² The need to win ‘hearts and minds’ in the future EU engagement in BiH was emphasised by a confidential source, *Personal Interview*, Sarajevo, 29/04/10.

⁵⁸³ W. Bruggemann, “Illegal immigration and trafficking in human beings seen as a security problem for EUROPE”, EUROPOL, 2002.

That foreign country is called the future.”⁵⁸⁴ In that sense, the accession process reflects an underlying notion of ‘progress’ as a linear transition process from a conflictive society towards a European peaceful future. This is often linked to the idea that peacebuilding in a post-conflict area can start from a specific stage of conflict, while institution- and civil society-building can help liberate social life from its past. In that sense, EU rapprochement in the Western Balkans becomes a rather deterministic and outcome-oriented policy.

The European Partnership policies are clear on their ambitions to dissolve from the past in terms of expecting BiH to move forward and make progress in a number of policy areas that the EU considers as crucial for the future of the country.⁵⁸⁵ This is how the creation of peace becomes an outcome-oriented mission during the course of which it is expected that a state structure emerges in which institutions are capable of restoring justice, of promoting reconciliation and providing security – the latter mainly through the EUPM – in order to move the country towards a better future.⁵⁸⁶ This is not to imply that the EU has a clear blueprint that cannot be changed – indeed it is rather obvious that the EU is in the process of (re)developing its policies according to its own experiences and has shown some variety in its policies over time. This is rather to argue that there is a belief in the possibility of almost linear progress during the course of which BiH can move closer to the *acquis* and move away from its troublesome past with the assistance of the EU.⁵⁸⁷ There is an agreement among all EU institutions in that they want to push BiH forward towards accession.⁵⁸⁸ The EUSR views its role as an assistant to the country in the context of the accession process, with the view that BiH has no alternative but enter the EU.⁵⁸⁹ In agreement, a staff member of the Delegation of the Commission in Sarajevo confirms that the future of BiH is necessarily within the EU, although accession might only happen 20 or more years in the future.⁵⁹⁰

⁵⁸⁴ Catherine Ashton High Representative / Vice President, “The EU and the Western Balkans in a changing world”, Civil Society Meeting Belgrade, 18/02/10, http://www.europa-eu-un.org/articles/en/article_9508_en.htm (accessed 04/06/11).

⁵⁸⁵ Cf. Council of the European Union, “Council Decision of 18 February 2008 on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the European Partnership with Bosnia and Herzegovina and repealing Decision 2006/55/EC”, Official Journal L 080, 19/03/2008, pp.18-31.

⁵⁸⁶ Cf. <http://www.delbih.ec.europa.eu/?akcija=vijesti&akcija2=pregled&jezik=2&ID=157> (accessed 18/04/10).

⁵⁸⁷ Cf. <http://euobserver.com/9/26335> (accessed 18/04/10).

⁵⁸⁸ Xavier Oleiro Ogando, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

⁵⁸⁹ Confidential source, *Personal Interview*, Sarajevo, 24/03/10.

⁵⁹⁰ Vladimir Pandurevic, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

The future space can be considered an inclusive one that addresses different levels of society, all of which are meant to transform the country and enable it to move towards a better future. Again, this inclusivity is only on the passive side since the design of the future is reserved for the EU, or at least those actors in BiH who are deemed capable of implementing the EU's norms and values. The space is thus exclusive as far as its creation is concerned, being reluctant to open up to differing voices. It is open to 'receivers', but closed to 'creators' outside the EU's peacebuilding framework. As a result, it is mainly based on top-down processes and offers little room for improvisation as the EU retains control of identifying the processes that are central for the development of BiH. It can be said that the future space is highly structured in terms of having a clear direction. At the same time, the space is public with the EU making its vision for the country clear through its communication with the people. This also reflects a desire of the EU to transform BiH into a suitable neighbour, if not member, in the long run by making it similar to what are believed to be EU norms and values. This shows that the EU believes to share common values⁵⁹¹ – although the quality of those values is hardly ever outlined explicitly. At the same time, this reflects a belief that Europeanisation will represent an appropriate solution for BiH. What is imagined and represented as 'European values' is based on some sort of shared identity, as well as the frequent reference to the *acquis*, which BiH has to be made compatible with. In that sense, BiH is portrayed as different from the EU and in need of change. This conveys the EU's need to transform countries before admitting them, possibly due its issues when it comes to dealing with difference.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined eight exemplary spaces of agency as the EU promotes them. It has shown that the civil society space is contested even within the EU, but has tended to frame local agency in a narrow version of 'civilised society'. The latter has served as a central partner for the EU to implement its policies related to the

⁵⁹¹ Cf. European Union, "Respect for and promotion of the common values of the European Union: the European Commission puts the emphasis on prevention", Brussels, 2003.

democratisation space, which aims to make BiH compatible with the Copenhagen Criteria. The regional cooperation space builds on the notion that, just as the EU itself tends to take a regional approach internally, BiH cannot be seen in isolation of its neighbours. Again building on civil society as a partner, the EU has developed a human rights space that can be considered one of the key spaces in the context of accession. In this context, the institutions/control space provides the tools with which the EU can intervene into Bosnian political affairs, which can be seen, for instance, through its approach to the emergence of a state and politics space of agency. One of the EU's main attractions having been the visa facilitation agreements, this can be framed as a travel space in which discourses about free movement cluster. Finally, specifically relating to the EU's peacebuilding ambitions, a future space can be said to emerge, which focuses on 'progress' and the eventual accession process.

Those exemplary spaces illustrate some patterns running through the ways in which the EU acts in its spaces of agency. Those spaces are not clearly distinguishable, but overlapping, and they feed into each other. For instance, civil society is not only a policy field for the EU on its own terms, but at the same time an essential element in the development of many other spaces. Along similar lines, the human rights and democratisation space are closely linked to each other. It can thereby be observed that the EU's spaces tend to be highly abstract and are not tied to actual geographical places. As a result, there is an inherent notion that those spaces can be easily translated into other places elsewhere, independent of their physical location.

I have shown that, although some of these spaces have an inclusive component, they are only accessible to those willing to act as receivers or participate passively in the respective space. At the same time, most of the EU's spaces, the regional cooperation space to a lesser extent, are rather exclusive for actors outside the EU, in terms of which actors gain access to contribute actively to the development of the space. In that way, the EU tries to ensure to keep control over its spaces, their constituting discourses, and the directions in which those are moving. This is reinforced by a predominance of top-down over bottom-up mechanisms, where the central guidelines come from Brussels are taken up, slightly modified by the Delegation in Sarajevo and, from there, passed on to local society and local actors. The latter are viewed in need of change to be able to become part of the space. This is particularly evident in the civil society space, to which

local actors can contribute if they are willing to act according to the logic of the space (i.e. professionalising their organisational structures and responding to the EU's priorities and guidelines). This is a means for the EU to spread its values and mechanisms among society, in terms of empowering those actors that are willing to act according to the mechanisms of the EU spaces of agency. The fact that the EU sets the conditions for who gets access to the spaces and under which conditions is also implied by its ambition to centralise the country. The EU is eager to centralise BiH into one unit that it can deal with, which means that actors who favour divisions in the country do not easily gain access to the EU's spaces. This, in turn, reflects the EU's strategies of translation between spaces: it tries to talk to actors that are more or less sympathetic to its spaces, and, if so, will make them active actors within that space. Once those actors are part of the space of agency, then the EU can guide them. A related tool of translation is the strategy to include a number of actors passively acting as recipients of the space, which is the case, for instance, with the travel space. This space concerns many Bosnians and raises their interest in the work of the EU, although they cannot directly participate in the creation and development of this space. At the same time, through their interest in it, they learn to speak the language of the space, thereby unconsciously translating it towards other (local) spaces. This explains why most of the EU's spaces are public to a certain extent, given that this helps spread its institutional discourses and their associated meanings broadly, enhancing the space of agency by connecting it to other spaces in the societal sphere. At the same time, the EU's strategies at play in those different spaces of agency differ from one another, which will help us understand later on why some spaces find it easier to connect to local spaces than others.

In general, these strategies reflect the EU's self-understanding as a "transformative power,"⁵⁹² with the EU trying to find ways in which Bosnian society can move towards what the EU believes to be its own identity. In that sense, BiH is often viewed as different and in need of learning, while the EU uses its own spaces to transform local spaces. This also serves as a way to respond to the EU's need for a secure neighbourhood as well as a realistic framework for enlargement. The latter is only considered realistic under certain conditions such as a functioning civil society, a

⁵⁹² Cf. Heather Grabbe, *The EU's Transformative Power. Europeanization through Conditionality in Central and Eastern Europe*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.

democratic and centralised organisation of the state, the implementation of human rights and so forth. The success or failure of the EU to achieve this in terms of being able to meaningfully translate those discourses into local spaces of agency will be investigated below. This will cast light on the extent to which the EU's spaces represent spaces relevant to local peacebuilding, and it will look at these spaces and processes in terms of how much and in what way they are referred to locally.

Ch.6: Local Responses to the EU's Spaces of Agency

This section will now look in closer detail at the responses to the EU's spaces from local cultural actors. It can be considered part of what Castells has termed *resistance identity* as the ability of local actors to challenge institutional discourses. The chapter investigates how the EU's spaces are received by a number of actors, and how are they modified by them. Based on this, it will attempt to investigate how successful the EU is in translating its spaces in BiH, as well as how local actors work with and resist them.

The Choice of Voices and Agents

To gain a deeper insight into some responses, this and the following chapter specifically look at local cultural actors. This may not be an obvious choice, given that many culturally engaged actors do not find the EU a topic they want to talk about. During my fieldwork interviews, most of them even rapidly changed the conversation topic when I started asking them about the EU. However, what I will show here is the centrality of cultural actors to the EU's peacebuilding ambitions as well as their indirect contribution to it through their involvement in certain spaces of agency.

Here, I understand 'culture' as a label referring to creative energies that are dissipated within a society. Yet the distinction between 'high culture' and 'popular culture' is not relevant for this thesis, given that creative energies can be found in the everyday sphere, as well as, in a more distilled form, in the activities of cultural institutions. Indeed, the artists that this thesis focuses on may be considered actors of the sphere of 'high culture' on the one hand, but on the other hand, they are situated in an everyday context from which they draw inspiration and are also part of social networks; they are family members, neighbours, producers, consumers and so forth. In that respect, I challenge the boundary that is sometimes artificially created between high culture and popular culture. Lefebvre, for instance argues:

Certainly, right from the start, festivals contrasted violently with everyday life, *but they were not separate from it*. They were like everyday life, but more intense; and the moments of that

life – the practical community, food, the relation with nature - in other words, work - were reunited, amplified, magnified in the festival.⁵⁹³

Lefebvre suggests that arts, creation and inventiveness emerge from the politics of everyday life and from their position they can provide a critique of the everyday, just as much as the everyday can provide a critique of arts.⁵⁹⁴ This assertion ties in with de Certeau's view on arts as related to their everyday significations and the tactics associated with them, with tactics themselves representing an art that may represent the voices of the weak.⁵⁹⁵ This is why their artwork can be viewed as particularly insightful in terms of cultural responses to peacebuilding, but by no means can it be considered as isolated from the everyday context from which it develops. Therefore, local cultural actors in this thesis refer to a variety of actors that are involved in creative processes in terms of transforming a general experience into an artistic product. The ways in which they do this vary considerably, ranging from film productions to theatre workshops, from museum exhibitions to music performances. Those activities are not necessarily public, but may also be semi-public or well hidden from the public sphere. In this context, the question arises as to why it might make sense to choose local cultural actors as a case study for the analysis of processes during the course of which spaces of agency are shaped. There are a number of reasons for this. First and foremost, arts are multidimensional. Not only are they situated in concrete creative processes, but they are reflective of underlying identities and needs on which their creative moment is based. Indeed, cultural actors cannot be viewed as exclusively cultural, but they are part of society and thus carry political, economic and social identities as well, with arts reflecting those in a cross-cutting way. This ties in with Harvey's suggestion stating that

Aesthetic and cultural practices are particularly susceptible to the changing experience of space and time precisely because they entail the construction of spatial representations and artefacts out of the flow of human experience. They always broker between Being and Becoming.

(...)

The politics of the cultural mass are (...) important, since they are in the business of defining the symbolic order through the production of images for everyone.⁵⁹⁶

⁵⁹³ Henri Lefebvre, *Critique of everyday life, vol.1*, op. cit., p.207.

⁵⁹⁴ Henri Lefebvre, *Critique of everyday life, vol.2*; translated by John Moore ; with a preface by Michel Trebitsch, London: Verso, 2008, pp.19, 44, 240.

⁵⁹⁵ Michel de Certeau, op. cit., p.37.

⁵⁹⁶ David Harvey, op. cit., pp.327, 348.

In that sense, cultural processes build upon experiences from different societal spheres as the inspiration and foundation for the representational processes in which specific elements and needs are emphasised by the artist. Arts are revealing of underlying identities and needs, they reflect upon them, distil them and translate them to make them accessible to a wide range of people, using the arts space to find the liberty to say things that cannot necessarily be said otherwise. In that sense, cultural actors are able to mobilise a broad spectrum of people, although this may not be visible all the time. As Caruso suggests, arts are based on the respective artist's lived experiences, situated in a social system and are therefore political in nature.⁵⁹⁷ Caruso claims that, representing political and economic power, culture reflects the search for identity through its imaginative and transformative-subversive potentials.⁵⁹⁸ Arts can thus be said to help us understand a specific context politically due to its ability to connect the personal and the political.⁵⁹⁹ This makes arts a relevant category for this thesis because it opens up a political understanding of peacebuilding from a different angle, one which is less censored compared to that which is voiced in the political realm, as a result of its ability to code information and limit its access to an interested public. In this context, Danto argues that "all art is political in consequence, even if politics should not be its immediate content."⁶⁰⁰ In that respect, a focus on culture and arts allows for a deep understanding of social contexts and of how personal experiences relate to bigger public, political ideas.

Second, cultural actors have a diverse range of means and techniques at their disposal. This means that creative techniques in themselves reflect actors' ability to create spaces of agency, not only through *what* they address, but also *how* they do so. Since those techniques are not necessarily always accessible to policy actors or possibly even the broader public sphere, they are less subject to censorship and political control. Against this background, both the techniques and content with which artists decide to work have a high potential in reflecting underlying needs and tend to find creative channels to do so while making use of the liberties of the arts sector. At the same time,

⁵⁹⁷ Hwa Young Choi Caruso, "Art as a Political Act: Expression of Cultural Identity, Self-Identity, and Gender by Suk Nam Yun and Yong Soon Min", *The Journal of Aesthetic Education*, vol.39, no.3, 2005, pp.71-87.

⁵⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁰ Arthur C. Danto, *Beyond the brillo box: The visual arts in post-historical perspective*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998, p.182.

as Landry has pointed out, as long as they are not part of a ‘culture of control’, arts and culture have the power to transform social settings on their own terms as well as symbolising complex ideas.⁶⁰¹ Third, cultural actors are particularly insightful in a country like BiH, where culture has a history of challenging the political and its associated forms of control in more disguised ways. This is also the context in which society became mobilised during the war in the 90s through cultural resistance to violence, with artists launching theatre and film festivals to make their voices heard, exercising a profound influence on society. Zelizer describes how, despite the adverse social conditions during the siege of Sarajevo, the city enjoyed a vibrant cultural life, staging countless performances, exhibitions and other arts projects.⁶⁰² Events such as the theatre festival MESS or the film festival became signs of the people’s resilience and their resistance to violence. Still today, people in Sarajevo talk with pride about the vibrant cultural life during the war and how this brought a feeling of being human back into their otherwise cruel everyday lives. There is thus a high degree of identification with cultural processes in the Bosnian context, while cultural actors often assume the role of making people’s voices heard and translating the social into the cultural, and often the latter also into the political.

However, although cultural actors reflect a variety of identities and needs as they emerge from within society, this is not to argue that they are representative of society as a whole. Indeed, they may only represent a niche of actors within a bigger picture. What their voices can do, however, is to cast light on the dynamics with which various forms of peace are negotiated between different actors that try to make their voices heard in different ways. Given that such negotiations of peace are processes in constant reproduction and modification, they can indeed never be said to be representative. In that sense, examining some instances in which local cultural actors, a diverse group in itself, act, can only represent a snap-shot of selected local spaces of agency. As a result, this section aims neither to essentialise spaces of agency as objective or timeless truths, nor to look at the EU’s and local spaces as binary, but rather to point to processes that are key to understanding how spaces change and impact on each other as well as the mechanisms of translation and hybridisation between them. In that respect, the

⁶⁰¹ Charles Landry, “Culture at the Heart of Transformation”, DEZA and Pro Helvetia, 2006.

⁶⁰² Craig Zelizer, “The role of artistic processes in peacebuilding in Bosnia-Herzegovina”, *Peace and Conflict Studies*, vol.10, no.2, 2003, pp.62-75, p.66.

following section has the ambition to investigate a number of factors that impact on the development of selected spaces of agency in order to emphasise the transformative and negotiable dimension of peacebuilding. This has often been played down by the existing literature on peace and conflict, which tends to imagine peace as a coherent and universal matter, neglecting its contextuality and transformability. Instead, this chapter deconstructs processes of agency, negotiation and resistance as they are voiced towards specific elements of peacebuilding, showing that the latter is never just black or white, but much more nuanced, fragmented and complex than that.

Responses to the EU's Spaces of Agency

Civil Society

As it has been outlined above, the EU has – together with other actors active in the peacebuilding and development area - actively participated in the creation of a civil society space, which frames local society in its (in)ability to professionalise and adapt to what the EU imagines civil society to be. Indeed, the EU considers civil society a central actor and partner in the peacebuilding process. In the responses to this space, we can observe a certain degree of complicity, while particularly NGOs have become complicit in the EU's civil society conceptions. This is hardly ever openly voiced, but some (cultural) NGOs have benefitted from the EU's focus on civil society as a partner by getting access to funds or at least being invited to conferences and receptions hosted by the EU.⁶⁰³ This in turn makes it easier for such actors to get involved in the EU's strategies and funding priorities for the future. Such actors, mainly NGOs that have access to funding and / or dialogue with the EU, tend to become complicit in this system by confirming the EU in its approach to focus on civil society as a peacebuilding partner. Indeed, in the Delegation in Sarajevo, there is a perception that NGOs are generally happy with the EU in the country, which a staff member of the Delegation derives from the high number of funding applications that are put in every year.⁶⁰⁴ However, in many cases this represents a tuning of local interests to EU interests rather than vice versa – the Delegation of the EU is very clear about the procedure being a

⁶⁰³ I observed this throughout my fieldwork in 2010.

⁶⁰⁴ Vladimir Pandurević, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

numerical process with the priorities being set in Brussels.⁶⁰⁵ This means that the version of peace that the EU is developing in BiH represents mostly a realisation of the EU's approaches instead of reflecting contextualised peacebuilding that takes into account the everyday dimension of peace in BiH. Peacebuilding subcontracted to local NGOs may help selected local actors to get access to resources and public attention on the one hand, but on the other hand, it is often perceived as constraining. Therefore, local actors often have an ambiguous attitude towards the EU's policies and approaches in this field. A programme manager of a Sarajevo-based NGO working on civil courage and resistance, for instance, did not criticise the EU's funding procedures *per se*, and implied that Bosnians will need to be trained to learn how to write proposals according to EU guidelines. Yet, the interviewee also suggested that the EU give easier access to funding to make funding procedures work better for BiH, which in turns reflects a certain degree of ambiguity towards the EU's civil society space.⁶⁰⁶ The fact that local NGOs have adapted to the EU's requirements on the one hand, but do not identify with them to a large extent, became obvious when I attended a civil society meeting hosted by the Delegation of the EU in Sarajevo.⁶⁰⁷ Although many NGO representatives participated in it, there was not much enthusiasm about the pre-set agenda, which was mainly organisational in nature, and was not responsive to the ideas and the input of the NGO representatives. People indeed apologised to me afterwards that this meeting lacked substance.

This reflects the extent to which there are feelings of rejection against the civil society space, which is also voiced by a number of cultural actors, relating to the quality of civil society from a domestic perspective on the one hand, but also to the EU's ways of engaging with it on the other hand. In this context, a radio journalist suggested that civil society in BiH is a minority and not a common way of organising social life.⁶⁰⁸ Along those lines, the president of the alumni organisation Alumni Centra za Interdisciplinarnе Postdiplomske Studije (ACIPS) suggested that civil society does not represent a valid partner neither to local politicians nor to the international community, since it has not emerged from the grassroots, but acts as a client of political parties.

⁶⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁶ Eleonora Emkić, Gariwo, *Personal Interview*, Sarajevo, 23/04/10.

⁶⁰⁷ Meeting held in Sarajevo, 19/03/10.

⁶⁰⁸ Adnan Čalkić, EFM Student Radio, *Personal Interview*, Sarajevo, 12/03/10.

According to him, the fact that civil society never emerged from within society, but is rather based on money and financial opportunities, makes it an unsuitable policy partner. Pointing to his own association, ACIPS, he explained that the ‘real civil’ society comes by accident, as opposed to being artificially set up and planned.⁶⁰⁹ The problem seems to lie in the fact that the EU has high expectations on civil society, often equalising it with NGOs, as an NGO staff member pointed out.⁶¹⁰ He claimed that this reflects a managerial paradigm, in terms of thinking in frameworks, structures and deadlines, and since this is “all about money and donor frameworks”, it closes possibilities and inhibits creativity: “If you cannot put it in a framework, the problem does not exist.”⁶¹¹ This fails to connect to the ways in which people experience conflict and peace as well as their associated needs, which are hardly ever amenable to being organised in a framework.

In that respect, the founder of a youth and music centre in Travnik, ‘Alter Art’, explained that the NGO format was advantageous in terms of facilitating access to funds, but he expressed his regret having to run a centre as an NGO, given that this felt to him like losing the spirit of the project as a result of having to explain every little step to the donors.⁶¹² Again, this mirrors the extent to which the EU’s ambitions to frame their relations with civil society in administrative terms fails to connect to the expectations from numerous Bosnian actors. The observation that in the Peacebuilding Partnership programme a major problem was that “many of the proposals lacked quality and some contained administrative errors. In some cases this was no doubt due to a lack of experience in writing EC proposals”,⁶¹³ is illustrative of why there is a lack of mutual engagement between the organisational structures of the EU and local cultural actors. The associated engines (organisational efficiency vs. complex approaches based on a ‘messy’ everyday) therefore appear distant, not finding a common space of agency. Therefore, although societal actors work with the civil society frame that is provided by the EU (and indeed other international peacebuilding actors in the country), they are not uncritical of it, and do voice their resentments to it. The main issue seems to be the

⁶⁰⁹ Sanel Huskić, ACIPS, student presentation, Sarajevo, 15/03/10.

⁶¹⁰ Nebojša Šavija-Valha, NDC Sarajevo, *Personal Interview*, Sarajevo, 12/03/09.

⁶¹¹ Ibid.

⁶¹² Darko Saračević, Alter Art, *Personal Interview*, Travnik, 02/03/11.

⁶¹³ Sarah Bayne and Patrick Trolliet, “Stocktaking and scoping of the Peacebuilding Partnership”, European Commission 2009, http://www.eas.europa.eu/ifs/pbp/docs/study_en.pdf (accessed 31/07/11).

EU's tendency to think in frames and structures rather than in terms of social needs and contents that are voiced by the recipients of policies. There seems to be a thread running through local discourses, saying that "the EU Commission is not about people"⁶¹⁴, but about institutions and power.

Criticism towards the EU's civil society space does not remain passive, but there are also actual acts of resistance to this space. In this context, the Youth Theatre in Sarajevo tries to find alternative ways of making a difference in post-war BiH. A dramaturgist of this theatre explained that NGOs did not have adequate means to bring about change in society, while the work of theatres was more connected to society, more productive and transformative.⁶¹⁵ This ties in with a more general feeling on the ground that NGOs have often become job creators and become distanced from the ground. Taking this perception up, the film company 'deblokada' has developed its particular ways of dealing with unresolved societal issues in terms of integrating them with their films. Explaining their deviation from the NGO format, a staff member criticised the focus on keywords such as 'peacebuilding', 'democracy' and 'human rights', which are all domains of various NGOs, but they do not seem to be influential in society, so an alternative approach is required.⁶¹⁶ This clearly points to the perception that NGOs are not representative of the people, but are rather focused on keywords that donors want to hear. Interestingly enough, the interviewee had worked for an NGO herself before engaging in cultural work, which in turn reflects the dissatisfaction of many people (even inside NGOs) with the language and rhetoric used by the international peacebuilding community. 'Civil society' can be considered part of that rhetoric, while it is locally often associated with the idea of being driven by foreign donors.⁶¹⁷

An activist of the social resistance movement 'Dosta!' (English: 'Enough!') confirmed the necessity of establishing a strong society in BiH rather than a technical civil society.⁶¹⁸ This is indeed what Dosta! is trying to do by encouraging people to get involved in the political sphere to be able to create a version of peace which is their own

⁶¹⁴ sMagdalena Schildknecht, Narko-Ne, *Personal Interview*, Sarajevo, 11/03/10 and Aida Pilav, Pozorište Mladih Sarajevo, *Personal Interview*, Sarajevo, 31/03/10.

⁶¹⁵ Aida Pilav, *Personal Interview*, op cit.

⁶¹⁶ Amira Kresevljaković, deblokada, *Personal Interview*, Sarajevo, 13/04/10.

⁶¹⁷ Confidential source, *E-mail Conversation*, 03/08/11.

⁶¹⁸ Darko Brkan, Dosta!, *Personal Interview*, Sarajevo, 01/04/10.

and in which society makes decisions itself (rather than external authorities).⁶¹⁹ It encourages people to stand up for their rights and needs and thus to transform the public sphere. To be able to achieve this, Dosta! is not run like an NGO, but represents an association of activist and socially-engaged citizens, mostly working on a voluntary basis. They leave their traces throughout Sarajevo to make their resistance visible and are much better known than most NGOs in the city, particularly in Sarajevo. Dosta! deliberately refrains from considering itself a member of civil society, since they view the latter as being played by the international community, and not by the local population.⁶²⁰ Through their ambition to include the interested public to change the political realm in BiH, Dosta! builds on the initiative of citizens rather than the input of the international community. As a result, they do not rely on the stereotypical peacebuilding keywords mentioned above ('civil society', 'human rights' etc), but their key values are 'povjerenje' (trust), 'solidarnost' (solidarity), 'beskompromisnost' (intransigence), 'istrajnost' (persistence), 'socijalna pravda' (social justice), 'dostojanstvo' (dignity), 'osviještenost građana' (a citizens' consciousness), 'apsolutna moć glasu naroda' (the absolute power of the voice of the people), 'bez nacionalizma i isticanja nacionalnih interesa' (no nationalism and national interests), 'kreativnost' (creativity) and 'popularizacija' (popularisation).⁶²¹ These terms deviate clearly from the version of peace that is envisaged by the EU and reflect the extent to which Bosnian agencies have found ways of voicing their vision of BiH in alternative terms.

However, resistance to the civil society space is not only voiced in public, but also in more hidden ways, as it is the case with the Duplex Gallery in Sarajevo. Its founder is eager to keep this art gallery hidden, so only people genuinely interested in visiting it will find it. The gallery is located in the backyard of a small shopping passage in the centre of Sarajevo, so it is technically accessible to everyone, but practically only people who have heard about it from 'insiders' will be able to access it. Not only does this strategy prevent the gallery from becoming a product of consumer politics, but, according to the owner of the gallery, this also keeps actors such as the EU from using it as a tool of the promotion of their policies.⁶²² The example of the Duplex Gallery shows

⁶¹⁹ Ibid.

⁶²⁰ Ibid.

⁶²¹ <http://dosta.ba/latinica/o-pokretu-dosta/> (accessed 31/07/11).

⁶²² Pierre Courtin, Duplex Gallery, *Several Personal Conversations*, Sarajevo, April 2010.

how resistance may be voiced through the withdrawal from its public sphere that is predicated on a visible and transparent civil society. This points to the fact that being part of civil society also means being a policy tool for the international community in terms of depending on their funding, showing in their reports and (possibly even unconsciously) responding to their needs and demands. In this vein, the civil society space becomes distanced from people's everyday lives and thus fails to take hold locally in a sustainable way. Indeed, a journalist from the regional network BIRN explained that reconciliation is a very personal issue and cannot be decided about collectively⁶²³ - as many donors try to do with the help of civil society partners who are believed to be representative of local society. However, since many people view CSOs as part of the international community or clients of local authorities, reconciliation via civil society is unlikely to trickle down in terms of being translated into local spaces of agency. Against this background, it becomes understandable why many cultural actors are experimenting with alternative approaches to engage with local society. Although it may seem that those alternatives ideas remain trapped within the cultural arena, the discourses produced within this sphere do get multiplied beyond it. For instance, the Sarajevo Center for Contemporary Art (SCCA) launched a campaign in 2005 in which they expressed their "support of art projects which publicly and openly raise issues related to our time and start a direct dialogue with citizens in a new and untraditional way, both in form and content."⁶²⁴ This is clearly a call for arts to develop alternative ways of addressing people's needs. Yet, instead of doing so via a civil society framework, this represents an attempt to abstract those needs and transform them into something creative rather than something exclusively responsive to donor requirements.

Against this background, it becomes obvious that the degree of approval of the EU's civil society space seems to be low among the actors interviewed for this thesis. Where there is translation into other spaces, this comes mainly in the form of complicity or compliance as a response to imposition rather than as a genuine will to implement the EU's policies, i.e. accommodation. This is not only due to the fact that the EU has rather inflexible requirements in this respect, but it is also a result of the low levels of

⁶²³ Nidžara Ahmetasević, BIRN, Phone Interview, 19/07/10.

⁶²⁴ Sarajevo Center for Contemporary Art, "New Monument. De/Construction of Monument", Sarajevo, 2006, p.8.

trust civil society enjoys in BiH, where people tend to be sceptical towards its potential to actually represent societal needs and interests. There seems to be only little contact to other spaces, so the EU struggles translating the meanings it is creating in this space of agency into local spaces, where civil society is often considered a superficial construct of the international community, in fact mainly an engine to get donor money. This partly results from the exclusivity of the space, as it has been shown above, so many actors feel excluded from it and do not feel they should become involved, given that they often do not see how they can make a difference in a highly pre-structured space. Such forms of rejection and resistance have indeed led to a growing awareness within the EU that its use of the “civil society” notion is rather limited and needs rethinking. The fact that this is changing to a certain extent can be seen in recent events organised by the EU, to which not only NGOs in the narrow sense are invited. In fact, we can see some tentative efforts to enhance the guest list, for instance including cultural actors.⁶²⁵ To what extent this will influence the bigger lines of cooperation with civil society is yet to be seen.

Democratisation

It has been outlined above that the democratisation space is a central one for the EU, relating to its own identity on the one hand, but also to its accession criteria and conditionality. However, both the quantity and quality of responses from the ground towards democratisation are somewhat limited, while it seems to be hardly relevant in discourses of local cultural actors and their spaces. Yet although there is not much response to democracy and democratisation from the ground, actors like the Swiss Cultural Programme in the Western Balkans (SCP) have created a link between the democratisation agenda and their cultural engagement in the entire region, which is an example of a local actor accommodating the EU’s democratisation space as well as the connection of this space to a broad notion of peacebuilding. In this context, the Deputy Regional Manager explained that within their cultural agenda, democratisation has been made an important goal since it contributes to empowerment and ownership and

⁶²⁵ An example of this is the P2P programme, for which a meeting with different organisations from the Western Balkans was organised in Brussels, 4 May 2011.

therefore represents an important contribution to cultural life in the Western Balkans.⁶²⁶ The SCP uses culture as an instrument to promote its much broader agenda, one of the central goals of which can be seen to be democratisation as a result of cultural dialogue. This is particularly evident in their recent project “Balkans’ Initiative for Cultural Cooperation, Exchange and Development (BICCED)” that SCP is conducting in cooperation with various journalist associations and networks. This project is focused on training journalists on reporting in the cultural sector to provide high quality analytical reporting on crucial political issues relating to culture and arts.⁶²⁷ Along those lines, the cultural sector is being used not only for the sake of itself, but also as a training sphere for a wider democratisation agenda. This process also works vice versa, where democracy is used instrumentally in terms of creating a positive environment in which cultural activities can unfold. This is the case with the SCP’s “Rural Communities Culture” project that is implemented with a number of local partners in the Western Balkans, aiming to create the environment in which cultural needs can be identified and local artists can develop their own projects.⁶²⁸

The Centre André Malraux in Sarajevo pursues a similar approach in terms of using their cultural projects to support “the development of a democratic, civil and intercultural Bosnia and Herzegovina.”⁶²⁹ Again, this represents a more or less indirect link between cultural activities and democratisation, while the latter becomes an implicit goal of the Centre’s activities, such as book festivals, cooperation with other NGOs in the country as well as its efforts to strengthen civil society more generally.⁶³⁰ Such activities situate the abstract notion of democracy in a bigger context, with the ability to personalise and emotionalise it to connect it to a wider audience.

At the same time, apart from examples such as the SCP or the Centre André Malraux, which are actors that can be situated somewhere towards the middle of a spectrum between local society and the EU, endorsement of the democratisation space among other cultural actors appears largely lacking – meaning that acceptance and accommodation of this space is relatively low. This is often seen as related to the lack of contextuality of the EU’s democratisation agenda. It has been suggested that democracy

⁶²⁶ Bertan Selim, SCP, *Personal Interview*, Sarajevo, 08/04/10.

⁶²⁷ http://www.scp-ba.net/files/BIRN_project_sheet_final.pdf (accessed 27/01/11).

⁶²⁸ http://www.scp-ba.net/files/Rural_Communities_Culture_1.pdf (accessed 27/01/11).

⁶²⁹ Centre André Malraux, “Europe every day”, Sarajevo, 2009.

⁶³⁰ *Ibid.*

cannot be implemented as a general pattern, but it has to be developed and adopted as a gradual process.⁶³¹ This is where cultural actors come into play in their ability to modify and adapt abstract concepts by working with them on a different level as well as experimenting with the ways in which those can be implemented.

Yet, in many of these creative experiments, actors seem to deploy strong feelings of rejection against, or at least demands for modification of the EU's democratisation space – not only against its contents, but more against the ways in which it is being implemented in BiH. In terms of content, a staff member of the Nansen Dialogue Center in Mostar suggested that democracy must be connected to material needs to connect to people in terms of providing “what they can feel and see and touch” rather than just representing empty talks.⁶³² This is opposed to the EU's approach viewing democracy mainly as a policy tool that needs to be integrated with policy documents, NGO agendas and so forth. Yet democratisation policies are often perceived as rhetorical devices that do not lead to substantial improvements in people's lives. It has been emphasised to me that

due to the fact that we have been hearing about it for the last 20 years, and compared to the "good" authoritarian regime that we used to have, demokracija [democracy] didn't bring much benefits for ordinary Bosnians.⁶³³

In this context, a theatre dramaturgist suggested that democracy was indeed a meaningless term.⁶³⁴ In a similar vein, the president of ACIPS criticised the fact that the international community did not substantially change existing power structures, but rather legitimised incumbent power holders, which resulted in a minimal democracy, which is, according to the interviewee, the worst form of democracy, since it actually exacerbates the situation of those who are not in power.⁶³⁵ This in turn is linked to the criticism of the blueprint approach of the international community, which assumes that democratisation will work in similar ways, independent of the places in which it is being implemented. With respect to the EU, local critiques tend to take offence at what has been outlined above, namely the EU's lack of flexibility to adapt democratisation

⁶³¹ Asja Hafner, SCCA / pro.ba, *Personal Interview*, Sarajevo, 16/04/10.

⁶³² Elvir Djuliman, NDC Mostar, *Personal Interview*, Mostar, 15/04/10.

⁶³³ Confidential source, *E-mail Conversation*, 03/08/11.

⁶³⁴ Aida Pilav, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

⁶³⁵ Sanel Huskić, *Student Presentation*, op. cit.

policies to the Bosnian context, given that its approach to democratisation cannot be compromised upon as a result of it being part of the Copenhagen Criteria.

A programme coordinator of the SCCA in Sarajevo voiced her rejection of this, arguing that the international community only created one single model of democracy, but is applying this everywhere out of context.⁶³⁶ In that sense, efforts aimed at democracy promotion are mainly associated with the international community rather than local actors. This results in a perception of democracy being exclusively one-way and top-down,⁶³⁷ without taking into account the diverse and specific needs of the local population. The latter is expected to act as a passive recipient of the EU's democratisation space and responds accordingly by refusing to get involved, thus voicing their feelings of rejection towards it. This is partly grounded in a perception that the EU is playing with its assumed position of superiority by teaching people about how to live democracy. In this context, numerous interlocutors complained about the attitude of the EU that is often perceived as patronising. A cultural event manager of the Youth Centre 'Dom Mladih' in Sarajevo voiced his anger with this approach, saying that the fact that foreigners were promoting democracy and tolerance after the war was ridiculous, given that the country had developed these things before the war and was thus not in need of a teacher.⁶³⁸ Agreeing with that, another interviewee claimed that there was no need to talk about democracy and that he felt offended by others trying to teach him how to be 'civilised'.⁶³⁹

Yet, while there is a lot of rejection of the EU's democratisation space, which seems to have turned into an "othering" space in terms of assuming that the "other" needs to learn how to be democratic, the degree of resistance to it is only low. This may be connected to the fact that more generally, democracy seems a desirable goal for many local actors, whereas the main points of contention seem to lie in the patronising *processes* during the course of which democracy is being 'taught' in BiH as well as the lack of contextuality and connection to people's lives. Against this background, the Nansen Dialogue Center in Mostar has tried to develop its own way of approaching democratisation by organising a concert that intended to bring different people together.

⁶³⁶ Asja Hafner, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

⁶³⁷ Ibid.

⁶³⁸ Zijad Pekmez, Dom Mladih Sarajevo, *Personal Interview*, Sarajevo, 12/04/10.

⁶³⁹ Confidential source, *Personal Interview*, Sarajevo, 25/03/10.

The goal was to establish a dialogue during the concert, so that people would start talking about social issues – not only, but also about democracy and its associated meanings.⁶⁴⁰ Again, such initiatives mirror the extent to which smaller initiatives can use their tools (i.e. access to music groups and concert venues) to mobilise a wider public for their ideas as well as translating the meanings of a EU space into a specific context in a way that makes more sense to society. Democratisation makes sense contextually through such events, because they establish its meanings in relation to the people.

All in all, it becomes obvious that there are strong feelings of rejection against the EU's democratisation space of agency. This is linked to the fact that this is a highly pre-structured space that seems to leave hardly any room for local actors to challenge or modify it. Only if those actors already share the basic foundations of the space – as it is the case with bigger international NGOs such as the SCP or the Centre André Malraux, then they can participate, shape and fill it with their own ideas. However, where actors feel they are not being heard or that they do not have a chance to contribute to the space, there seems to be only a small likelihood for them to become active members. As a result, the democratisation space remains highly abstract and top-down as it is perceived locally, and thus fails to translate its meanings into local spaces of agency. Democratisation is not very present as a buzzword in local public discourses, and although the degree of resistance to the space is low, there are hardly any mechanisms through which the contents of that space can be translated into local discourses. Only where local actors take the initiative to engage with the space can it be translated into a language that connects to people's everyday lives. This runs contrary to the assumption that mechanisms of translation work best when already strong actors take the initiative and integrate them with their bigger agendas. There is only little conversation about the meaning of democratisation for peacebuilding in BiH between the EU and local actors. So it seems that no common space of agency is emerging through which democratisation policies could be negotiated and processed. What can be observed, however, is that, despite its institutional paralysis to change democratisation policies, there is an increasing critical awareness within the EU towards its own democratisation agenda, while at the same time, democracy has lost its central role in the relationship

⁶⁴⁰ Elvir Djuliman, *Personal Interview*, op.cit.

between the EU and BiH. The Commission's latest progress report is reflective of that change, winding down its previously-placed emphasis on democratisation, not least as a result of the failure of such policies to take hold locally.⁶⁴¹

Regional Cooperation

As outlined above, regional cooperation is one of the cornerstones of EU engagement in BiH and follows the EU's own history of regional integration.

Generally, there seems to be some degree of accommodation and tolerance towards the regional cooperation space. Again, the SCP has incorporated this notion and bases its cultural approach to peacebuilding on regional cooperation projects to instil a culture of social change. To achieve this, SCP supports individual cultural actors to cooperate across the region through a variety of projects.⁶⁴² An example is the E761 programme, funded by SCP, which aims to build creative capacities in both BiH and Serbia as well as establishing regional networks.⁶⁴³ Such initiatives emanate not only from bigger organisations, but also from artists themselves. For instance, the Museum for Contemporary Arts in Republika Srpska regularly bases projects on cooperation with curators from the region. As the PR manager outlined, their biggest arts project involved a curator from Sarajevo, one from South Serbia and one from Banja Luka.⁶⁴⁴ The president of Protok, the Center for Visual Communication, makes a more general statement about the need to follow the EU's approach to regional cooperation, which Protok does by inviting artists from the region and cooperating with the SCCA.⁶⁴⁵ This is a clear sign of the willingness to accommodate the EU's regional cooperation space, and even take it further from there. In contrast to the EU, such initiatives may not necessarily have the goal of peacebuilding or memberstate-building, since they are

⁶⁴¹ European Commission, "Commission staff working document Bosnia and Herzegovina 2010 Progress Report, accompanying the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council", Brussels, 2010.

⁶⁴² Bertan Selim, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

⁶⁴³ http://www.scp-ba.net/files/Academica_project_sheet_final.pdf (accessed 27/01/11).

⁶⁴⁴ Branka Šestić, Muzej Savremene Umjetnosti RS, *Personal Interview*, Banja Luka, 27/04/10.

⁶⁴⁵ Radenko Milak, "Dijalogom do budućeg suživota", interview in kulturpunkt.hr, 15/11/09, available at <http://www.kulturpunkt.hr/i/kulturoskop/341/> (accessed 04/06/10).

looking at the practical implications and concrete advantages for a cultural project by building on regional cooperation. However, the way of achieving this seems to be more or less coherent with the EU's approach to regional cooperation and therefore shows how processes that do not seem to be linked in the first place (a cultural and a peacebuilding agenda) can be brought into symbiosis for mutual benefit.

At the same time, these cross-regional contacts with other cities, such as Mostar or Sarajevo, are limited to the individual rather than the structural level and are thus highly dependent on the individual actors and their mutual relationships.⁶⁴⁶ A member of the EFM student radio, for instance, emphasised that, after having travelled throughout BiH, he realised that young people in Banja Luka had the same problems as people in Sarajevo.⁶⁴⁷ This example mirrors the way in which the space of local cultural actors often connects to the EU's space, by connecting it to their own experiences. For instance, they partly use ideas contained in the EU's regional cooperation space to make sense of their personal experiences.

As a result, we can see efforts to modify the EU's space of agency by transforming its structured and top-down nature into something that can take hold locally. Via this modified approach to regional cooperation, it becomes possible for actors to use elements of the EU space and translate them into local discourses to make them relevant on the ground. This may be one of the success factors of the film producing company 'deblokada'. In fact, not only their films but also their other projects, such as artists' and theatre workshops, often have a regional dimension, with the main producer, Jasmila Žbanić, working closely with actors cross-regionally.⁶⁴⁸ Her recent film, 'Na Putu' ('On the Path') is just one example of this, being played by actors from the entire region rather than just from BiH. In this respect, 'deblokada' is developing its own ways of talking about regional issues as well as creating concrete meanings for people's everyday lives. Again, this represents an attempt of translation from a bigger space of agency ('regional cooperation') into a more localised one.

In a different way, but no less creatively, the 'D-O Ark Underground' (Biennale of Contemporary Art) has internalised regional cooperation as an engine of its approach. The project committee has transformed Tito's formerly secret bunker in Konjic into an

⁶⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁷ Mirza Ajnadžić, EFM Student Radio, *Student Presentation*, Sarajevo, 07/03/11.

⁶⁴⁸ Amira Kresevljaković, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

exhibition centre as an attempt to deal with the past and its associated divisions in the region. Before the opening in May 2011, the project coordinators organised roundtables and lectures across the region, namely in Sarajevo, Banja Luka, Belgrade, Mostar, Ljubljana and Konjic, including experts from the entire region (ex-Yugoslavia and beyond) as well as a curator from Belgrade and one from Montenegro. In terms of regional cooperation, the organisers claim:

We believe that this project will be recognized as an important one for its potential to promote better understanding between the nations of our region, as well as between the region and Europe.⁶⁴⁹

In its subtle connection to peacebuilding, this approach reflects not only a certain form of accommodation of the EU's notion of regional cooperation, but at the same time it translates it into the regional context of the (Western) Balkans, connecting it to symbol-laden places and to the experiences of the people addressed by this arts project. Peacebuilding through the regional cooperation space thus becomes a translation between local spaces and those of the EU, with actors as described above helping to make this space resonant among the people as well as reminding of its contextual meaning.

At the same time, we can observe a certain degree of modification of the space by a number of cultural organisations that translate a given space into a local context to make it relevant on the ground. While for the EU, in the context of regional cooperation, there is an emphasis on its judicial and economic dimensions (i.e. through war trials and trade agreements),⁶⁵⁰ Pravo Ljudski, a human rights film festival, uses the screening of documentaries to express their social engagement and critical stance towards social and political developments. As the creative director of the festival pointed out, Pravo Ljudski feels the need to promote young artists from the region. This is not only to support them and their work, but at the same time to raise the interest of potential audiences, against the background that the latter tend to be most interested in films from the region, since those are considered 'our films'.⁶⁵¹ In that sense, the film festival acts as a tool of mobilisation through which the rather abstract notion of

⁶⁴⁹ <http://www.bijenale.ba/> (accessed 27/01/11).

⁶⁵⁰ European Commission, "Commission staff working document Bosnia and Herzegovina 2010 Progress Report, accompanying the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council", op. cit.

⁶⁵¹ Kumjana Novakova, Pravo Ljudski, *Personal Interview*, Sarajevo, 09/04/10.

regional cooperation is translated into local spheres, and thus represents a tool through which the EU's space of regional cooperation can open up and start merging with local spaces of agency. This idea can also be seen as incorporated by 'Traduki', a European network of literature and books with a particular focus on South East Europe. Their main work consists of doing interregional translations of the books the organisation considers interesting for a country according to its specific needs. This is based on the assumption that 'you have to know your neighbour', which in turn is the pre-condition for their approach to fostering cultural exchange across the region.⁶⁵² It also includes a peacebuilding dimension in terms of encouraging cross-regional dialogue, albeit on a societal level rather than through engagement with political elites, the level which the EU tends to focus on. At the same time, although promoting books across the region, this approach is not inattentive to the diverging needs within this region, often promoting different versions of a book depending on differing needs and demands.⁶⁵³ The coordinator of the regional office in Sarajevo suggested that, for instance, the literary needs in Croatia and Serbia differ considerably from those in BiH.⁶⁵⁴ In that sense, Traduki attempts to foster regional cooperation, yet in a way that is responsive to the various needs emerging within the region. The importance of taking into account local needs reflects the ambitions of a number of actors that work towards regional cooperation, whether this be intentional or rather accidental. In this context, the director of the Children's Theatre in Banja Luka pointed to the importance of responding to children's needs with their performances, at the same time identifying regionally cross-cutting needs, which form the foundation of their international festivals in cooperation with countries like Croatia, Serbia and beyond.⁶⁵⁵ This can be considered a powerful translation of the regional cooperation space by connecting regional peacebuilding to its associated needs and by making it more accessible to a wider audience, including children, who are often marginalised in this respect. This shows very clearly that the ways in which local cultural actors tend to deal with regional cooperation may be more selective than the EU's approach, yet at the same time they develop more specific

⁶⁵² Hana Stojić, Traduki, *Personal Interview*, Sarajevo, 21/04/10.

⁶⁵³ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁵ Predrag Bjelošević, Dječije Pozorište RS, *Personal Interview*, Banja Luka, 27/04/10.

programmes targeted at different social niches and therefore vesting the notion of regional cooperation with concrete social configurations.

MESS, a big theatre festival, incorporates a strong regional dimension. The festival was founded in 1960 and became renowned as the most important national festival in Yugoslavia, working with artists and companies in the entire country. In this spirit, despite the social ruptures escalating in the 1990s, it became a space of cultural resistance to the, screening films during the war, as well as being the first institution to communicate with neighbouring countries after it.⁶⁵⁶ Even now, about 15 years later, their production catalogue is reflective of numerous projects that are conducted in cooperation with different countries in the region, and brings together productions from various countries in the region.⁶⁵⁷ Although peacebuilding ambitions may not be mentioned explicitly in the mission statement of MESS, it cannot be denied that it includes a component of it, being in the position to mobilise a large audience to engage in discourses related to social cohabitation and therefore translating discourses as they refer to peacebuilding into an everyday context.

The EU's regional cooperation space seems to find much more resonance on the ground than the previously-outlined spaces. A variety of cultural actors are building on it, accommodating and modifying it so it can be translated into local discourses. In that sense, local discourses merge with the EU's, which reflects a high degree of hybridity between spaces. In fact, a common space seems to be emerging here, to which both EU actors as well as cultural actors contribute, although in very different ways. While the EU seems to focus on cooperation between economic and political elites, and partly civil society actors, local actors have emphasised dialogue between cultural actors, their audiences, and people more generally. This results in a symbiosis between actors, during the course of which the EU provides the institutional, economic and political background, while those cultural actors mentioned above translate this approach to broaden the audience and thus participants of that space. The EU and some local cultural actors therefore work on the same space of agency and talk about a similar meaning of peace with respect to regional cooperation. The fact that cultural actors

⁶⁵⁶ Nihad Kresevljaković, MESS, *Personal Interview*, Sarajevo, 01/04/10.

⁶⁵⁷ <http://www.mess.ba/2010/en/program/catalogue> (accessed 28/01/11).

manage to mobilise larger audiences to talk about and work on regional cooperation can be considered as beneficial for the EU's ambitions in that sphere.

Human Rights

Similar to democratisation and regional cooperation, human rights form a cornerstone of EU engagement in BiH. Generally speaking, the topic of human rights seems to have remained in the domain of NGOs specifically focused on human rights issues rather than being mainstreamed broadly in many sectors. In addition, there is a perception that in BiH, human rights are very dogmatic and cannot be discussed or negotiated by the people.⁶⁵⁸ Again, this alludes to the technical character of the EU's human rights policies and the fact that those are not very open to challenge, being part of the Copenhagen Criteria. For many Bosnians, human rights do not have the power that they are often imagined to have in terms of improving people's lives, but they often refer to human rights as 'one of the mantras of the international community.'⁶⁵⁹

However, there are some cultural actors that have started working on human rights, with the most prominent and visible example in Sarajevo probably being Pravo Ljudski, the above-mentioned human rights film festival. Through the screening of films that are related to human rights issues in a broad sense, they point to what they consider problematic social developments, not only in BiH, but also beyond. They organised a photo competition for young people (ZOOM 2010) dealing with human rights issues. The associated events are meant to promote a culture of human rights and democracy, which can be understood in a flexible and contextual way, while the creative director made clear that they would never make a compromise on the meaning of tolerance and dignity as the foundation of their work.⁶⁶⁰ Pravo Ljudski can be considered an attempt to translate the EU's human rights space into local discourses and make them accessible to a wider audience. On the one hand, this is facilitated by the fact that normally the tickets to the film screenings during the festival are free of charge and most members of Pravo Ljudski work on a voluntary basis. On the other hand,

⁶⁵⁸ Confidential source, *Student Presentation*, Sarajevo, 17/03/10.

⁶⁵⁹ Confidential source, *E-mail conversation*, 03/08/11.

⁶⁶⁰ Kumjana Novakova, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

human rights discourses are made accessible through the emotional approach of Pravo Ljudski– as opposed to the EU’s technical understanding of human rights. In this context, the organisation writes:

5th Pravo Ljudski, nurtured by its inspiring, enthusiastic, faithful, true and human friends, is unremittingly developing. Excited, eager, enthusiastic, passionate, tired (less), on our way to the new programmatic concepts and contents, we are trembling amid the constant drive for exploration, (un)conditioned potentials for acting and fear from ignorance.⁶⁶¹

Pravo Ljudski modifies the EU’s human rights space by making it more accessible to the public and translating its discourses into a language that is more connected to people’s everyday lives. They also enhance the meaning of “human rights” in terms of emotionalising it, giving the term new energy and enthusiasm. Since they give meaning to the otherwise abstract term, their approach can be viewed part of local peacebuilding.

Damir Nikšić, an artist from Sarajevo, who is based in Stockholm, is pursuing a similar approach in his particular way. In his exhibition “Oriental dream”, which was hosted by the Duplex Gallery in Sarajevo in January 2011, he presents his vision of the ‘Bosnian Dream’:

A Fight for Human rights or for a piece of bread is a bitter fight. A fight for a dream is a sweet fight, and a Bosnian dream is the sweetest dream, because it’s an international dream, that the entire mankind should dream in Bosnia, and not Assyria and Egypte, or Gog and Magog [sic].⁶⁶²

This dream the artist develops here is a fight for human rights and for the satisfaction of material needs. The way in which the artist presents it is not a dream limited to BiH though, but includes an international dimension. What becomes obvious is his approach to human rights not as a technical instrument, but as a smaller part of a bigger dream for “the entire mankind”, again using an emotional and personalised perspective on human rights.⁶⁶³ This approach in turn widens the potential audience of the human rights space; it accords a particular meaning to it, which makes sense in the

⁶⁶¹ Kumjana Novakova and Monja Suta Hibert, “Pravo Ljudski, 5th Human Rights Festival”, catalogue, Sarajevo, 2010, <http://www.pravoljudski.org/pdf/katalogPLJweb.pdf> (accessed 28/01/10).

⁶⁶² Damir Nikšić, exhibition invitation, email via Pierre Courtin, 19/01/11.

⁶⁶³ Ibid.

Bosnian context and connects to people's perception of human rights in relation to their personal experiences.

Yet, although there seems to be some degree of accommodation and modification of the EU's human rights space, it can also be observed the latter's human rights policies do in many cases fail to materialise concretely for the people. This is not last a result of the EU working with the government as a main partner for the implementation of human rights policies.⁶⁶⁴

It is sometimes unclear what the actual meanings of human rights are for a specific cultural actor working with the term. The D-O ARK Underground project in Konjic, for instance, claims to promote human rights and tolerance in terms of dealing with issues related to the Cold War and their relationship with the past and future,⁶⁶⁵ yet what this concretely means for the project and the meanings created around 'human rights' is not made entirely clear. Such dynamics reflect the well-known problem of prevailing donor discourses, which all too often prescribe a certain language for organisations to gain access to their funding. At the same time, this points to the power of donors to shape the meanings of the space of agency through their financial incentives, at least superficially, while local needs and perceptions of human rights may still differ from them. It has specifically been suggested that in the context of BiH, human rights have to be seen in the tension between collective and individual rights, which is part of the history of the country.⁶⁶⁶ The president of the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in BiH explained that, although the Bosnian idea of human rights came close to the EU's values, there were still some particular areas of human rights that were particularly relevant for BiH, mainly in relation to (ethnic) discrimination, minority issues and so forth.⁶⁶⁷ At the same time, he critiqued the neo-liberal approach - shared by the EU - that emphasises privatisation policies and lack a social policy for compensation in a "very wild market economy."⁶⁶⁸ This reflects the degree to which human rights are perceived to be in need of being tuned to the context in which they are

⁶⁶⁴ cf. European Commission, "Commission staff working document Bosnia and Herzegovina 2010 Progress Report, accompanying the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council", op. cit.

⁶⁶⁵ <http://www.bijenale.ba/> (accessed 27/01/11).

⁶⁶⁶ Jasna Bakšić Muftić, "Bosna i Hercegovina 10 godina poslije Dejtona- mogući pravac promjena", Sarajevo, 2005, [www.bh-hchr.org/Saopstenja/Jasna%20Baksic%20Muftic.doc](http://www.bh-hchr.org/Saopštenja/Jasna%20Baksic%20Muftic.doc) (accessed 30/07/11).

⁶⁶⁷ Srđan Dizdarević, Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in BiH, *Personal Interview*, Sarajevo, 10/03/08.

⁶⁶⁸ Ibid.

implemented. As the Human Rights Report of the Human Rights Centre of the University of Sarajevo emphasises, the degree to which Bosnians know about and trust in the protection of their human rights is limited due to a perception that the legal access to human rights does not tend to materialise concretely for the people.⁶⁶⁹

Thus, generally speaking, the responses to the EU's human rights space tend to remain vague and limited. Not many cultural actors seem to build on it, which prevents the space from taking hold among society. However, where cultural actors make an effort to become involved in the human rights space by modifying it and translating it into local contexts, creative energies are freed, which in turn help the discourses materialise locally. Yet, more generally, the human rights space has become part of local peacebuilding discourses only to a limited extent, still mainly emerging from the donor sphere.

Institutions/Control

The elements and mechanisms of the EU's approach to govern and control BiH through its (sub-)institutions have been outlined above. I have shown that there are a variety of institutional control mechanisms, ranging from directed civil society funding to accession conditionality.

Some culturally engaged actors have welcomed elements of this space, pointing to the advantages of moving towards the EU. This agreement seems to be based on the EU's bigger lines of engagement rather than on the details of the accession process though. In this context, a film producer suggested that the EU is a great direction for the country to go into, at the same time assuming that in ten years "we will be part of it".⁶⁷⁰ He praised the ability of the EU to help the country envisage a brighter future, shaped by transformations with respect to ecological awareness and the hope for BiH to make progress in different fields.⁶⁷¹ The EU is therefore a platform on which hopes can be projected, as part of the vision of an open, peaceful and international BiH.

⁶⁶⁹ Human Rights Centre, "Human Rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina," Sarajevo, 2009, <http://hrc.unsa.ba/hrr2008/PDFS/humanrightsinbih2008.pdf> (accessed 01/08/11).

⁶⁷⁰ Namik Kabil, film producer, *Personal Interview*, Sarajevo, 14/04/10.

⁶⁷¹ Ibid.

A staff member of the community development foundation Mozaik (funded by the EU, N.B.) praised the EU as a landmark for organisations in BiH in terms of teaching them how to professionalise through their control mechanisms and procedures.⁶⁷² Being involved in cultural heritage projects amongst others, Mozaik generally holds a high opinion of the EU, with the executive director claiming that the EU has the right to set the rules and procedures related to its presence in the country, with Mozaik adapting to those so their finance and administration departments know how to go about EU-funded projects.⁶⁷³ The interviewee even welcomed the idea that the IPA funds have, since 2010, started to fund ideas coming from within the EU rather than just from local partners, which she considered as beneficial due to her perception that people's ideas in BiH were not "good enough" to create successful projects.⁶⁷⁴ This in turn shows how the EU is perceived (by some) as a patron that is more developed than BiH and can therefore help the country and its society to make progress on different scales. Yet to a certain extent, this represents a reproduction of the discourses of 'Balkanism' and can be seen in relation to Bakić-Hayden's 'nesting orientalisms' concept, pointing to the fact that compliance is not just a passive category, but reflects the agency of local actors to appropriate discourses of Balkanism to 'recycle' them for their own benefits.⁶⁷⁵

It becomes clear that there is a central financial dimension in the responses to the EU's institutional control mechanisms. The PR manager of the Museum for Contemporary Art in Banja Luka pointed to their need for finances as well as reputational backup which can be provided by funds from the UN or the EU: "The first thing is to be strong here and after that we'll have strength and can apply this for something bigger, something greater. We have high hopes, that's for sure."⁶⁷⁶ This shows that receiving initial EU funding is not just a technical means to help an organisation go about its work, but it may also have longer-lasting effects in terms of building trust in an organisation and giving its staff the courage to attempt to run bigger projects. In that sense, the EU is seen as capable of strengthening actors and thus of

⁶⁷² Vesna Bajšanski-Agić, Mozaik, *Personal Interview*, Sarajevo, 24/03/10.

⁶⁷³ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁵ Milica Bakić-Hayden, "Nesting Orientalisms: The Case of Former Yugoslavia", *Slavic Review*, vol.54, no.4, 1995, pp.917-931.

⁶⁷⁶ Branka Šestić, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

making transformation possible. When it places trust on a certain actor, the latter might develop a higher self-confidence and undertake bigger projects. Those may indeed be political and possibly partly beyond the control of the EU as funder, since specifically with arts projects, meanings can be created and transformed in coded and not always perfectly controllable ways.

With a less financially-oriented, but thoroughly positive view of the EU as an actor in BiH, an activist of the social movement Dosta! suggested that the most suitable peacebuilding actor in the country would be the EU in the light of its ability to establish institutional structures as well as a functioning critical civil society.⁶⁷⁷ This is to some extent in the interest of Dosta! in its attempts to find ways of giving the power of politics back to society, while the group currently complains about a lack of strong societal groups that would be in the position to challenge the views of the political elites. In that sense, the EU's policies to strengthen civil society go hand in hand with Dosta!'s own ambitions to empower society. Due to a lack of trust in and legitimacy of politicians within BiH, the EU appears as a last resort to restore guidance, at the same time resisting domestic control mechanisms. In that respect, the domestic political sphere becomes an internationalised sphere, with the EU representing a governing actor to compensate for the failures of the public arena.

However, those positive responses towards some selected EU institutional control mechanisms are not the only responses from local cultural actors. Indeed, there also seems to be a certain degree of ambiguity towards those mechanisms. A film producer, who is generally very much in favour of EU accession, confirmed that, on the one hand, the EU was a great direction for the country to go in – partly against the background that due to its geographical location, BiH will, according to him, automatically become part of the EU in the foreseeable future.⁶⁷⁸ On the other hand, the interviewee admitted that this would not solve all major problems BiH is currently facing – in fact, poor people would still be poor.⁶⁷⁹ Yet this is not necessarily a critique of the substances of EU control mechanisms in the country, but rather a claim that this is due to a lack of rigidity on the part of the EU, which is called upon to put higher

⁶⁷⁷ Darko Brkan, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

⁶⁷⁸ Namik Kabil, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

⁶⁷⁹ Ibid.

demands and exert more pressure on local actors.⁶⁸⁰ Along those lines, a project manager of a theatre company argued that the EU's institutional approach is contested, but since the EU is in the position to make rules, its expectations can be considered realistic.⁶⁸¹ This mirrors the extent to which the EU has already re-created and reconfigured the public arena, making itself a central actor in it and drawing the boundaries around what is imagined feasible. Peacebuilding and its associated public spaces without the involvement of the EU therefore become almost unthinkable.

Gariwo, a Sarajevo-based NGO working towards more civil courage in everyday life, has found a way in which the EU's institutional control space can be negotiated. The organisation created an opportunity for students to meet with a number of ambassadors from the international community in BiH and created a space in which issues such as EU accession could be discussed.⁶⁸² This worked as a two-way process and thus allowed for an event during the course of which students could communicate their own needs related to EU accession and try to influence the associated decision-making processes.⁶⁸³ Although this may have been on a very small scale, with the effects of this not even being visible, this represents an attempt to negotiate institutional control mechanisms and to implicitly claim peacebuilding back to local initiatives.

However, not all responses to this space are based on such forms of support and constructive engagement. What can be observed as well is an increasing ignorance of the EU's policies. The latter can be seen as linked to disappointment with what the EU has (not) achieved so far despite the big hopes that had been pinned on its role as a peacebuilder in BiH. In this context, it has been suggested that the EU is not the answer to everything, and since it appears incredibly hard to change social organisation according to EU standards, many people do not believe in big changes nor in a 'big future'.⁶⁸⁴ This is in line with the argument that the EU will not be able to solve the main issues of BiH - the country's poverty issues more than anything else - so there is a perception that despite a potential integration with the EU, BiH will still be the poorest country in the EU.⁶⁸⁵ These responses reflect frustration and resignation vis-à-vis the

⁶⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁸¹ Confidential source, *Personal Interview*, Sarajevo, 25/03/10.

⁶⁸² Eleonora Emkić, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

⁶⁸³ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁴ Branka Šestić, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

⁶⁸⁵ Confidential source, *Personal Interview*, Sarajevo, 25/03/10.

EU's presence in the country, the policies of which remain distant from the people and therefore do not carry meanings relevant for their lives. A common peacebuilding effort thus becomes hard to imagine.

Such responses lead to feelings of rejection among numerous cultural actors, who are disappointed with the EU's failure to meet its own initial targets. Perceptions that the EU is distant from the people in BiH and issues with the need to integrate the 'local' with the EU's requirements and standards⁶⁸⁶ are often voiced, in addition to concerns regarding the approach of the international community more generally. A programme manager of the Nansen Dialogue Center Sarajevo relates this criticism to the fact that the institutions of the international community tend to lack contextual awareness of the areas they are working in as well as a lack of knowledge about how the subjects will respond to their policies.⁶⁸⁷ As the interviewee pointed out, such things can only be learned on the ground, but are totally neglected in approaches that are based on blueprints deprived of native knowledge, as it seems to be the case with the policies of many big peacebuilding actors in BiH.⁶⁸⁸ In that sense, he suggested that with this technical approach, the international community is unable to fight the causes of conflict (since those have to be experienced with the help of local knowledge), but is limited to fighting symptoms of the conflict.⁶⁸⁹ Against this background, the president of ACIPS criticised the international community for not talking to representatives of communities – which is difficult in BiH anyway since they do not have official representatives, like 'elders' – but only to 'the men at the top'.⁶⁹⁰ This points to the question as to who can speak legitimately on behalf of a certain community or nation, i.e. who is a legitimate interlocutor or the EU to negotiate with. Yet its tendency to rely on the governing authorities encounters resistance in BiH, where, according to Sarajlić –Maglić, the power-sharing mechanisms in the political system of BiH have allowed political elites to monopolise the political space for themselves, while at the same time, subordinating the interests of other actors to their own interests in that space.⁶⁹¹

⁶⁸⁶ Eleonora Emkić, Gariwo, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

⁶⁸⁷ Nebojša Šavija-Valha, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

⁶⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁹⁰ Sanel Huskić, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

⁶⁹¹ Denisa Sarajlić-Maglić, "Can BiH elites run the state?", in Heinrich Böll Foundation, Office for Bosnia and Herzegovina (ed.), *Bosnia and Herzegovina: Between EU-Integration Toolbox and International Community's Exit Strategy*, Sarajevo, 2010.

Specifically related to the EU, there is criticism of its machinery, which, according to an interviewee, is based on a business approach and its aims to make profit.⁶⁹² There is criticism of the EU related to a perceived distance of people from the decision-making centres, which, for the EU, is Brussels. In that respect, it has been said that there have been issues with the Ambassador to the EU Delegation not reporting things correctly from BiH to Brussels.⁶⁹³ This criticism is indeed part of a wider critique of peacebuilding, which is often perceived as technical, distanced and business-oriented, hence taking the abstract and institutional as a point of departure rather than the everyday context in which it is deployed.

In fact, the distance between the EU and the diverse experiences of local actors particularly becomes an issue for cultural actors outside the capital city. The director of the Children's Theatre RS in Banja Luka, for instance, complained that the EU was only in Sarajevo, i.e. far away from their lives and activities.⁶⁹⁴ This in turn means that the EU is unable to account for the dynamics beyond Sarajevo, which are often quite different, and fails to take the peripheries of the country into consideration. There is an acknowledgement within the EU that their engagement beyond the capital is only limited, and although staff is encouraged to travel throughout the country, this often fails due to the practicalities and time issues.⁶⁹⁵ This raises questions about the capacity or inability of peacebuilding actors more generally to establish proximity to their subjects and leads to questions about the extent to which a distance from the local population may strengthen the peacebuilders' control mechanisms, avoiding to include possibly deviating local voices.

Yet, while local manifestations of rejection tend to remain passive in terms of not actively seeking to bring about change, there are actors that actively resist the institutions/ control space of the EU. The owner of the Duplex Gallery, for instance, admitted that in the past he refused funding that was offered to him in order to avoid getting trapped in the attached donor conditionalities as well as to remain flexible. Instead, he wants to make his gallery a space of resistance to reverse the system where small actors have to follow donor logics. His vision is to make his own gallery space

⁶⁹² Nebojša Šavija-Valha, Ambrosia, *Personal Interview*, Sarajevo, 23/03/10.

⁶⁹³ Confidential source, *Student Presentation*, Sarajevo, 17/03/10.

⁶⁹⁴ Predrag Bjelošević, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

⁶⁹⁵ Olga Baus-Gibert, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

highly resonant on the ground so that eventually the bigger funders will address him rather than vice versa. According to him, this is how Duplex becomes a manifestation of (hidden) power as well as an example of the possibility of making changes in a different way, i.e. a way that does not follow the logics of money.⁶⁹⁶ This resists a version of peace created by institutions as the main power-holders in favour of a subversive and creative approach to peace.

Yet, while the Duplex approach can be said to be a form of hidden and subtle resistance, the artist Nebojša Šerić Šoba has chosen a more public form of resistance, symbolised by a monument that most citizens in Sarajevo are familiar with. For a project entitled “New Monument. De/Construction of Monument”, initiated by the Sarajevo Centre for Contemporary Art, he designed a food can depicting “Ikar”, which represents the humanitarian food aid that was handed out by the international community during the war. This is not directly related to the EU, but to the international community in general. However, the ‘EU’ and the ‘West’ are often thought of in similar terms, so this monument – which was voted for by the majority of judges in the competition and was erected in a little park in Sarajevo – represents a statement concerning the perception of the West in BiH. The artist comments:

Political aid we have received from the West is the same as the one we received as food: mysterious in content and with unknown ingredients, by mysterious manufacturer and with an undetermined period of validity.⁶⁹⁷



⁶⁹⁶ Pierre Courtin, Duplex Gallery, *Personal Interview*, Sarajevo, 23/04/10.

⁶⁹⁷ Sarajevo Center for Contemporary Art, op. cit.

As this section has shown, the responses to the EU's institutions/control space are highly nuanced and cannot be said to point to a homogeneous perception of this space on the part of local cultural actors. This is certainly due to the complex and multi-layered nature of this space, some elements of which are welcomed by specific actors who benefit from them, while other elements are rejected and resisted in different ways. Broadly speaking, a number of actors are translating the EU's institutional control mechanisms into local spaces and thus make them relevant. To a certain extent, this reflects a desire to involve the EU as an instrument to put pressure on local authorities - the political support of the EU can then be used to support and legitimise a certain political agenda. It has indeed been suggested that the international community, and particularly the EU, should exert more pressure and get more involved to stop divisions within the country.⁶⁹⁹ On the other hand, there also seem to be voices that are more sceptical towards the EU's institutions/ control space, which is often perceived as poor in contextual knowledge and practice as well as lacking contact with local actors. This may also be a result of actors feeling that the engagement of the EU in BiH undermines their plans and pushes the country in a direction that these respective actors do not agree with. It does therefore not come as a surprise that a number of local cultural actors prefer ignoring this space of agency or take an ambiguous attitude towards it. As a result, only some parts of this space are translated into local spheres, while other parts of the space are unable to connect to local spaces of agency. This reflects the extent to which the EU's ways of governing the country and its people are not straightforward, but they rather build on a fragmented and often changing approach to member-state building. This is due to the highly fragmented domestic political sphere, in which the EU is viewed simultaneously as a partner for some actors and as a foreign imposition for others. As a result of this polarisation of politics and society, the EU has sometimes, albeit unintentionally, contributed to the production of further cleavages, thus undermining its own peacebuilding mission. Such dynamics then impact back on the EU's approach in terms of having to adapt its conditionalities when resistance to them was too high. The watering down of the measures required for the signing of the SAA

⁶⁹⁸ http://www.prometheus6.org/files/ikar_canned_beef.jpg (accessed 04/01/11).

⁶⁹⁹ Eleonora Emkić, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

in 2008 is only one example of the EU losing its immunity as a result of local resistance.⁷⁰⁰

State and Politics

In the previous chapter I argued that the EU is working in and on a state and political space, viewing local authorities as somewhat problematic, but still using them as the main partners for the EU's relations with BiH and, more concretely, to facilitate accession negotiations. The responses of the local cultural actors to this space represented in this chapter are mostly indirect, not necessarily addressing the EU directly, but challenging the fact that the EU does not question their interlocutors, while many expect it 'to know better', and may then be disappointed if improvement does not happen or is only limited. Such responses are not limited to the cultural sector, but are quite widespread among the population more generally, where disappointment with domestic governing elites is no exception. In fact, the term 'država' ('state') does not tend to trigger positive reactions among people. Whenever we had a conversation involving this topic - and not just necessarily in interviews, but also in private conversations - people would complain about the malfunctioning system as well as of the political elites being corrupt. People would also point out problems with the bureaucracy in the country, which does indeed exclude the vulnerable (for instance elderly, illiterate or disabled people) from getting access to state resources and services.⁷⁰¹

This disappointment with the state can lead to different reactions, with some actors deciding to withdraw from the state/political space by ignoring it. A theatre dramaturgist admitted that she never gets involved in politics at all, since "politics don't give us enough" and "there is no space for thinking individually".⁷⁰² She has therefore decided to withdraw completely from that sphere, since it seems to be unresponsive to her needs. This is not the only possible response though, which the example of the

⁷⁰⁰ Cf. Toby Vogel, "Bosnia removes last hurdle to pact with EU", *European Voice*, 11/04/08, <http://www.europeanvoice.com/article/2008/04/713april/bosnia-removes-last-hurdle-to-pact-with-eu/60279.aspx> (accessed 01/08/11).

⁷⁰¹ Ingrid Halbritter, Pharos e.V., *Personal Interview*, Sarajevo, 08/03/09.

⁷⁰² Aida Pilav, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

SCCA shows. When setting up their “New Monument. De/Construction of Monument” project, it was unavoidable for them to cooperate with the local authorities to negotiate issues such as the location of the respective monuments as well as permits and so forth. In these processes, the centre encountered the question “Who owns public space?” as a crucial one, in that they found that often the authorities believed they did, so SCCA had to negotiate with them over this question.⁷⁰³ Although there is no direct interaction with the EU, both the EU and SCCA engage in the same space, and approach it from two different sides. Their interaction is not based on personal contacts, but on their engagement with a similar issues and involvement in discourses emerging in the same space. SCCA is voicing its agency in this space by claiming part-ownership of the public space. This clearly modifies the approach of the EU to public space, where - apart from political elites as democratic representatives - civil society actors are defined as key actors, while in practice art galleries and other cultural actors are not necessarily included. On the one hand, one could argue that the EU’s institutional structures are not apt to include cultural actors in its approach to the public sphere. Yet on the other hand, those actors benefit from close contact to wider audiences and have a big influence on them through the ways in which they create meanings. Having a meaning for its ‘subjects’ is essential for any policy if it is to take hold and to result in local ownership in the long run. Therefore, marginalising cultural actors in the public space risks undermining the EU’s peacebuilding ambitions in that many perceive them as distant and meaningless.

Rather than negotiating the state/political space, other actors have voiced their rejection of it. This can be directed at domestic circumstances on the one hand, or more directly at the EU’s ways of dealing with it on the other hand. Domestically, a radio journalist took issue with the fact that politicians fail to deal with what he calls the “real problems”, such as health, education, adolescent delinquency and corruption.⁷⁰⁴ This shows that the state/political space of agency, to which the EU contributes and with which it engages, remains irrelevant for people’s everyday lives and is thus only weak in terms of translating its meanings to the ground. This is partly a result of the fact that the space is highly contested among actors, both internationally and domestically. To quote one example, there seems to be a tendency for the Federation to view the RS as an

⁷⁰³ Sarajevo Center for Contemporary Art, op. cit., p.9.

⁷⁰⁴ Adnan Čalkić, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

artificial creation, which is contrary to what the people in RS perceive and again different from the view of the Bosnian Croats.⁷⁰⁵ While this statement is still reflective of the ethnic divisions deepened during the war, others have emphasised the necessity to have only one president of the country, rather than three in order to be able to find new alternative means to change society.⁷⁰⁶ This goes hand in hand with what the creative director of Pravo Ljudski said about the political system of BiH, which she considered as schizophrenic, arguing that despite its divisive tendencies, it has never been amended or improved.⁷⁰⁷ This is an expression of the rejection of the state/political space. It is indirectly addressed to the international community, including the EU, who pushed for the current constitution in the first place, but who is perceived as unable or even unwilling to amend it in its current state despite the growing international awareness that the constitution created by the DPA has failed to create sustainable peace in BiH. This critique has been more clearly vocalised by the president of ACIPS, accusing the EU of being technocratic and unwilling to get involved in politics, not prepared to exert pressure on local politicians.⁷⁰⁸ He argued that the fact that there is no ‘positive vibration’ coming from the EU leads to frustration among the population, which may in turn eventually be channelled into aggression and violence.⁷⁰⁹ These voices of rejection show that there is a wide disagreement with the ways in which the state and its structures have been set up as well as with the way that politics functions in BiH. This in turn represents an indirect critique of the EU’s space of agency, given that it works with those given structures and politicians, while there seem to be expectations among Bosnians (and more for the Bosniaks than for the Bosnian Serbs) for the EU to use its power to challenge this system rather than take it for granted. Yet, since this does not appear to happen, a number of local cultural actors have developed their own strategies of resistance to the ways in which the political sphere works, voicing what can often be heard in wider societal discourses in a more fragmented way. A dramaturgist, for instance, said that the Youth Theatre in Sarajevo relies on a cynical approach to the political situation in BiH, which forms the basis of their plays.⁷¹⁰ In a similar vein, a

⁷⁰⁵ Confidential source, *Student Presentation*, Sarajevo, 17/03/10.

⁷⁰⁶ Aida Pilav, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

⁷⁰⁷ Kumjana Novakova, Pravo Ljudski, *Student Presentation*, Sarajevo, 15/03/10.

⁷⁰⁸ Sanel Huskić, *Student Presentation*, op. cit.

⁷⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁷¹⁰ Aida Pilav, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

journalist of the student radio station in Sarajevo explained that in their work, they talk about politics in a satirical way in order to be close to young people.⁷¹¹ They thus use the political situation in BiH as the basis of their programme, but they present it in a comical and tragic way, at the same time being “very honest and very true”.⁷¹² In that way, the contents of the state/political space are translated into local discourses, but rather than conveying the very meanings of the space literally, those meanings are used as the basis for a critique through a cynical approach to them. Numerous people have pointed out to me that the best way to attract a large audience in a theatre is to address societal issues –often related to the post-war context- through humour and cynicism, which are common ways in BiH to deal with frustration and tragedy. In that sense, this approach manages to personalise peace, transferring it to a new platform where it can be discussed and negotiated – which is usually not the case in the traditional political sphere of which many people have withdrawn.

Such a critique may also form the foundation on which artists base their work. In this context, a project manager of the East West Theatre Company suggested that politics is only words, not having a great effect, whereas his theatre company is able to do concrete things.⁷¹³ He derived this from their theatrical approach that reflects a certain degree of responsibility to society by changing societal processes step-by-step.⁷¹⁴ This approach in turn mirrors a withdrawal from the political sphere, yet at the same time serves as an alternative entry into the political sphere by taking a bottom-up instead of a top-down approach. Through this approach, the theatre creates a way to resist the political sphere, while acting in parallel spheres, thus minimising the importance of the political and the state within its own physical space. A similar development holds for the human rights festival Pravo Ljudski. Indeed, due to their lack of connection with politicians, they are often seen as subversive by the latter.⁷¹⁵ Such strategies can have quite an impact in terms of raising the interest of more people than the political sphere. The NGO Gariwo, for instance, created ways to resist certain

⁷¹¹ Adnan Čalkić, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

⁷¹² Ibid.

⁷¹³ Nermin Hamzagić, East West Theater Company, *Personal Interview*, Sarajevo, 25/03/10.

⁷¹⁴ Ibid.

⁷¹⁵ Kumjana Novakova, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

political processes by supporting students who wrote critical songs about politicians – as an effect of this, according to a staff member, a university director had to resign.⁷¹⁶

Interestingly enough, although young Bosnians are often accused of being passive and not engaged, some of them seem quite powerful in resisting the state/political space. The Youth Centre Abrašević in Mostar, for instance, derives its goals from the perception that public spaces are increasingly becoming hostages of nationalist politics, segregation and discrimination.⁷¹⁷ This is the background against which Abrašević aims to create a zone where city memories and remembrances of the urban can be saved, thus acting as a space of resistance, memory, and public activity.⁷¹⁸ Abrašević has indeed become a popular location for young people in Mostar - not only due to a lack of social venues in the city in general, but also because it provides a space that is different from the political arena, less controlling and more responsive to the needs of the local youth. Equally, the Youth Centre in Srebrenica contends that they do not feel they have a say in the political sphere, using the space of the centre for people to say what they think and fight for, where the development of alternatives can be discussed.⁷¹⁹ There seem to be a number of parallel developments across youth centres in BiH, acting as centres of resistance to what they perceive an illegitimate public space. Alter Art in Travnik, as its director suggested, particularly aims to engage in that respect, not necessarily encouraging critical expressions, but much rather critical actions, which the director considers as essential for the transformation of the “mentality of people here”.⁷²⁰ In a way, those spaces only emerge in the way they are, because actors such as the EU do not access them, while they remain free of censorship and disciplining. They thus become venues in which the personal and the emotional can be expressed. However, this also means that the public spaces as they are inhabited by the EU in its engagement with political elites fail to connect to the former, which impedes the development of a version of peace that includes a diversity of actors. Peacebuilding is mainly acted out in the sphere of the state and politics, whereas its alternative versions as they are developed in cultural arenas often remain unseen.

⁷¹⁶ Eleonora Emkić, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

⁷¹⁷ Husein Oručević, “Defense of public space – defense of our future”, video-lecture at the OKC Abrašević’s Festival of Arts in Divided Cities, Mostar, 15/04/10.

⁷¹⁸ Ibid.

⁷¹⁹ Milena Nikolić, Youth Center Srebrenica, *Student Presentation*, Srebrenica, 02/04/10.

⁷²⁰ Darko Saračević, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

Thinking of alternatives is also the one of the ambitions of the Museum for Contemporary Arts RS in Banja Luka. Since its staff members feel distant from Sarajevo politically and culturally, the museum is trying to form a counter-centre in Banja Luka, promoting their own artists and environment. In this context, their PR manager stated: “We started to promote our scene, the Banja Luka scene, the RS scene, because Bosnia is something else.”⁷²¹ This is a matter of identity, not only to have Banja Luka on the national and regional arts map through their exhibitions, but also more generally to frame their identity as distinct from Sarajevo.⁷²² With a similar idea in mind, the arts centre Protok has been using its exhibition project “SpaPort” to revive the local cultural scene in Banja Luka, as independent from the BiH arts scene.⁷²³ Those initiatives represent a way of indirectly challenging a centralised state system from what is considered the ‘periphery’ in relation to Sarajevo, and a system, which the EU is pushing for. By emphasising a particular Banja Lukan or RS identity, the EU’s centralising approach to peacebuilding in BiH is challenged and resisted, particularly in RS. This corresponds to what the PR manager of the Museum for Contemporary Art RS suggested with respect to their relationship with the capital city, namely that people from Banja Luka do not view Sarajevo as the capital, only as a place where people have to go to get their visas, while they would not go there “for fun”.⁷²⁴ At the same time, this is not to imply that people in RS are necessarily and always in favour of deepening the divisions between the entities of BiH. The director of the arts association Protok, for instance, said: “I hope that my generation finds some new strategies and bridges the gaps of national politics.”⁷²⁵ In that sense, one can see that the responses to the state/political space that the EU works with are quite diverse, depending on the identity and goals of the actor in question. What can be observed though is that cultural actors tend to be sceptical of the space, challenging the ways in which the EU engages with the Bosnian state and politics, often in an indirect manner. We can observe a form of ‘reverse translation’: many cultural actors seem to pick up on political topics, but rather than just translating the respective meanings into local discourses, they translate them in a way that conveys their scepticism, rejection or resistance. This in turn opens up new

⁷²¹ Branka Šestić, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

⁷²² Ibid.

⁷²³ Radenko Milak, op. cit.

⁷²⁴ Branka Šestić, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

⁷²⁵ Radenko Milak, op. cit.

spaces in which people can discuss the meanings of politics and the state in a critical and creative way, while at the same time withdrawing from the ways in which the EU discusses politics. What this means concretely in the peacebuilding context is that we see a growing distance between the state/ political space of the EU and the ways in which the subjects of peacebuilding relate to that space. Interaction through the public sphere thus remains more than limited and leads to a withdrawal of the general public from political affairs and the state, which the EU, however, uses as one of the central entry points to Bosnian society. Since there is not much domestic engagement in that space, the EU fails to establish a dialogue about the meaning of the state and politics in general, again undermining the very legitimacy that peacebuilding ideally rests upon. This in turn raises questions about the extent to which cultural actors in their ability to create and transform meanings for what is otherwise abstract, may act as a bridge between public and private. Since they are immersed in an everyday context, they know about what touches people, while at the same time being in the position to access wider political discourses – if not in the language of the political elites, then in the subtle techniques that art has at its disposal.

Travel

One of the new developments that come with EU rapprochement and eventual accession is the benefit of easier travelling for Bosnians, with a big step being made with the visa liberalisation agreements in 2010. The travel space finds a lot of positive responses locally, and this is maybe particularly the case among cultural actors who are often involved in international arts projects, depending on the possibility to travel. Against this background, a project manager pointed to the lack of flexibility for the East West Theater Company if its artists and producers are not free to travel spontaneously, without having the reliability of getting a visa quickly when needed.⁷²⁶ At the same time, the desire to travel is not just one of artists and cultural actors, but also of citizens in general, and particular of young people, who lack the opportunity to travel, as a

⁷²⁶ Nermin Hamzagić, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

museum curator from Banja Luka pointed out.⁷²⁷ This is a particularly big issue for people outside Sarajevo, given that most of the embassies as well as the EU Delegation are situated in the country's capital. For people living in other parts of BiH, trying to get a visa may become an even more difficult process, which may feel like 'begging'⁷²⁸ and therefore has a humiliating dimension to it. Until 2010, the inability to travel appeared to many as a ghetto-like situation, with all neighbours being able to travel while Bosnians were locked in their small territory, as a production assistant of the famous film company 'deblokada' explained.⁷²⁹ Interestingly, this film company is involved in discussions about the EU and the associated travel space, which they perceive as unjust (giving preference to people with Serbian and Croatian passports), while at the same time advocating for a more open and just future of travelling.⁷³⁰ This seems to be of great importance specifically in the countries of the former Yugoslavia, where travelling was one of the main positive aspects of people's lives. The Museum for Contemporary Arts in Banja Luka, for instance, reminds people of Yugoslavian times when it was common for the museum to send curators on study visits to places within Yugoslavia, but also to France, England, Italy and so forth.⁷³¹ This reflects a vision of BiH as open to the world, with people enjoying the freedom to move between spaces, and indeed places.

In this context, the possibility of achieving an EU travel space appears as a highly attractive one - that is, not necessarily in its current design that still seems to put BiH at a disadvantage, but looking into the future when potential EU membership may make travelling an equal opportunity across the entire region beyond the 90 day visa liberalisation. Different actors emphasise the travel option as most important benefit of EU accession for BiH citizens, promising a 'better future',⁷³² or a wider space in which "people can experience new things to make a positive change for their own country".⁷³³ This in turn shows that, although many actors are not happy with the current travel

⁷²⁷ Branka Šestić, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

⁷²⁸ Ibid.

⁷²⁹ Amira Kresevljaković, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

⁷³⁰ See commentary by the directress of deblokada on http://www.deblokada.ba/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=46&Itemid=37 (accessed 14/10/10).

⁷³¹ Muzej Savremene Umjetnosti RS, "From the Gallery to the Museum. 1971-2006", Banja Luka, 2006.

⁷³² Radenko Milak, PROTOK, *Email Conversation*, 04/06/10.

⁷³³ Eleonora Emkić, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

situation, they expect major improvements from eventual EU membership. The fact that the EU uses this attractive prospect as a carrot for its own policy goals, yet at the same time connecting it to local needs, reflects the extent to which there is a possibility for a common space of agency to emerge.

However, not all responses to the EU's travel space are unanimously positive, but also ambiguous. Several cultural actors, who are generally positive towards the travel space, also pointed to the limitations of the EU's travel options, suggesting that even with Schengen, there will be many people who will still be unable to travel, for instance due to financial limitations.⁷³⁴ Apart from this more or less modest criticism, there are also stronger forms of resistance to the travel space, an example for this being the theatre festival MESS. In 2009, in the form of a public campaign, MESS made a strong political statement against the EU, which was related to the travel context and based on the perception that the Schengen policies were humiliating with Macedonia and Serbia entering, while BiH was not.⁷³⁵ At this stage, i.e. before the Visa Liberalisation Agreements for BiH in 2010, the travel space as created by Schengen was perceived as lacking justice and putting BiH at a disadvantage. A 'just peace' was thus not expected to emerge from the Schengen policies.

With similar thoughts in mind, in 2010 the film producer Jasmila Žbanić published a statement on her company's website, directly accusing the European Commission of leaving Bosniaks and 'others' in isolation, while lifting visa restrictions for Croatian, Serbian and Montenegrin citizens.⁷³⁶ This is a widely spread perception, mainly among those Bosnians who do not have double citizenship, so cultural actors, such as Jasmila Žbanić, can use their popularity to voice such grievances that are otherwise not always heard. Not only do statements from rather famous art producers shed light on the centrality of the travel and visa issue, but this is also reflected in the UNDP's Early Warning System annual report 2008, which shows that nearly half of the population (42.2%) would emigrate if they could⁷³⁷ – not least due to political and economic circumstances. This figure demonstrates the fact that people's experiences of

⁷³⁴ Branka Šestić, *Personal Interview*, op. cit. and Selma Spahić, MESS and Bosnian National Theatre Zenica, *Personal Interview*, Sarajevo, 03/03/11.

⁷³⁵ Nihad Kresevljaković, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

⁷³⁶ Jasmila Žbanić, "European Commission Made Disastrous Mistake", http://www.deblokada.ba/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=46&Itemid=37 (accessed 19/01/11).

⁷³⁷ Bosnia and Herzegovina United Nations Development Programme, op. cit.

life in BiH diverge from their hopes and expectations, thereby questioning the success of numerous peacebuilding efforts for the people.

The responses to the EU's travel space are not homogenous, but they reflect a broad tendency to approve the EU's vision of making travelling easier, which can be read as a sign that a common space of agency is emerging. Yet, the underlying needs and motivations for the creation of such a space differ. On the part of the EU, a common travel space mainly represents a way to ensure that other benchmarks are fulfilled by the political leadership, while the ways in which the travel space is referred to by a number of local cultural actors reflect the need to move in a free space and being liberated from the geographical constraints on them. Yet, as both the EU and many local actors create a similar meaning (free movement), although on behalf of different needs, a common space is about to emerge, certainly with its heterogeneities and tensions. The power of this seemingly centripetal space could be seen in 2010, with local resistance and negotiation contributing to the EU's push for and final implementation of the Visa Facilitation Agreements. At the same time it is important to be aware of the fact that this space might dissolve again when the EU is perceived as not following up on its promises. This is particularly likely in the light of the *ways* in which the EU proceeds to create this space – it is the gradual opening of the space across the region that creates tensions, with Bosnians feeling they are the last ones in the region to be able to travel. Thus, even within a space tensions may emerge, as do discourses about how to deal with them. Although the travel space seems to have different meanings for the EU (a carrot, at least before the Visa Facilitation Agreements) as opposed to local actors (free movement, feeling more welcome in Europe), those meanings seem, to a certain extent, compatible with each other, allowing for the respective institutional policies to succeed more easily. The travel space therefore represents a space in which direct engagement between local actors and the EU is possible. This has been visible during my fieldwork in BiH in terms of EU officials being aware of the needs and interests of the people with respect to travelling. It is not least the pressure from local actors that has accelerated the passage of the Visa Liberalisation Agreements, pointing to local agency that has often been underestimated.

Future

The previous chapter has argued that the EU has tended to focus on the future as a time dimension in its peacebuilding engagement, and more specifically with respect to the accession process. A number of the local cultural actors investigated for this chapter seem to challenge this approach, although there is a certain degree of acceptance of it. The fact that some actors are ambiguous about taking the future as their main focus and instead attempt to modify its associated space to make it work on the ground is illustrated by the approach of the interreligious choir ‘Pontanima’. By uniting people from different faiths as well as atheists, they work for a future in which “spiritual music could heal and reconcile the people of Sarajevo and Bosnia-Herzegovina.”⁷³⁸ In this context, the founder of the choir stated that

[p]eople in Bosnia tend to talk about the past, about the war. But we try to turn people toward the future, and that’s what we sing about. People at Pontanima have learned not to talk much, which is very valuable to me. They believe in the message of music. We deal with the war, from the past, but to us, the war is not too much of a preoccupation.⁷³⁹

This statement reflects the extent to which a focus on the future matters locally as well, yet on the other hand this does not represent a mere adoption of the EU’s approach, but rather a modification according to the contextual needs of the choir members. They try to develop a vision of the future, in a subtle and personal way, not thinking of the future in institutional terms (i.e. as EU accession), but in a way that matters to the choir members directly and that is feasible. This has not always been easy so the choir has developed a way to deal with the past and to link it to the future with its own approach, while being aware of the fact that – particularly in the beginning – it was rather difficult for some choir members to sing the songs of their ‘enemies’, i.e. religious communities other than their own.⁷⁴⁰ In that sense, elements of the future space are translated, but they are modified so they account for people’s lives and personal experiences. Local peacebuilding efforts in fact often adopt a much more

⁷³⁸ <http://www.pontanima.ba/pontanima.html> (accessed 31/01/11). This vision also comes across clearly in the choir’s rehearsals, which the author auditioned in spring 2010.

⁷³⁹ Ivo Marković in Namik Kabil, *Vjernici*, documentary, Sarajevo, 2008.

⁷⁴⁰ <http://www.pontanima.ba/pontanima.html> (accessed 31/01/11).

personalised approach – as opposed to the EU’s rather technical focus on the accession process – appealing to the emotional and the private dimension of peacebuilding. They connect to what seems close to people as well as concrete, as opposed to abstract and technical. It has been pointed out to me several times - by people from different backgrounds who are not necessarily traditional audiences or creators of the cultural scene in BiH – that Pontanima does create emotions with its audience and transgresses boundaries in ways which would be unthinkable in the political arena of the country. Thus, as a result of the disconnection of the formal political sphere from people’s lives, actors such as Pontanima create a space in which political options and reconfigurations can be experimented with.

Another example of local cultural actors modifying the future space is Ehlimana Hrapović’s proposal for the SCCA’s “New Monument. De/Construction of Monument” project. The artist proposes to use the Tito statue, which is currently located in the courtyard of former military barracks in Sarajevo, and to add a mirror at which the statue is staring. This in turn is meant to serve as a symbol and critique of the ‘retrospection’ and ‘introspection’ of Bosnian monuments by asking: “is it possible and has it ever been possible to see the future?”⁷⁴¹ The artist contextualises the future space for the context of BiH and its history, suggesting a focus on the future, yet without neglecting the past, which seems highly relevant for an outlook to the future. In that sense, local peacebuilding, in its widest sense, becomes a complex interaction between the past and the future, a way of looking at the flows rather than the ruptures between them. This differs from an outlook on the future as dissolved from the past, building on what the former EUSR Carl Bildt has suggested: “You must focus on the future. If you only deal with the past you will never leave the past.”⁷⁴²

In contrast to that, there are actors that emphasise the benefits of the ‘socialist’ past,⁷⁴³ which can partly be seen as a reaction to the failure of the post-war peace process, which has not managed to materialise for society and failed to satisfy people’s

⁷⁴¹ Sarajevo Center for Contemporary Art, op. cit., p.40.

⁷⁴² Carl Bildt, cited in euinside, “Carl Bildt: Bosnia must look into the future not fight with the past”, 28/10/09, <http://www.euinside.eu/en/news/carl-blidt-bosnia-should-look-in-the-future-not-fight-with-the-past> (accessed 03/08/11).

⁷⁴³ Sanel Huskić, *Student Presentation*, op. cit.

needs.⁷⁴⁴ Against this background, there is frequent reference back to the pre-war situation – and hardly ever towards the post-war peacebuilding context – which is often viewed as a social situation based on respect for the family, school and home and supported by the provision of social benefits.⁷⁴⁵ In an everyday context, even beyond the cultural scene, there is indeed much reference to, and often even nostalgia for, the past, and sometimes even pride with respect to the values of the former Yugoslavia. This is certainly different depending on whom you ask as well as a generational question (the younger generation not having experienced this era), but the past does generally play an important role in the ways in which people look at the future. In that sense, there is quite some resistance to the EU's approach to time, which attempts to start a new future, dissolved from, or at least reforming the past to make EU membership possible.⁷⁴⁶ A programme coordinator of the Sarajevo Centre for Contemporary Arts complained about the international community, and specifically about the EU, due to their attempts to “jump over” the past by neglecting BiH's historical circumstances and neglecting the fact that change always takes time.⁷⁴⁷ The interviewee suggested that there has to be a vision for the future of BiH, which must however not be disconnected from the past, while positive elements in history can be used to overcome trauma and thus contribute to peace in the future.⁷⁴⁸

Resistance to the future space that is being promoted by the EU equally becomes clear with the work of the Abrašević Youth Centre in Mostar, which tends to build on a shared memory of Yugoslav culture, for instance by celebrating Yugoslav holidays in the centre.⁷⁴⁹ Again, this reflects resistance to the idea that peacebuilding and its modern problem-solving tools will be conducive to a better future⁷⁵⁰ and can be seen as a reaction to the discourses of the EU. Those are eager to create a *new* society, dissolved from its history and memory, with civil society being represented as a tool to promote the separation from the past. Against this background, local cultural actors have started thinking about how to connect the future to the past. Jasmila Žbanić's films, for

⁷⁴⁴ Eleonora Emkić, *Personal Interview*, op. cit., pointed out that a better future for BiH would imply the satisfaction of basic needs, which is not yet the case.

⁷⁴⁵ Aida Pilav, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

⁷⁴⁶ Cf. Olli Rehn, op. cit.

⁷⁴⁷ Asja Hafner, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

⁷⁴⁸ Asja Hafner, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

⁷⁴⁹ Katie Hampton, OKC Abrašević, *Personal Interview*, Mostar, 18/03/10.

⁷⁵⁰ Confidential source, *Personal Interview*, Sarajevo, 10/03/10.

instance, which are very popular in BiH, deal with unresolved issues of the past, with ‘Red Rubber Boots’ and ‘Esma’s Secret’ being two particularly prominent examples,⁷⁵¹ which have been received with great interest in BiH.

These examples show that the ways in which the EU uses the future space of agency does not closely connect to local perceptions of time. Although the latter do not neglect the importance of the future, they tend to view it in connection with the past rather than dissolved from it. The focus on the past can thus be considered a manifestation of resistance to the exclusive focus on the future, as it is promoted by the EU in its efforts to transform BiH into a potential member-state. As a result, we can see a new space emerging in the discourses of some local cultural actors, namely a ‘past space’, which will be outlined below.

Conclusion

I have shown that the responses to the EU’s different spaces of agency are highly diverse, not just between the different spaces, but also within them. Those responses are dependent on the identities, needs and interests involved. What can be observed is that in some cases where the EU’s spaces fail to connect to people’s lives and experiences, local cultural actors contextualise them and translate selected meanings of the respective space into discourses that matter locally. In such cases, local and EU spaces may merge into one bigger space, with a degree of hybridity emerging in the interaction between local and EU actors. This does not mean that the respective EU space is translated one-on-one – indeed it tends to get modified and adapted in the translation process – but links and bridges are established, so the space shares a bigger audience and opens up to more participants. This has happened in spaces such as the regional cooperation or the travel space, which are less top-down than others, more open to new participants and inclusive in nature. In such spaces the chances to have a dialogue about peacebuilding, its elements and the associated vision of a peaceful BiH, are much higher, which seems to be of mutual benefit. The example of the travel space

⁷⁵¹ See www.deblokada.ba (accessed 12/08/10).

shows that the incentivising carrot associated with it enhances the leverage of the EU on the one hand, and it also responds to needs as they emerge in BiH on the other hand. Although this is just a snapshot of a fluid and dynamic landscape of spaces, it shows that peacebuilding efforts connect best to their subjects when actors move within a common space of agency. At the same time, this contributes to the legitimisation of peacebuilding actors, such as the EU, in terms of familiarising all sides with the discourses of the respective 'other'. Cultural actors seem to be particularly skilled at inventing ways in which translation can happen, if at all, acting as gatekeepers to those spaces. If they consider a space worthy of exploration, they may help open it up to a wider audience, by engaging with the contents of the space in a creative way. This in turn suggests that the decision of whether to translate the contents and meanings of a space, as well as how this is done, is a manifestation of social agency. It has an impact on boundaries between spaces, identities, representations, and thus the way in which peacebuilding takes place. Again, with respect to the travel and regional cooperation space, we can see a great deal of translation and linkages between the EU and local actors. These are also the spheres in which the EU is most powerful, given that those fields serve as an effective 'carrot' and attraction of the EU.

In other cases, where the EU space is too far from what cultural actors think is relevant or is even perceived as counter-productive, those actors may ignore the space, not translating it or resisting it by developing alternatives. If many of the EU's spaces and their meanings were translated into discourses that seem relevant on the ground, this would augment the impact of the EU as well as its role as a potential peacebuilder in BiH. Yet if its spaces remain on the sidelines of local spaces of agency, the EU's impact and transformational power will be limited. This is the case with spaces such as the civil society or the democratisation spaces, which remain exclusive to numerous local actors and have not managed to promote many positive developments in the peacebuilding process. Certainly, the selected responses from the cultural sector are just a small insight into what happens to those discourses in bigger arenas with a higher number of actors involved. However, similar processes are at work in the EU's interaction with other actors, while the responses of local cultural actors can shed light on the ways in which the power of translation impacts upon peacebuilding processes as well as the meanings that are created in them. The EU is dependent on actors that are in

the position to translate its highly abstract spaces in order to secure its reputation and legitimacy locally. What seems to matter then is not the abstract content of a specific space of agency, but rather what happens to this content in the social sphere. Against this background, this chapter has aimed to outline a number of dynamics and processes of selected spaces of agency, and what happens when they are contextualised on the ground – yet without claiming to provide an exhaustive list of spaces or responses to them. At the same time, this is not to argue that local actors restrict themselves solely to responding to externally created spaces. On the contrary, I will go on to argue that the processes of responding and translating described above may lead to the emergence of local spaces of agency, which constitute a response to external dynamics, their shortcomings and failures on the one hand, but also represent the exercise of agency, freedom and creativity on the other hand. In such processes, local actors try to redefine the boundaries of what appears feasible and thinkable in the peacebuilding context. I suggest that those spaces are in the process of constituting themselves to reclaim local agency as well as an (indirect) means to influence the peacebuilding process in more subtle, less formalised ways, and in a manner that reflects diverse needs and interests which have not been taken into account in the EU's spaces of agency. Those spaces are connected to the responses towards the EU spaces, but they are not limited to merely responding. They rather represent a way of departing from external constraints and developing counter-visions of peace as an expression of local agency. Against this background, the following chapter will look at some selected spaces of agency that have emerged locally.

Chapter 7: Local Spaces of Agency

This chapter will look at spaces of agency that are emerging locally, building on Castells' *project identity* as outlined above. It therefore asks how local actors build their identity through the redefinition of prevailing social structures. Their responses show that local responses to the EU's spaces are more than merely reactions, drawing on the creativity of local actors who challenge boundaries around spaces and frames of representation, such as peacebuilding. Instead, often unconsciously, they develop their own visions of peace, as diverse as those may be, in a more contextualised and personalised manner. The exemplary spaces that this chapter aims to illustrate – which are not to be read as fixed nor as having stable boundaries – include a social relationships space, a freedom space, an arts space, and a past space.

The Social Relationships Space

As chapter 5 has illustrated, the EU tends to frame social relationships in BiH through its civil society framework. I have shown that this approach has encountered strong feelings of rejection and even resistance on the ground, with the degree of acceptance of the civil society space remaining rather low and vague. Numerous Bosnians have in fact pointed out to me that they associate 'civil society' with NGOs rather than as a tool or process through which they can make their voices heard. People often emphasised their scepticism towards NGOs, given that the latter are perceived as responding to donor demands, as opposed to emerging from certain social needs or issues. At this point, we need to investigate the ways in which local actors frame themselves and represent themselves as a society as well as their role in the context of peacebuilding, yet without implying that society has developed one coherent self-representation.

What can be observed is a tendency to personalise social relations. In that sense, the focus is less on formal structures of interaction, though more on everyday life experiences. A staff member of the Nansen Dialogue Center in Mostar explained their approach as closely related to people's personal experiences and focusing on their life

stories to gain a better understanding of the current social fragmentations.⁷⁵² Against this background, the foundation of the work of the Nansen Dialogue Center is a position close to the community surrounding them:

Nansen Dialogue is marked by the wish to provide a neutral and open space where the different actors in a serious conflict can meet face to face in truthful and honest communication. The aim is to break down enemy images, as well as to increase understanding of each other's positions, interests and needs.⁷⁵³

Originally developed in Brazil, and having been used in different Bosnian communities, the “Theatre of the Oppressed” provides another way of working on the community level. A co-organiser of the project explained that in this theatre project, young people, all amateurs, performed short plays of no more than ten minutes each, on actual conflicts that affected their communities. This included various topics, such as the situation of a couple from different ethnic backgrounds expecting a baby with the parents being against the liaison, reflecting the very personal and social implications of bigger conflict dynamics. With this background story in mind, the audience is then called on stage to improvise and find ways in which such a dilemma can be resolved. In many instances, the play did take several hours, but was considered a big success by the organisers due to the positive reception in the respective audiences.⁷⁵⁴ This form of theatre represents an interesting approach to social relations, since it shows the audience that they are not just passive receivers of surrounding structures and problems, but that they are actually able to impact on what is going on. Rather than imposing a format onto society (‘civil society’ representing one such format), this approach opens up spaces of creativity in which people are encouraged to think beyond limitations, by exploring new possibilities of social coexistence, and of peacebuilding on a personal level. The EU, however, finds it hard to interact with such looser forms of social organisation, given that it chooses its civil society partners not necessarily according to their ways of engaging with society and social needs, but according to whether they are influential enough to engage in policy dialogues and to form a counterweight to the government.⁷⁵⁵

⁷⁵² Elvir Djuliman, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

⁷⁵³ http://www.nansen-dialogue.net/ndcmostar/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=390&Itemid=512&lang=en (accessed 31/01/11).

⁷⁵⁴ Goran Bubalo, Catholic Relief Services, *Personal Interview*, Sarajevo, 05/03/10.

⁷⁵⁵ Confidential source, European Commission, DG ELARG, *Personal Interview*, Brussels, 09/09/10.

Yet contrary to the EU's perception that people beyond the civil society frame put up with acting as passive recipients of the peacebuilding process without any major involvement in political affairs, there are more examples where actors have taken the initiative to change things in the light of the failure of the state to do so. A member of the 'Propeler band' explained that this music group started doing street art in the form of music performances on the streets to be able to use the profits to support people in need. For instance, they bought a wheelchair for someone in need who could not afford to buy one himself.⁷⁵⁶ Not only do such events serve to gain access to broad audiences by creating an open space that is accessible to many ('the streets'), but it also reflects alternative forms of social solidarity emerging beyond the civil society framework, in a less professionalised and more improvised manner. This is in line with Dosta!'s approach that aims to encourage society to get involved in social and political life with the goal of creating a 'social peace', which is characterised by the fact that society makes decisions itself rather than just accepting what is being imposed on it.⁷⁵⁷ Interestingly enough, what the interviewee translated as 'social peace' is originally framed as 'socijalna pravda' ('social justice') on the website of the association, pointing to the idea of justice as a necessary quality of social relationships.⁷⁵⁸ The fact that the interviewee translated it differently in English, leaving the justice dimension on the sidelines, is illustrative of the power of translation between spaces as well as the agency to frame meanings according to a certain audience. It also shows that the concepts used in the language of the EU or the peacebuilders more generally, does not necessarily coincide with that of specific local actors in BiH.

Alongside with social justice, 'solidarnost' ('solidarity') is one of the key values of Dosta! and an essential element of their work. These terms are not only crucial for the work of his one organisation, but are also central to the work of the recently founded political party Naša Stranka.⁷⁵⁹ These are just two examples out of many which reflect the importance of the ideas of justice and solidarity with respect to social relations. This may certainly be related to a specific political culture, the history of BiH and its

⁷⁵⁶ Damir Basić, Propeler band, *Personal Interview*, Sarajevo, 31/03/10.

⁷⁵⁷ Darko Brkan, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

⁷⁵⁸ <http://dosta.ba/latinica/o-pokretu-dosta/> (accessed 28/07/11).

⁷⁵⁹ See http://nasastranka.ba/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=262&Itemid=81 (accessed 28/07/11) and http://nasastranka.ba/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=279&Itemid=2 (accessed 28/07/11).

experiences with socialism in particular, yet what it shows is that the social relationships space appears to remain largely immune to the civil society space. Certainly, when I interviewed people in English, there was a tendency to resort to the ‘buzzwords’ of the international community (i.e. civil society, social peace, human rights etc.). However, when speaking to people in their language or accessing websites in Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian, I realised that the choice of words as well as the associated meanings are different from how those actors present themselves to the international community. Again, this reflects the extent to which certain spaces of agency may be impacted upon by the discourses of the EU’s spaces of agency in terms of modifying their representation to the outside. On the other hand though, there is no unconditional acceptance of the EU’s spaces, but certain discourses and meanings remain behind the facades, where external censorship and disciplining is less prevalent.

Such discourses that connect to people’s experiences (and the context they are familiar with) indeed manage to mobilise large audiences, since they connect to the personal experiences of many people and build on a language that derives from everyday life. Cultural activities seem to be particularly suitable to the creation of a social relationship space that is close to people’s everyday experiences. This became obvious, amongst others, during a screening of the Bosnian film ‘Na Putu’ during a theatre festival in spring 2010. After the screening, most people in the audience stayed on to discuss how the problems illustrated in the film connected to their own lives and social relationships. Such discussions were equally held during subsequent short film screenings of the festival, reflecting the ability between artwork to address issues with respect to social relationships and to engage the audience in related discussions. This sometimes results in conversations about disrupted social relationships and how those they affect people’s everyday lives in a post-conflict context. In contrast, NGO jargon and its associated ‘buzzwords’ are often not capable of grasping the complex experiences people face, which partly explains the lack of enthusiasm often found in NGO meetings as they are organised by the EU. On the other hand, cultural activities in spheres not accessible to (international) NGOs and donors often manage to trigger more powerful emotional responses from the audience because they engage with certain topics without the constraints involved in adopting professionalised discourses. Such events are, for instance, common during the Sarajevo Winter Festival and attract large

audiences. I myself experienced implicitly political discussions during events that were held in the local language, attracting huge audiences in small venues where the audience created palpable social bonds due to their emotional involvement in the event and its topics.

In this context, the development of alternative forms of social cohabitation often starts on a small scale, i.e. in smaller communities, as it is the case with the interreligious choir Pontanima. A choir member praised “the fact that you are different from others, and still you belong to a community. That is the greatness of Pontanima.”⁷⁶⁰ This reflects a specific form of social cohabitation within the choir, which may not be as easily feasible beyond the rehearsal rooms, but represents a way of finding a personalised way of reconciliation beyond professionalised civil society mechanisms. At the same time, this is not to imply that such forms of social cohabitation are easy to live or to translate into a wider social scale. Yet it is a starting point from which new developments can become thinkable and possibly spread into the wider societal sphere. In this context, the choir conductor of Pontanima said:

It will take a long time. Especially since we have noticed the fact, that in the broader sense, not just in Bosnia-Herzegovina, people will have to relearn not to fear the different and unknown. (...) Anyone who starts thinking differently because of our music we consider another stone in the spiritual bridge to the other bank.⁷⁶¹

This represents a deviation from the EU’s approach to social change and transformation, implemented through projects of a limited duration (often two or three years),⁷⁶² which tends to neglect the non-project nature of social change. Instead, there seems to be an awareness among choir members that local peacebuilding does not follow such logics, but is a matter of time and personal engagement. In that respect, Pontanima’s work ties in with the statement that “our music scene is the most shining example of us living together”⁷⁶³ and is somewhat similar to Ambrosia’s, an association of artists, who challenge the current state of affairs (politically and socially) in BiH. Their goal is to create an alternative (social and arts) scene, not through NGO

⁷⁶⁰ Mirsad Čičeklić in Namik Kabil, *Vjernici*, documentary, Sarajevo, 2008.

⁷⁶¹ Josip Katavić in Namik Kabil, op. cit.

⁷⁶² See <http://www.tacso.org> (accessed 06/08/11).

⁷⁶³ Mirza Ajnadžić, *Student Presentation*, op. cit.

mechanisms, but just by acting as “crazy artists.”⁷⁶⁴ In this context, their approach to social life in BiH is not driven by donors, but by their own interests and visions for the country.⁷⁶⁵ Again, this represents a space in which change becomes thinkable, in which options can be explored and alternative paths to peacebuilding can be imagined through experimentation rather than (external) prescription.

Along similar lines, the OKC Abrašević is trying to develop alternative forms of social cohabitation that move beyond ethnic divisions. This became particularly evident in a discussion in the centre during their festival “Defense of Public Space, Defense of our Future”.⁷⁶⁶ Young people, some of whom regularly spend time at the centre, others who were new to it, discussed issues of social coexistence in Mostar, pointing to issues of identity and needs as they develop within a social space. This, however, does not imply that the view held by many activists in this centre is a highly romantic one. Instead, there is an acknowledgement of identity conflicts, while there are ongoing processes of reflection about how those can be dealt with. A lecture held during the festival is illustrative of this:

If we take the approach of agonistic pluralism and perceive the public space as a place for constructive struggle, it can be noticed that art in public space holds a great potential which can be realized through production of spaces for potential encounter/conflict, but also as a tool to articulate distinct positions.⁷⁶⁷

Against this background, it becomes obvious that the views of many artists or actors involved in creative processes do not necessarily represent a tendency to idealise, but they aim to find ways in which current conflictual social relations can be dealt with, how they can be understood, and how they can be transformed. In that respect, they create an imaginary space in which new approaches to peacebuilding become thinkable and from where they can reach out into society if they find positive resonance there. In the context of the social relationships space, we can see different constellations and ideas emerging, connecting to the actors’ experiences in their everyday lives, which they share with a bigger environment. This stands in contrast to the EU’s civil society

⁷⁶⁴ Nebojša Šavija-Valha, Ambrosia, *Personal Interview*, Sarajevo, 23/03/10.

⁷⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶⁶ The author attended parts of the festival.

⁷⁶⁷ Anja Bogojević, lecture summary from project leaflet “Festival of Arts in Divided Cities”, OKC Abrašević, Mostar, 2010.

approach that has a tendency to support the creation of civil society through the promotion of ideas that might not necessarily have existed before the onset of the peacebuilding process. In addition, while the EU has often been accused of pursuing an elitist approach to civil society, during the course of which professionalised, English-speaking NGOs are privileged, actors like the Museum for Contemporary Arts in Banja Luka aim to pursue a more comprehensive, grassroots-based approach. In this context, their PR manager suggested that

[i]t is important to have different categories in society to be involved in, not only for the elitist level of people, which is what we are trying to do (...)The museum of contemporary art is not that kind of building, not that elitist thing, but for everyone the same.⁷⁶⁸

It seems that this is not an approach that requires the subjects to adapt to the institutions (which comes close to the EU's approach), but a reverse process, during the course of which the museum adapts to the people and their needs.⁷⁶⁹

At the same time, those needs and associated ideas may be highly diverse. As I have suggested above, existing social relations are still strongly shaped by conflictual tendencies, which form the basis of imaginations of social relationships. Yet the presence of social conflicts and dividing lines does not mean that there are no visions of a better social cohabitation in the country. Alluding to the socialist history of BiH, a theatre dramaturgist talked about the importance of family in social life, which was one of the cornerstones under Tito, but also a source of peaceful life.⁷⁷⁰ On a more political level, a staff member of the NGO Gariwo suggested that (social) reconciliation would also mean the presence of only one government, one state, one constitution, and one nation with many religions,⁷⁷¹ which in turn ties in with the EU's vision of a unified country.

What these rather incoherent processes show is that this emerging space is not very coherent in its meanings in terms of suggesting a particular form of social cohabitation that most people in BiH would agree with. There is disagreement about the extent to which a centralised BiH is desirable, about the importance of social solidarity

⁷⁶⁸ Branka Šestić, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

⁷⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁷⁰ Aida Pilav, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

⁷⁷¹ Eleonora Emkić, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

and welfare, about the role of religion and so forth. The social relationships space is a rather fragmented space, with differing needs and interests being involved. What keeps this space together in all its fluidity, however, is the fact that the discourses that emerge around this topic interact with each other, while they may be in the process of negotiating and developing alternative ways of living. There is a clear personal dimension to this space, which reflects its focus on the everyday rather than an institutionalised version of social coexistence. Generally, the number of actors contributing to this space is high, given that it is quite open in terms of who can participate in the discourses, both actively and passively. Cultural actors can use their access to art techniques as well as to society through their position within it to develop spaces in which options can be designed, presented and developed further.

The social relationships space of agency is shaped by bottom-up as well as top-down processes that cluster meanings in a less coordinated, but contextually meaningful way. This reflects an incentive for actors to participate in this space in terms of discussing the meanings that are developed around social relationships in post-war BiH. In that sense, the power relations of this space can be viewed as diffuse and fragmented, power certainly abiding more with some actors than others, yet offering the possibility for interested participants to get involved and challenge the discourses existing in that space. These discourses and participation in them may happen in venues as they are offered by the open space of the OKC Abrašević, through creative initiatives in a non-professionalised way, or just by conversations and interactions on the streets. Against this background, the social relationship space has a strong potential to translate its meanings to a wider audience, as contested as those may be. Such dynamics make peacebuilding much more accessible for people in that they feel part of the associated discourses and contribute to the creation of meanings therein.

The Freedom Space

Chapter 5 has suggested that the way in which the EU runs its spaces of agency is mostly in a controlled and top-down manner, in which participation is often limited to passivity and reception, rather than input and modification. Against this background, the following section argues that local actors have created a ‘freedom’ space in which they

challenge the boundaries imposed upon them by liberating themselves from constraints that they consider problematic, or they resist. A Bosnian media activist has indeed suggested that “for every revolution, you need an idea around which people can cluster”, alluding to the necessity of creating a space from which change can be made possible.⁷⁷² In this context, it has been argued that possibly the most important cultural need of young people is “to express themselves with no limits and rules which are set from particular institution or stereotype [sic].”⁷⁷³

The above-mentioned free association of academics and artists, Ambrosia, is an excellent example of actors carving out their freedom space. Their primary *raison d’être* is the development of uncensored way of interacting, which is expressed in the statement of one member: “Moj fetish je sloboda” (“My fetish is freedom”).⁷⁷⁴ The group tries to implement this vision by producing their own ideas without making any compromises, in that they experiment with different, mostly unconventional, art techniques to imagine ways in which the current situation of BiH as well as its social constellations can be transformed.⁷⁷⁵ This activism comes at a price though; since Ambrosia is not set up as an NGO, it is not externally funded, while its members contribute their private funds to keep the project going.⁷⁷⁶ However, this represents a deliberate decision on the part of the group members, given that without major financial contributions from outside – small grants at best - they can hardly be controlled, so they dare acts of ‘real subversion.’⁷⁷⁷ In this spirit, they can reach a higher degree of freedom, as they need not compromise with donor preferences, but can really focus their creative work on what they think matters most.⁷⁷⁸ At the same time, the focus away from donor demands does not mean that Ambrosia is keen to represent society – indeed, the group members look at society as a countering force. As a member suggested, they work on the development of a rebellious and critical counter-culture, counter-balancing the mainstream and thus becoming central actors of social correction and transformation.⁷⁷⁹ This is only possible because Ambrosia transcends existing social

⁷⁷² Mirza Ajnadžić, *Student Presentation*, op. cit.

⁷⁷³ Demis Sinancević, *Vizionarsko Društvo*, *Email Conversation*, 25/08/10.

⁷⁷⁴ TV programme on Ambrosia, BHT TV, Sarajevo, 26/08/09.

⁷⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁷⁶ Nebojša Šavija-Valha, *Ambrosia*, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

⁷⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁷⁹ Ibid.

and political boundaries, i.e. boundaries of spaces, by voicing their agency in terms of challenging what is thinkable in post-war BiH. Doing this, they become a powerful social force in terms of impacting upon society from a critical perspective and in developing options of social change. In this context, ‘powerful’ is defined differently from the EU’s perspective in terms of referring to the agency to impact on discourses rather than as being an interlocutor to the international community.

This in turn fosters the emergence of a freedom space, to which other actors are contributing as well. Among those actors are chiefly youth centres in different parts of the country. The Youth Center in Srebrenica, for instance, labels itself as a space of resistance in which people can say what they think and fight for.⁷⁸⁰ The centre is a good example of how agency can create a space of freedom by transcending existing boundaries through creativity, given that directly after the war the building served as nothing more than a public toilet. This, however, did not prevent young theatre activists from building up a youth centre in which they can realise their visions and develop alternatives to social life in Srebrenica.⁷⁸¹ The centre has now become an inviting space in which young people can express their needs in a way that is different from politics, but through their own ways and approaches.⁷⁸² This is very similar to the OKC Abrašević in Mostar, which has been built up from ruins by young people from the city. Again, those young people have created an ‘open space’ in which they can make use of their freedom in terms of limiting external control mechanisms and pressure from outside.⁷⁸³ A volunteer to the centre pointed out that the youth who regularly spend time there have an ‘amazing sense of ownership’, and feel that this space is theirs.⁷⁸⁴ Against this background, the Abrašević centre has become a space of resistance, in which people can have discussions that they would not necessarily be able to have beyond the centre – in fact the centre connects people and discourses that would not come together beyond.⁷⁸⁵ This is also expressed through their radio programme, which is non-profit oriented and in which people are free to say whatever they want to.⁷⁸⁶ In that sense, those youth centres become new spaces, both physically and ideationally, escaping

⁷⁸⁰ Milena Nikolić, *Student Presentation*, op. cit.

⁷⁸¹ Ibid.

⁷⁸² Ibid.

⁷⁸³ Katie Hampton, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

⁷⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁸⁶ Ibid.

control mechanisms that are present in wider societal and political discourses by transcending the boundaries of what is ‘sayable’ and ‘doable’, creating possibilities of action. This certainly involves a ‘risk’ on the side of the organisers, since they do not know what their members will make of the platforms they are providing. This risk, however, is part of the reason of existence of those centres, and helps them survive by supporting the development of alternative visions of the future in a less restricted manner. At the same time, those are open spaces and therefore easily accessible for interested people, who may feel better represented there than in the political arena. It seems that ‘ownership’ is crucial to the creation and maintenance of the space. Having built the rehearsal room and studio in the youth centre Alter Art in Travnik by themselves, the local youth have made it their own, using it as a platform where social relationships can be (re-)configured.⁷⁸⁷ Indeed, this feeling of ownership seems to translate into the work of the centre in that the youth feel responsible for its development and have a stake in its activities. This represents a crucial difference to projects implemented for or funded by the EU, which often prescribe the respective ideas and goals and therefore fail to create a feeling of ownership among the actors implementing them. The ownership and freedom to design the development of a certain programme or idea therefore seems to be at the roots of how people relate to it as well as its sustainability.

The notions of freedom and ownership are also the reasoning behind what the artists Nermina Omerbegović and Aida Pasić proposed for the “New Monument. De/Construction of Monument” project, which was voted for by consensus. The monument in itself is just a pedestal to be erected in a park in Sarajevo. Its location, however, is one of the main characteristics of the monument, based on the assumption that “parks were always the place where people would gather and meet for socializing and chatting.”⁷⁸⁸ The pedestal is intended to serve as a platform for open talk and free speech, a space where people can voice their opinions.⁷⁸⁹ The artists view this as a critique and incentive to encourage free thinking “in a society represented only as a collectivity”.⁷⁹⁰ They argue that their pedestal symbolises the conquest of social space,

⁷⁸⁷ Darko Saračević, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

⁷⁸⁸ Sarajevo Center for Contemporary Art, op. cit., p.100.

⁷⁸⁹ Ibid., p.100.

⁷⁹⁰ Ibid., p.100.

thus acting as a tool through which external control is reduced in importance through a focus on free thinking and speaking.⁷⁹¹ The artists view themselves as the ones that create this freedom space, but the exercise of agency is handed over to those interested in using it, thus addressing a large audience that may, at least symbolically, take over its concrete design.

This stands somewhat in contrast to Damir Nikšić's 'Oriental Dream', as a design of what he calls a 'Bosnian Theology of Liberation' (BTL). His dream is more concrete in what it imagines freedom to be like:

BTL insists on the tradition and the pedagogy of the oppressed, on spirituality and humor, on agit-pop approach in the treatment of the dream, of freedom in order to compress strongly the lines of sweet dreamers into a monolith Bosnian knot, or a European navel knot of the old world, into one and only Bosnian dream which is also African, Asian, European and American.⁷⁹²

In addition to his allusion to the connections between BiH and other continents where this dream of freedom emerges, Nikšić has a clear political take to his notion of freedom, relating it to what he imagines social life to be like, namely "the joint work, common food table, where the honorable, hard-working and peaceful guests are invited, a food table, where the vultures, predators, demagogues, explorators, canny, wolves and hyenas aren't welcome."⁷⁹³ Thus, for Nikšić, freedom is not a notion of anarchy in terms of 'all do what they want', but is strongly related to social life. In that sense, freedom is conceptualised here not so much in terms of the tradition of 'liberalism' as a political strand of thought, but rather relates to its social dimensions and its basis in everyday life. This in turn casts light on the diverging meanings of freedom being used by the EU, compared to those meanings that matter in a local context. Indeed, the EU's understanding of 'freedom' differs considerably, mainly relating to the internal market and its four freedoms of movement (of people, goods, services and capital) as well as in its connection to security and justice as the assumed basis of free movement.⁷⁹⁴

This reflects the extent to which local visions of freedom are contextualised and thus different from the EU's notions. Yet it becomes clear that cultural and art work is

⁷⁹¹ Ibid., p.100.

⁷⁹² Damir Nikšić, op. cit.

⁷⁹³ Ibid.

⁷⁹⁴ See http://europa.eu/pol/justice/index_en.htm (accessed 06/08/11) and http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/capital/framework/treaty_en.htm (accessed 06/08/11).

an efficient tool for constructing meanings around this space, in terms of making the abstract term ‘freedom’ (N.B. that freedom is also at the roots of liberalism, yet with a different meaning and viewed as playing out in a specific political setting) accessible to a wider audience. As a result, the freedom space becomes an open space in which different conceptualisations of social life and peacebuilding can be experimented with. As I have shown above, some artists understand their role as providing a platform on which people can voice their own imaginations of freedom, while others have more concrete ideas about the contents of the freedom space. Generally, the freedom space of agency tends to be quite inclusive, as it is particularly the case with the work of the cultural youth centres in Mostar and Srebrenica, which are open to people that are otherwise marginalised in society and provide a space in which alternative ideas can be discussed. Those venues are shaped by bottom-up processes and are thus hardly accessible to donors or governing institutions, given that they are sometimes deliberately hidden to be able to preserve their autonomy and freedom. As a result, such spaces often differ considerably from the venues in which civil society meets as well as from the latter’s way of working, which is, however, just what shapes the freedom within such spaces. Unlike typical donor–funded civil society organisations, actors within the freedom space tend to resist external control and often sacrifice financial and other security to be able to assume a critical and challenging position in society. This is what makes them so attractive to some, and so frightening to others.

The Arts Space

My particular focus on local cultural actors means that a focus on the ‘arts space’ suggests itself. Indeed, what the connections of this space to other spaces, such as the freedom space, show, is that it serves as a central tool to bring meanings across to larger audiences. However, the arts space is not only a tool used within other spaces of agency, but rather contains meanings itself. However, it is sometimes perceived as weak, immature and in need of tutoring by the international community.⁷⁹⁵

⁷⁹⁵ Radenko Milak, *op. cit.*

As outlined above, the EU has tended to treat culture at best as a sphere in which society can be transformed, while at the same time referring to Bosnian culture as in need of development.

Yet, gradually a new, or even old, cultural self-confidence seems to be (re-) emerging among Bosnian artists and the wider society. A journalist, for instance, suggested that the only good thing that BiH still has was culture, since “it is the only thing that makes us feel like normal human beings.”⁷⁹⁶ The importance of art became obvious throughout my fieldwork. Most cultural events I attended, including theatre performances, concerts, film screenings exhibition openings, festivals, gathered large audiences - most of them were highly attended – and made people engage with related social and political questions on a different level. In such events, it was not unusual for people to have tears in their eyes and to share their emotions, while there is a high degree of enthusiasm to be felt – usually on both the side of the performers and the audiences. For many, arts represent a space in which they can express themselves, their needs and realise their potentials. It connects the private to the public and makes the subjective, everyday experiences of people relevant on a wider scale. The film ‘Ja sam iz Srebrenice’ (‘I am from Srebrenica’), directed by Ado Hasanović, is just one example where personal, everyday experiences are the basis of a more general message relating to the quality of public life, i.e. the town of Srebrenica viewed as a limiting and liberating space. Srebrenica is therefore portrayed as an ambiguous space, depending on the particularities of people’s everyday lives as they are situated in the town.

By talking to a number of cultural actors, it became obvious that cultural work is closely connected to the ways in which people deal with their everyday lives. This approach is, amongst others, reflected in the work of the Swiss Cultural Programme that views culture as everyday life culture, “as life itself”.⁷⁹⁷ Along those lines, a project manager of SCCA suggested that arts are always about life and the current moment⁷⁹⁸, rather than abstract ideas. In that sense, the arts space can be considered as particularly insightful as regards the meanings of peace and its everyday life dimension, given that artists take up social issues, possibly distort and represent them, whilst upholding connections to the origins of their ideas. The ways in which the arts portray and

⁷⁹⁶ Nidzara Ahmetasević, *Phone Interview*, op. cit.

⁷⁹⁷ Bertan Selim, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

⁷⁹⁸ Asja Hafner, SCCA / pro.ba, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

represent ‘peace’ or ‘society’ can tell us a lot about the discrepancies between different imaginations as well as telling us where bridges between them may lie. The fact that cultural actors are very close to and integrated with social topics is particularly evident with the work of theatres. An interviewee involved in the programming of different theatres in BiH emphasised the importance of connecting with society, addressing topical problems and framing them in an emotional way.⁷⁹⁹ This requires the use of frames, such as the family or “everyday political issues” to be able to fulfil critical social functions.⁸⁰⁰

The representation of social processes is also one of the cornerstones of the film producing company ‘deblokada’, which earned its name through its activities of cultural resistance during the siege of Sarajevo in terms of ‘unblocking’ social and political tensions that had accumulated during the siege.⁸⁰¹ As their bulletin claims, deblokada views the residues of the war as still embodied in political, economic and social blockades.⁸⁰² Against this background, deblokada’s approach to arts is a response, a form of social consciousness, which analyses the remnants of the war.⁸⁰³ This is based on the assumption that “film can engender change”⁸⁰⁴ and thus actively impact on the post-war and peacebuilding dynamics in the country and region. The main producer for deblokada, Jasmila Žbanić, argues: “I am interested in characters who seem to be functional on the surface, but who, in fact, hide the hard experiences of life deep inside themselves.”⁸⁰⁵ This statement shows that arts have the potential to be very close to life and the diverse experiences people may have, and at the same time possess the power to create new meanings of those experiences and thus to deploy a transformative potential. In a similar vein, the “New Monument. De/Construction of Monument” project of the SCCA aims to create new meanings of existing locations, thereby making use of their transformative potential.⁸⁰⁶ In that sense, cultural agencies can offer ways of working with surrounding structures, as well as channelling them into something new and creative. This goes beyond the EU’s approach to arts, which, as several EU officials

⁷⁹⁹ Selma Spahić, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

⁸⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁸⁰¹ Amira Kresevljaković, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

⁸⁰² Nebojša Jovanović, “Deblokada” *Deblokada Bulletin*, Sarajevo, not dated.

⁸⁰³ Ibid.

⁸⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁰⁵ Jasmila Žbanić, interviewed by Nebojša Jovanović, “Deblokada” *Deblokada Bulletin*, Sarajevo, not dated.

⁸⁰⁶ Sarajevo Center for Contemporary Art, op. cit., p.13.

have suggested to me, is based on a view that culture is not as big a priority as human rights or democratisation, for instance, given that the latter are assumed to form the foundation of the former.⁸⁰⁷ In addition, culture as a field is not part of the SAA and is therefore only a secondary goal to the EU.⁸⁰⁸ This in turn reflects how the EU does not consider culture as an essential sphere of politics and has not made it a central space of agency as far as its engagement in BiH is concerned.

However, a PR manager from Banja Luka praised cultural centres as places where one can talk in a different way about politics in BiH, but also about issues relating to Europe and the world.⁸⁰⁹ Her museum makes use of this potential, realising the importance of focusing on people in general rather than on elites exclusively. This is related to the history of the museum, which in its beginning in the late 1970s organised meetings with artists on the streets, brought arts to the streets, and consulted citizens about how to set up paintings and graphics in their homes.⁸¹⁰ Again, there is an emphasis on the connection between arts and the people as well as their lives, symbolised by the fact that the arts space (here: the paintings) entered the private sphere (here: the homes of people). The museum is aware of this, suggesting that

the Museum broke barriers of usual attitude to museums as “houses of silence”, and took radical place as other republic cultural institutions and totally approached its role and place of the museum in this region [sic].⁸¹¹

This mirrors the extent to which cultural actors have, in many instances, adopted a central role in people’s private and social lives, as opposed to numerous peacebuilding actors, who have limited their engagement to the institutional and technical realms, therefore remaining distant from people’s actual experiences of peace. To the contrary, the Duplex Gallery in Sarajevo has become a space in which visitors discuss political issues, their visions of peace and social life on an ad hoc basis. I have witnessed and participated in political discussions in the courtyard of the gallery, where artists and visitors often stop by to have a coffee or a cigarette. Those informal gatherings frequently result in political and substantial discussions. To connect to people’s lives,

⁸⁰⁷ Vladimir Pandurević, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

⁸⁰⁸ Confidential source, *Personal Interview*, Sarajevo, 24/03/10.

⁸⁰⁹ Branka Šestić, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

⁸¹⁰ Muzej Savremene Umjetnosti RS, « From the Gallery to the Museum. 1971-2006 », Banja Luka, 2006.

⁸¹¹ Ibid.

and particularly young people's needs, is also the main objective of the cultural NGO Vizionarsko Društvo. This is the background against which its director organised an exhibition project, 'Barake', using an abandoned space of two barracks to start a 'real Cultural Revolution'.⁸¹² The director referred to Barake as a 'socio-political experiment', emphasising that it attracted all kinds of people, who "tried to express themselves on any possible way [sic]" by pursuing diverse arts disciplines.⁸¹³ He underlined that Barake offered a space for future professionals in any field, not just arts, to express their "emotions, rage, love, politeness", which he considers as a central cultural need of young people, which the NGO tried to support.⁸¹⁴ This project then led to processes during the course of which people could experiment in communicating their cultural needs in an ironic, satirical, critical and responsible way.⁸¹⁵ In that way, the arts project ensured a connection to its audience, who could become its active participants at the same time and feel represented by it. Similar dynamics can be found in the approach of the arts association Protok in Banja Luka. In its approach to create a new arts scene that changes the perceptions and functions of arts in society, their project SpaPort, an exhibition of contemporary arts that investigates Yugoslav history in the light of current developments, emerged from the needs of the local cultural scene.⁸¹⁶ According to the director of Protok, it represents "an art which talks about problems and which clearly and critically poses questions vis-à-vis socio-political realities."⁸¹⁷ Arts therefore fulfil essential functions in a society, relating to people's identities and transformative agency with respect to wider political questions.

What can also be observed is that the arts space tends to connect to real places rather than just abstract, imaginary spaces that can be used anywhere. Again, this makes such spaces more accessible to people than the abstract spaces of international peacebuilding, which cannot be clearly situated in a certain locale. Not only is this true for theatres, with the Theatre of the Oppressed being tied to a concrete community in which oppressive structures prevail, but it is particularly evident in a theatre project that was staged in the Duplex Gallery in Sarajevo in 2010. The project, entitled

⁸¹² <http://www.vizionarskodrustvo.com/unplugged.html> (accessed 03/02/11).

⁸¹³ Demis Sinancević, Vizionarsko Društvo, *Email Conversation*, 25/08/10.

⁸¹⁴ Ibid.

⁸¹⁵ Ibid.

⁸¹⁶ Radenko Milak, op. cit.

⁸¹⁷ Ibid. Translation by the author.

‘Theydream’, is a form of site-specific or environmental theatre, which aims to engage the audience by using the physical constraints of a site as part of the performance.⁸¹⁸ In that sense, the theatre tries to establish a close connection to people’s lives by playing in ‘appropriate real-world settings’ rather than an abstract theatrical space.⁸¹⁹ Again, this reflects the importance of linking arts to the perceived social realities on the ground, which in turn points to the relevance of the arts space in the context of peacebuilding. Most artists are aware of the transformative power of arts, with the director of Protok stating that their local cultural scene is independent of politics and institutions, thanks to the openness of people who lead initiatives and dialogue.⁸²⁰ As contested as this statement may be, it reflects that art provides a space different from the political arena, in which voices can be heard and legitimacy – in the sense of connection to the audience - re-established.

The French cultural centre André Malraux has realised this transformative power of arts in relation to social affairs and is using its own cultural approach to influence social developments and peacebuilding in the wider sense. From their French perspective, they want to assist BiH in eventually becoming an EU member by supporting “a democratic, civil and intercultural Bosnia and Herzegovina, and to develop a living and vivid cultural space.”⁸²¹ In this context, the centre fosters civil society exchange initiatives to help BiH find its place in Europe.⁸²² There are a number of projects that the centre runs to achieve this, examples of which would be debates on European cultural perspectives for BiH as well as book presentations and so forth.⁸²³ In that sense, the centre uses the arts as a tool through which discourses about the rapprochement to Europe are channelled as well as to achieve broader societal change. This in turn is certainly linked to the identity of the centre, which can be viewed as situated both in relation to the EU’s membership areas as well as to BiH, where they have their local office. It therefore becomes clear that the ways in which art is used and filled with meaning are heavily dependent on the identity of the actor in question.

⁸¹⁸ Saša Krga, Azra Ibrahimović, Sanela Hasanović, Elma Selman, Šefko Obućina, “Theydream”, email via Pierre Courtin, 03/09/10.

⁸¹⁹ Ibid.

⁸²⁰ Radenko Milak, op. cit.

⁸²¹ Centre André Malraux, op. cit.

⁸²² Ibid.

⁸²³ Ibid.

These examples can certainly only shed light on a small niche of dynamics within the arts space, and must thus not be considered exhaustive. However, there are some patterns emerging, i.e. processes that seem to be active in this space. In general, the arts space tends to be open and interested in being close to the people. The audience can become participants if they are interested in doing so, and thus impact on transformational processes within this space as well as of the spaces it interacts with. On the other hand, the concrete implications of this can hardly be quantified and may not be as high as the potentials, since participation in this space requires an active interest of those who might potentially be addressed by it. If they are interested though, there are manifold opportunities to voice their needs and transform them into creative projects, which can be communicated to a wide audience. Given that there is no central ‘control mechanism’ that decides whether an artwork will be included in the space of agency, the latter is mainly shaped by bottom-up processes, which thus give essential insights into social dynamics. In that sense, the arts space may represent an important element of a bigger social relationships and peacebuilding space, in its ability to communicate the needs of a wide variety of people in a fairly uncensored way. Against this background, it is surprising that arts have only been granted a marginal position in international peacebuilding policies, despite their potential to bring the personal and the emotional back into the picture. The reluctance to engage with cultural partners is probably a result of their more fragmented and – in an EU understanding – less bureaucratically professionalised way of working, which makes the cultural sphere less ‘suitable’ to act as a partner of the EU. Although there seems to be a growing awareness within the EU about the importance of culture as a possible gateway to society and the need to engage in cultural events, it has been said that this is heavily dependent on whether people in institutions have a sense for it as well as the concrete event in question.⁸²⁴ An EU official suggested that artists are not necessarily suitable recipients of EU funds due to their ‘artistic souls’ as well as their lack of capacity and/or willingness to comply with EU guidelines.⁸²⁵ This very much reflects an instrumental view on peacebuilding in which local society is imagined as in need of the help of the international community, rather than an awareness that there is mutual dependence, while the EU needs legitimacy and the cooperation of local actors itself to be able to implement its agenda.

⁸²⁴ Confidential source, *Personal Interview*, Sarajevo, 29/04/10.

⁸²⁵ Confidential source, Delegation of the EU to BiH, *Personal Interview*, Sarajevo, 22/03/10.

The arts space has therefore developed its own transformational strategies beyond the EU's spaces. This distance, however, also undermines the power of the EU within BiH in that it fails to cooperate with those who could help contextualise its policies. This is not to argue directly that the EU should transform its policies to populist ones at all costs, but to point at the need for it to rethink its approaches and implications for the subjects of peacebuilding. This certainly involves debates about the need for the EU to establish legitimacy for its policies in BiH, which is, however, internally contested. While some officials did not consider legitimacy a key area in which the EU should engage, others emphasised the need for the institution to strengthen its connections with the people. In that respect, there is certainly a risk of arts being instrumentalised for the legitimisation of certain policies, while on the other hand, it may help the EU understand the complexities of everyday social life – if it is interested as an institution at all.

The Past Space

An investigation of the future space promoted by the EU has shown that there is a considerable degree of resistance to it. Against this background, I argue that there is a local space emerging that deals with the past and develops complex interactions with the future space. In this context, referring to the humanitarian disaster related to the siege of Sarajevo, a journalist suggested that “in 1992, I lost the word ‘future’ from my vocabulary”.⁸²⁶

Indeed, many cultural actors deal with issues that are related to the country's past and history. This is sometimes based on the perception of a need to strengthen the cultural and social heritage of BiH,⁸²⁷ and/or a nostalgic view back on the times of the former Yugoslavia, which, culturally speaking, was flourishing, with Sarajevo being particularly famous for its music scene.⁸²⁸ It is observable that a number of cultural actors still refer back to the Yugoslavian arts scene in their approaches. Protok's SpaPort project, for instance, uses this as a point of departure, eager to invite artists

⁸²⁶ Nidžara Ahmetasević, *Conference on 'Delivering Just and Durable Peace?'*, Sarajevo, 04/09/09.

⁸²⁷ sMagdalena Schildknecht, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

⁸²⁸ Zijad Pekmez, *Personal Interview*, op. cit.

from the space of the former Yugoslavia.⁸²⁹ This, however, does not reflect an uncritical engagement with the past, but rather tries to investigate its issues and how those impact on the present. The director of *Protok* remarked that “our society has serious problems with the non-resolved issue of the past, the silence, and preservation of the truth.”⁸³⁰ Against this background, cultural actors can step in to deal with this, with *Protok*, for instance, addressing traumatic themes and using places from the close and distant past to point to the different meanings of one historical event.⁸³¹ By engaging with the past and its meanings, cultural actors develop the power to transform the past and how it is dealt with in the present. A film producer defended this approach, claiming that BiH does not deal enough with remembering and the concept of (a healthy) memory. Yet he considered this a necessary step that should be taken through alternative ways rather than through psychoanalysis, which may be problematic due to its claims that everything can be explained.⁸³² Here, institutions like theatres may be able to provide an alternative way of addressing the past. A dramaturgist suggested that a theatre is in the position to comment on history and to address dramatic feelings in relation to it, based on the need for a psychological clearing of emotions on the part of the people.⁸³³ Cultural actors can therefore build on their position as ‘critical voices’ of society to articulate what they perceive as problematic developments more easily than others, and transform them into irony, cynicism or humour, all of which find a lot of resonance in society. Again, this represents a toolkit that is unfamiliar for most professionalised NGOs and donors, given that it is not amenable neither to measurement nor to the project format as required by the EU.

It becomes clear that the transformative potential of arts takes effect in a diachronic time-dimension, i.e. when there is a reference to the past, which can then be reinterpreted in terms of what this would mean for the future. This is in line with the goals of the OKC Abrašević in Mostar, with a volunteer of the youth centre explaining that Yugoslav culture represents a shared memory of Abrašević, where Yugoslav holidays are still celebrated.⁸³⁴ At the same time, this is not limited to a nostalgic and

⁸²⁹ Radenko Milak, *op. cit.*

⁸³⁰ Radenko Milak, *Email Conversation*, *op. cit.*

⁸³¹ Radenko Milak, *op. cit.*

⁸³² Namik Kabil, *Personal Interview*, *op. cit.*

⁸³³ Aida Pilav, *Personal Interview*, *op. cit.*

⁸³⁴ Katie Hampton, *Personal Interview*, *op. cit.*

passive consideration of the past, but it represents an attempt to deal with the past in its intersection with the present and future. The centre approaches this, despite generally providing a space for mainly young people, by maintaining links to older generations in Mostar, many of whom associate the place with their memories in the past.⁸³⁵ Connecting those different generations through the centre then also means connecting the past to the present and the future via inter-generational discourses. This certainly reaches a wider and more diverse audience than most internationally set-up NGOs, which are, as Hammami suggests, mainly run by middle-class, English-speaking young professionals.⁸³⁶

The OKC Abrašević's "Art in Divided Cities" project, addressing issues of social life in Mostar, is reflective of the intersection of the past and future and

can in the end be interpreted as a repeated invitation to civic and ethical responsibility in an insecure field where the forces of globalisation and post-socialist transition intersect, like a step which in a simultaneous look backward and forward, attempts to draw attention to a recognition of the basic parameters for orientation in our specific transnational "reality".⁸³⁷

This quote reflects the extent to which Abrašević and other cultural actors engage with the past in its complex interplay with the present and the future. This engagement takes place in two different manners: Exploring the benefits of the past as they may be used to creatively construct the present and the future on the one hand, or deconstructing those elements of history that impede the construction of the present and future on the other hand. The "New Monument. De/Construction of Monument" project pursues the latter path in its ambition "to deconstruct the realities of transition in post-socialist, particularly in post-Yugoslav countries, so that our time could be thought in a new and creative way".⁸³⁸ This is based on the assumption that arts are able to revise history and historical memory, so that it is possible to overcome the past with the help of artwork that is assumed to be free from ideology and power abuse.⁸³⁹ This is particularly relevant considering the centrality of discourses about the past and its

⁸³⁵ Kristina Čorić, OKC Abrašević, *Student Presentation*, Mostar, 09/03/11.

⁸³⁶ Rema Hammami, "Palestinian NGOs Since Oslo: From NGO Politics to Social Movements?", *Middle East Report*, no.214, 2000, p.27.

⁸³⁷ Project summary from project leaflet: OKC Abrašević, "Festival of Arts in Divided Cities", Mostar, 2010.

⁸³⁸ Sarajevo Center for Contemporary Art, op. cit., p.12.

⁸³⁹ Ibid., p.12.

meaning for the present, not only in the cultural, but also in the wider societal discourse in relation to peace and peacebuilding, where transformation and change are viewed as inextricably linked to BiH's experiences from the past.

The bunker in Konjic mentioned above is an interesting symbolisation of such transformative potentials, given that the artists involved in the project symbolically and physically turned a space that had originally been built for a nuclear war into a space in which creative energies can be deployed. A defensive space is thus made offensive through a transformation of purpose. The project contends:

The bunker was a place to provide shelter and sustenance for a limited number of people during a brief period of time during a potential catastrophe. The exhibition could therefore become a "simulation of life" in restricted circumstances of the notion of pure "survival", with all its accompanying political and psychological (personal/intimate) experiences and insights.⁸⁴⁰

This mirrors the extent to which the past can serve as a source of inspiration for contemporary projects that deal with it in different ways, each having their particular take on it, but transforming it so it makes sense in the present. The power of actors to transform meanings becomes obvious as a manifestation of the agency to re-imagine and re-present certain visions for BiH and its people.

The artist Sanjin Selimović takes this up with his contribution to the "New Monument. De/Construction of Monument" project. He suggests the erection of a stone at the place of the Archduke Ferdinand's assassination site, with an inscription (in the local language):

This is where once some Austro-Hungarian throne successor and his wife passed by.

Nothing special happened.

This museum is dedicated to that event which has never happened.⁸⁴¹

This represents a radical approach to transformed history, which the artist calls "erased history" in that it retrospectively changes the relationship between the winners and losers of history.⁸⁴² Just through the eyes and work of the artist, history becomes

⁸⁴⁰ <http://www.bijenale.ba/selektori.html> (accessed 03/01/11).

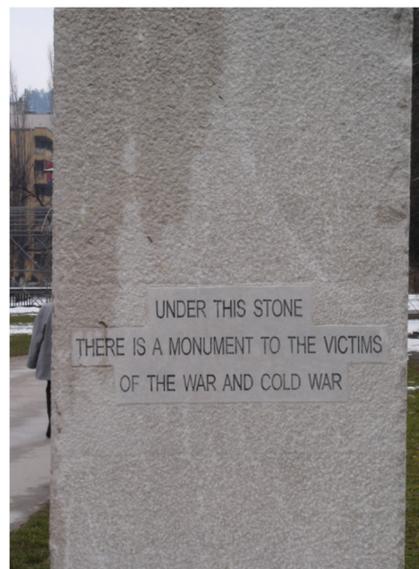
⁸⁴¹ Sarajevo Center for Contemporary Art, op. cit., p.73.

⁸⁴² Ibid., p.73.

reversed, transformed, equipped with new meanings in relation to the present. At the same time, this is a reflection of the power and agency of the every member of a space that dares to create new meanings within the space, since those meanings have the potential to be channelled into wider discourses and impact on other members of the space as well as on other spaces. This is in line with Bhabha's view on the borderline work of culture:

Such art does not merely recall the past as social cause or aesthetic precedent; it renews the past, refiguring it as a contingent 'in-between' space, that innovates and interrupts the performance of the present.⁸⁴³

In that respect, artists' approaches to renewing the past can be quite diverse, open or subtle, public or hidden, yet at the same time symbolically very powerful. A subtle approach to contemplating the past is the famous monument designed by Braco Dimitrijević, located in a park in Sarajevo. It consists of a white stone with the inscription (in several languages) "Under this stone there is a monument to the victims of the war and Cold War."⁸⁴⁴ This monument recalls the victims publicly, while at the same time keeping them symbolically hidden under the stone and thus commenting on the public culture of commemoration and forgetting in relation to those wars.



845

⁸⁴³ Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, op. cit., p.10.

⁸⁴⁴ Sarajevo Center for Contemporary Art, op. cit., p.26.

⁸⁴⁵ photograph by the author

Such artwork does have a meaning for peacebuilding, given that certainly most Sarajevans have come across this stone monument at some point. Even if they do not think about it directly, it can still be said that the ‘past’ is a very common point of reference in local discourses, which are distilled into something visible and touchable through this monument, which thus keeps the associated discourses alive.

The past space can be said to emerge in response to the future space that tends to be promoted by the EU (as well as numerous other actors, particularly within the international community), and is a very powerful one, given that it refers to people’s common experiences rather than an abstract and unknown (EU-) future. It therefore includes an everyday life dimension, which makes it easy to connect to almost everyone in the country, benefitting from a wide audience and interest. This in turn promotes its transformative capacities, in that actors working on that space use elements of the past to shape them in a way they can be used for their concrete goals in the present and for the future. Although this space is open to everyone as an audience, its active roles are mostly taken by people who have the interest, time, and willingness to creatively think about the past and its implications for the future as well as their own and other people’s identities in the latter based on the former. Yet, since most people have a specific, often ambiguous, relationship with the past, the audience of the space is rather wide, which in turn enhances its transformative capacities and its relevance in the context of peacebuilding missions. It seems that local versions of peacebuilding imply the need to engage with the past, to build on certain values, while rejecting others. By all means, contextualised peacebuilding necessitates a critical examination of the history it is situated in as well as how this may serve as a platform from which the future is developed.

Conclusion

This chapter has focused on some spaces of agency that local cultural actors produce in the peacebuilding context in BiH. I have investigated four exemplary spaces

that seem to be emerging locally, and in which actors voice their agency by determining and constantly challenging the contents and boundaries of their spaces. These spaces, namely a social relationships, a freedom, an arts and a past space, tend to be open to large groups of participants who can find both passive and active roles in there, so bottom-up dynamics are prevalent. This represents a way of creating ownership of spaces, which is not necessarily given within the EU spaces, so local actors have started to create spaces in which they can voice their needs, based on their identities, and negotiate their visions of peace. Those more localised spaces of agency are, in contrast to the EU's spaces of agency, often connected to physical spaces, such as cinemas, museums and theatres, as platforms in which discussions and debates can be held with a high degree of (artistic) freedom. At the same time, this raises questions about the reasons why the EU ignores those spaces, or, at least, does not engage with them directly, given that they seem to be gatekeepers to understanding the personal and everyday dimensions of peace and peacebuilding. Certainly, taking local spaces of agency into account would not make peacebuilding an easier task, considering that those local spaces are fragmented, contested and in constant movement. As this chapter has shown, a broad social consensus about a certain discourse cluster seems utopian, so homogeneity can only be superficial, a result of control and coercion. However, what these spaces reflect is their potential to engage and connect, to personalise and emotionalise what is technical and abstract. They can encourage discourses about the meaning of peacebuilding as well as its associated subjectivities, which is why those spaces have the potential to connect to the very substance of social transformation. Against this background, it seems that the EU is creating its own pitfalls by ignoring what is central to agency and change, although barely visible on the social and political surface.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

This experimental and exploratory thesis has investigated the complex processes of interaction between the EU and local cultural actors in Bosnia-Herzegovina by using a “spaces of agency” framework that spotlights forms of political agency that are both product(s) of and productive of cultural activities. It has done so against the background that peacebuilding in BiH seems to have failed both BiH’s citizens and partly also the EU, with the latter not living up to the high expectations set for it by various sides. The thesis has argued that one of the main obstacles facing the EU’s memberstate- building and peacebuilding strategy is their engagement with the “local” via a professionalised and “civilised” notion of civil society. The latter has been used as a gatekeeper to gain access to local dynamics, leading to a narrow, actor-centred and mono-dimensional notion of agency in the public realm. The thesis has shown that this assumption is at the root of international engagement in BiH, and more specifically of the EU, as it has developed in response to the 1990s war and changed during the post-war peacebuilding process. I have argued that the notion of civil society has gradually narrowed throughout the EU’s post-war engagement. This in turn has led to a limited engagement with society, focusing on a few selected actors, while many others have been excluded and have therefore avoided working with or even talking about the EU. Yet, taking into account that, despite the lack of direct interaction, the EU and local actors still interact in indirect ways through discourse clusters, I have suggested that their interaction can be framed through a *spaces of agency* concept, investigating imaginary spaces centering on certain discourse clusters. The *spaces of agency* concept is inspired by Lefebvre’s notion of space, with representational spaces (*espace vécu*) alluding to the symbolic and political character of spaces in terms of how they impact upon people’s everyday lives. Although *spaces of agency* can be considered imaginary and discursive spaces, the thesis has shown that, just like geographical spaces, they have certain infrastructures as well as particular audiences. I have used this concept to account for actors’ multiple and situated identities and to shed light on a variety of mutual responses when spaces interact. Such responses are diverse, ranging from accommodation and acceptance to rejection and resistance, illustrating the complex and ambiguous nature of peacebuilding interaction. I have suggested that agency is manifested through the challenging of

boundaries, audiences and contents of a space and between spaces, as well as the ability to translate meanings from one space to another. I have also argued that institutional ethnography represents a useful methodological tool to investigate the ways in which institutional discourses impact on people's everyday lives. However, institutional ethnography may be limiting as a methodology unless it is extended to investigate multiple ways of interaction, i.e. not exclusively the ways in which institutions impact on people's daily lives, but also how people re-transform institutions based on their everyday life experiences, with the 'exceptional' and the 'trivial' critiquing each other, just as Lefebvre has suggested.

Based on this methodology, the spaces of agency framework has provided the foundation of an analysis of some selected spaces in which the EU has been heavily involved, partly on its own, partly in interaction with other actors in BiH and beyond. What this investigation has shown is that, despite their fluidities and fragmented nature, processual patterns can be derived from the interaction of spaces of agency. The EU's spaces, for instance, largely tend to be public spaces open for participation, while their actual design and development is reserved for EU actors. Most of those spaces tend to be top-down in nature, and selective about the actors that are in the position to contribute to them. The EU's spaces are thus to a certain extent reflective of its own, rather introspective, accession agenda and hardly flexible to respond to demands for modification and contextualisation. This is the case, for instance for the democratisation and human rights spaces, both part of the Copenhagen Criteria and therefore not open to interpretation and challenge. This is based on an underlying assumption that the EU knows best how to cope with such issues (and notably 'better' than Bosnian actors), which in turn is illustrated in the language the Commission uses when referring to democratisation in BiH, with the key words to describe local conditions being 'problems', 'failure', 'very little progress', 'difficulties' etc.⁸⁴⁶

Local responses to those spaces are highly diverse, including dynamics such as acceptance, cooptation, compliance, ambiguity, negotiation, rejection and resistance. It appears that the travel and regional cooperation space have found positive resonance among cultural actors in BiH and therefore get translated into local spaces more easily

⁸⁴⁶ Cf. European Commission, "Commission staff working document Bosnia and Herzegovina 2010 Progress Report, accompanying the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council", op.cit.

due to their connection to the agendas of many Bosnian actors while the democratisation, human rights, civil society, future, institutions/control or state/politics space seem to remain more distant from the needs and interests of many Bosnians. The latter remain on the sidelines of local spaces, or when they are integrated, then only in a very modified version. For instance, as I have outlined above, the civil society space is only relevant to a few selected, mostly professionalised NGOs, while actors feeling excluded from it have withdrawn from it, channelling their energies into alternative spaces that are less accessible to the international community. A striking example in this context is the Duplex Gallery, with the director aiming to challenge the donor-system by not responding to conditionalities, but developing the gallery's vision beyond those, although this might threaten the basis of existence of the gallery.

Local cultural actors have produced their own spaces not only in response to the EU's spaces but also as part of a concrete engagement in the creation of spaces of agency related to peacebuilding. Examples given were the arts, freedom, past and social relationships spaces. They are complex, contested and constantly subject to challenge, but generally reflect a close connection to the everyday contexts in which they are situated. In that respect, they carry important meanings for the ways in which peace is imagined locally, and how this would relate to international/the EU's engagement in the country. Yet since those spaces are not professionalised according to the needs of the EU and therefore do not represent convenient policy inputs – they may not have a clearly articulated policy agenda nor do they respond to the EU's formal demands to project organisation– they tend to get sidelined, having to survive beyond the public sphere of international peacebuilding. Actors engaged in the arts space, for instance, are only rarely included in peacebuilding debates, as numerous civil society meetings hosted by the EU reflect. At the same time, even those excluded actors impact back on the work of the EU, often challenging it openly. This is, amongst others, the case with the event organised by the theatre festival MESS that challenges the Schengen regime through a public demonstration around imaginary walls. This is based on the perception that the Schengen regime puts Bosnians at a disadvantage in the region with respect to travelling. Several individuals working in the EU Delegation have stated that they were aware of such manifestations of resistance – possibly one of the reasons for which progress with the Visa Liberalisation Agreements was rather quick.

Such processes during the course of which local agencies impact upon institutions may take place in public, as the MESS event shows, but more often they take place in a disguised manner, so translation processes between spaces of agency often remain overlooked, while it is taken for granted that peacebuilding and its associated institutions should be created by the EU, with the population needing to adapt to them. However, there seems to be much more subtle influence on the ways in which bottom-up processes impact upon the meanings that are created within spaces of agency, infrastructures of inclusion and exclusion, as well as the articulation of needs and interests. What is political is therefore not only what seems political in the public sphere, but also what is happening in alternative spheres or at the intersection between public and private spaces, initiated by actors that do not necessarily represent themselves as political actors. An interviewee from the cultural centre in Travnik, for instance, emphasised that the centre was neither involved in political work, nor following a nationalist ideology, although being quite involved in the social life of the community, and therefore in political processes.⁸⁴⁷ The centre has in fact linked its arts projects to issues concerning the local community in terms of using arts for therapeutic purposes to socialise marginalised children back into society.⁸⁴⁸ This shows that, in response to what seems to be a highly illegitimate political sphere as far as elite politics are concerned, cultural actors have assumed political functions as a result of being situated in an everyday life context as well as their specific understanding of it. This may, in many cases, be an uncomfortable situation for the EU, being used to engaging with professionalised civil society actors according to its own understanding and struggling to find mechanisms with which less professionalised actors can be included in peacebuilding and member-state building. As a result, this approach creates cleavages between the EU and local society, undermining interactive peacebuilding and neglecting important voices in the public sphere. The latter then partly move to disguised and hidden arenas, where they feel they are heard and can make a difference. Processes of interaction between different spaces of agency can help us cast light on how those hidden arenas impact upon the visible and public arena, and vice versa. Again, this ties in with Lefebvre's *critique of everyday life*, in which he notes that public life has penetrated private life, at the same time calling for letting the private access the

⁸⁴⁷ Vildana Kalčo, Centar za Kulturu Travnik, *Personal Interview*, Travnik, 02/03/11.

⁸⁴⁸ Ibid.

public.⁸⁴⁹ The MESS event outlined above is therefore illustrative of the interplay between public and private spaces, in that it took place in public (on the streets) and took up a political issue, connecting it to feelings of humiliation as experienced by the people on a private (personal) level. This reflects the capacity of cultural actors to translate meanings of spaces of agency both to the local and to the EU context, benefiting from their position in society from which they can take critical stances towards social and political developments. They can therefore be considered key actors in the creation of peacebuilding legitimacy. Living and working in an everyday context of the post-war situation in BiH, they speak the language of the people and are able to distil fragmented statements into bigger discourses that relate, implicitly or explicitly, to peacebuilding. In this respect, they shape spaces of agency considerably, in that they impact upon the meanings created therein and thus subtly change the ways in which people relate to those spaces of agency. My fieldwork has repeatedly shown that the language cultural actors speak differs considerably from the ways in which the EU relates to cultural activities, framing it in an abstract and technical language that is distant from people's everyday lives. In a similar vein, the analysis of selected spaces of agency has outlined the extent to which meanings are different between some EU and local spaces, while others are more compatible and translatable.

The ambitions of cultural actors as outlined in this thesis can thus help understand the (de)legitimation of peacebuilding policies, which represents complex and nuanced processes that are in continuous flux and open to challenge. It shows that a connection between spaces of agency, and, most importantly, the translation of meanings between them, contributes to a higher degree of peacebuilding legitimacy. Since local cultural actors seem to be quite active in the subtle translation of meanings between spaces, they can be considered central 'knots' between spaces, which in turn reflects the need to look at peacebuilding legitimacy from a perspective transcending what has traditionally been conceptualised the formal political sphere, i.e. the political institutions and the elites working in those. Instead, what this example shows is that a variety of actors, some of which may not even be visible in the public sphere, can help create structures of legitimation by translating meanings between spaces, while they can also undermine the legitimacy of peacebuilding processes when meanings are not

⁸⁴⁹ Henri Lefebvre, *Critique of everyday life*, vol.2, op. cit., pp.4, 70.

transported between spaces and thus remain locally irrelevant. In that sense, the EU's human rights space may not have an important meaning for many Bosnians as such, but with the help of actors such as Pravo Ljudski, the human rights film festival, or the exhibition centre in Konjic, a venue that is close to many people's memories, the human rights space becomes more relevant and locally meaningful. Even if it may be limited in terms of audience, a certain degree of legitimacy may thus be created.

So if we focus on those peacebuilding processes of interaction, what can we derive from them? Why and how do they matter for the ways in which we look at peacebuilding? How do they tie in with or challenge the existing literature?

In brief, there are four sets of insights and associated questions that open up from this analysis:

- A reconsideration of the meaning of agency in the peacebuilding context
- The de-immunisation and de-authorisation of peacebuilding spaces that have been considered a panacea for the reconstruction of war-torn societies, particularly from the liberal peace perspective
- A conceptualisation of hybridity and hybridisation through the interaction of discourse clusters within spaces of agency
- The (political) role of cultural actors in peacebuilding operations

First, it can be argued that peacebuilding interaction via the spaces of agency concept allows for a nuanced view on the ways in which policies and their implementation are constituted in a dynamic manner. Moving beyond merely direct interaction processes, the concept is able to include a variety of actors, whether they be active and visible in the public sphere, or whether they be working underground beyond what is traditionally characterised as the "political", or between those extremes. Agency is thus no longer equated with visibility and direct control, but it reflects the ability to impact on meanings and audiences within certain spaces, and across spheres (e.g. hidden vs. public spheres). This may happen from the standpoint of a wide range of actors, who might not even be aware of their influence and power when translating meanings – or refusing to do so – to a wider social audience. As the thesis has outlined,

the ability to translate meanings between spaces, and to possibly modify them, can be crucial in the creation of legitimacy for certain policies. The regional cooperation space, for instance, has found rather positive resonance among society, not least due to the fact that cultural actors have taken it up and partly translated it to a wider audience. This is somewhat similar to the travel space, which has started to merge with a local travel space and has therefore been greeted with greater legitimacy, representing one of the spaces that have enhanced the EU's legitimacy in BiH. Other spaces, like the democratisation space, have struggled to connect to local discourses and have only marginally been taken up by local actors, undermining the legitimacy of the EU's engagement in Bosnia-Herzegovina. People indeed question the right of the EU to 'teach them democratic behaviour.'⁸⁵⁰

At this stage, I assume that some readers will look for a clearer categorisation of those spaces - they may ask about boundaries as well as a clearer typology of interaction between spaces. They may also wonder about the extent to which this thesis can help us understand peacebuilding, given that it focuses on cultural actors, i.e. a comparatively small section of the population. However, it has to be said my aim was not to provide a clear, representative and fixed landscape of spaces, given that this is about fluid, dynamic, subjective and fragmented processes. Since spaces of agency, as I conceptualise them, are highly transversal, translocal as well as in a constant process of adaptation and resistance, it seems impossible to ever cement them to a specific content. Against this background, what this thesis has tried to outline is the complexity of (often indirect) interaction, which is never just black or white, usually never just resistance or acceptance, but much more nuanced and often ambiguous. At the same time, this reflects the extent to which peacebuilding is fragmented, composed of a variety of spaces of agency, some of which have managed to connect better to Bosnian society, while others have faced more resistance. In that sense, peacebuilding can be broken down into a number of spaces of agency, with the EU seemingly relying on traditionally liberal spaces, yet adding some spaces as they connect to its own identity (the regional cooperation space and the travel space being examples of this). At the same time, cultural actors are only a small sector of many other actors (religious, economic, etc.) interacting with the EU's spaces and creating their own. Yet they represent more than

⁸⁵⁰ This is a statement I heard a lot during my fieldwork in BiH.

just a *tool* to understand the *processes* of interaction between spaces – although this is one aspect of their role – but they are also interesting content-wise, implicitly representing political as well as powerful manifestations of agency due to their ability to translate meanings in creative ways.

Second, what this thesis has outlined is the extent to which peacebuilding institutions, the EU in this case, and their spaces of agency are not immune to challenge nor do they hold the ultimate authority over what happens to their policies when they are contextualised. This investigation shows how the EU's spaces, or seemingly universal liberal spaces, are no longer exclusively controlled by their traditional agents, such as international organisations, or international NGOs. There is rather a tendency of those spaces to break down in some cases, or to become localised gradually. The regional cooperation space, for instance, has been expanded in local discourses to include cooperation not only on the political and economic, but also on the cultural and personal level. This is a modification the EU has started to account for, for instance through its People-2-People Programme, including a slightly broader range of actors than professionalised civil society actors, such as actors engaged in cultural arenas.

In the interplay between agency and structure, the latter can be viewed subject to challenge and transgression. Again, pointing to the agency of supposedly powerless actors, the breakdown or modification of entire discourse clusters (the EU's peacebuilding framework representing one example) shows how local ownership over liberal spaces has developed, yet often resisting their universalising and standardising nature, but adapting and contextualising them according to the needs identified by local actors. Such changes have already become visible, with the EU being governed by local actors rather than exclusively vice versa. One example in which a change in discourses has eventually developed into a change of policies is the European Union Police Mission aiming at police reform to centralise the political structures of the country through a multi-ethnic police force. This has been linked to a number of centralising measures, but has at the same time often been considered a failure despite – or because of – the heavy conditionality attached to police reform.⁸⁵¹ Due to much resistance from a diversity of actors within BiH (often referring to the need for ethnic groups to feel

⁸⁵¹ Tobias Flessenkemper, EUPM, *Personal Interview*, Sarajevo, 11/03/09.

protected⁸⁵², while a police force on its own possibly represents a symbol of protection) there are now voices within the EUPM calling for the removal of conditionality politics generally and pointing to the inability of the EU to tackle problems related to nationalism.⁸⁵³ The EU has therefore gradually shifted its approach towards a lighter version of reform as a response to the subtle influence of local actors. Another example of where local actors' responses have impacted on the EU's approaches concretely is a growing awareness within the EU that its bureaucracy is not suitable to interact with the people and that it does not have an approach "to win hearts and minds."⁸⁵⁴ In that sense, individual EU officials have emphasised the need to engage with a broader notion of civil society, for instance building on the "soft power" and motivational capacities of local professors of religion.⁸⁵⁵ This can be considered a response to the local resistance to the EU's technical and often de-emotionalising approach to peacebuilding. At the same time, other EU officials have now started to rethink their practices of intervention. Due to the failure to implement police reform fully as a result of local resistance, an EUPM official noted that there is a growing tendency to think about "leaving the people alone."⁸⁵⁶ Such changes in response to local agency are only partly visible and often inscrutable, but they reflect the extent to which institutions themselves are not immune from external influence. Similarly, individuals throughout EU institutions in Sarajevo start emphasising the need to engage with local people beyond formal mechanisms that are tailored for the elites, to get involved in diverse cultural activities to create a two-way dialogue.⁸⁵⁷ In that sense, the EU's notion of peace and peacebuilding is constantly being challenged and redefined by local actors, who have been developing strategies and mechanisms to make it their own.

Third, the spaces of agency concept allows for a new take on the notion of "hybrid peace". Hybridity is, against this background, no longer just a result of actor-interaction, but part of the very processes that take place in the everyday context of peacebuilding. It is therefore not merely an actor-centred concept, but becomes visible

⁸⁵² Lejla Somun-Krupalija, *Personal Interview*, op.cit.

⁸⁵³ Tobias Flessenkemper, EUPM, *Conference on 'Delivering Just and Durable Peace?'*, Sarajevo, 03/09/09.

⁸⁵⁴ Confidential source, EU official, *Personal Interview*, Sarajevo, 29/04/10.

⁸⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁵⁶ Tobias Flessenkemper, EUPM, *Personal Interview*, Sarajevo, 20/04/10.

⁸⁵⁷ Different confidential sources from different EU institutions in BiH, Sarajevo, March and April 2010.

within spaces of agency, which are shaped by local and international dynamics to a higher or lesser extent, while agency is situated in relational terms. This means that hybridity in one space may play out very differently from the ways in which it works in another space, producing contextualised processes according to certain discourse clusters. As the previous chapters have shown, on the one hand the EU and local cultural actors seem to complement each other with respect to regional cooperation, with the former facilitating its political and economic dimensions, while the latter engage in cultural cooperation. On the other hand, hybridity plays out differently in the future space, which, for the EU means ‘progress’ in terms of approaching eventual EU accession, while for many local actors, the future is only relevant in interaction with the past. Those discourses interact through spaces of agency, partially accepting and partially resisting each other. In the light of the spaces of agency concept, hybridity then represents a way of interaction, the quality of which is specific to a certain discourse cluster rather than to a general peacebuilding operation.

Fourth, some readers may wonder about the extent to which cultural actors, as they are the main focus of this thesis, matter in the peacebuilding context at all. Their audiences cannot be claimed to be representative of society as a whole, nor can cultural dynamics help us understand *everything*. They certainly speak to some topics more than to others, including certain sectors of society more than others. I am certainly not claiming that cultural actors are superior to other forms of organisation in BiH, but, with respect to peacebuilding agency, they represent a case study with which the power of actors that are not traditionally considered peacebuilding actors can be investigated. They show how the supposedly non-political (the cultural) can become political and develop subtle, but meaningful agency in the peacebuilding context. Cultural actors are often considered alternative arty types, who do not understand the political implications of their work and allegedly lack the capacity to respond to donor requirements. As a result, actors like the group of artists ‘Ambrosia’ have decided to withdraw from the donor-recipient system, funding their activities privately to avoid having to sacrifice their visions to bureaucratic application requirements. At the same time, although withdrawing from the donor-recipient funding system, those actors are nevertheless influential and indeed often political, through the creation and perpetuation of specific

meanings in a political context. As the exemplary spaces outlined above have shown, cultural actors did manage to fill abstract spaces with contextualised meanings, challenging institutionalised structures and contents of spaces when they fail to connect to the very context in which they are deployed. At the same time, cultural actors can also help connect the EU's spaces with local spaces, by building bridges between them and translating their associated meanings mutually. The regional cooperation space is reflective of this, with the institutional dimension being complemented with a cultural and personal one by diverse artist groups. In a similar vein, the EU's focus on the future has been enriched by a local past space, which has been linking the country's future to its past. In that sense, many actors tend to link social identities as they are envisaged for the future of BiH (such as a European identity) to corresponding experiences in the past, for instance by referring to Bosnians' identities as Europeans not only in the future, but also in the past and the present.⁸⁵⁸ Therefore the fact that cultural actors have long been considered as marginal within the peacebuilding literature (or as instruments to legitimise peacebuilding and conflict transformation at best)⁸⁵⁹ demands justice for those actors, who are much more complex than how they have long been portrayed. The negligence of cultural activities has downplayed cultural actors' ability to mobilise social energies, which form a necessary input into a localised, or hybrid, version of peacebuilding. The OKC Abrašević is a good example of this, reaching deeply into the local community in terms of cooperating with schools, fan clubs, NGOs, cultural groups and so forth.⁸⁶⁰ In addition, the cultural centre is about to build an e-community as well as producing a TV show that reaches a large audience, given that it is integrated with the most watched TV station in Herzegovina.⁸⁶¹ Finally, the OKC Abrašević can be said to be the only place in Mostar that is open to everyone, which makes it highly attractive to all sorts of people.⁸⁶² The centre reflects the power to translate from the cultural to the political and vice versa. In fact, one of the coordinators clearly explained voting patterns of the people who socialise in the centre, as well as how this was linked to their

⁸⁵⁸ Confidential source, *Student Presentation*, Sarajevo, 17/03/10.

⁸⁵⁹ Cf. David Chandler, "Race, Culture and Civil Society: Peacebuilding Discourse and the Understanding of Difference", *Security Dialogue*, vol.41, no.4, 2010, pp.369-390.

⁸⁶⁰ Kristina Čorić, *Student Presentation*, op. cit.

⁸⁶¹ Ibid.

⁸⁶² Ibid.

hopes and fears with respect to the future of BiH.⁸⁶³ In that sense, the centre serves as a venue for political discussions as well as debates about the quality of peace, people's expectations and possible contributions to it. The meanings created during the course of such discussions are then translated beyond that space, into the wider community and its political life. This in turn reflects the power of cultural actors, who appear particularly skilled at such processes of creative translation. This seems equally true for the Bosnian National Theatre Zenica, which is very well known among the local community and is one of its centres of gravity.⁸⁶⁴ Its director suggested that “without the theatre, nothing would go on in Zenica”, pointing to the ability of culture to free creative energies.⁸⁶⁵ This is neither to suggest that, in general terms, more traditional civil society actors or NGOs are unable to provide such services, nor to demonise technical approaches to peacebuilding *per se*. Indeed, there are numerous positive examples where professionalised NGOs have triggered positive developments, the educational work of the Nansen Dialogue Center in schools in Mostar being one prominent example. However, my argument points to the often-neglected ability of cultural actors to challenge what the international peacebuilding discourses have long taken for granted as well as the agency located in seemingly marginal arenas of social life.

The analysis conducted in this thesis inevitably raises questions related to the nature of the EU's engagement in BiH as well as the conclusions this analysis may suggest for the success of the former. Indeed, although the thesis is not striving to be prescriptive, it may suggest certain policy implications to the EU.

First and foremost, what this thesis suggests is that the EU has not been equally successful in all of its areas of engagement. This means that the EU can learn from its own successes and failures in the first place. As it has been pointed out above, it seems that the regional cooperation and the travel space can be counted as the more successful ones in the EU's engagement in BiH, so those spaces can help us understand the conditions of success – at least from a local perspective (or rather: local perspectives). Generally speaking, what those two spaces have in common is the fact that they respond to what can be considered needs and interests of many people. Indeed, particularly in

⁸⁶³ Kristina Čorić, OKC Abrašević, *Email conversation*, 26/04/11.

⁸⁶⁴ Hazim Begagić, Bosnian National Theatre Zenica, *Personal Interview*, Zenica, 09/03/11.

⁸⁶⁵ *Ibid.* Translation by author.

the spaces occupied by cultural actors, travelling seems to be a pressing need. This is certainly linked to the fact that cultural actors have an interest in establishing links with colleagues and institutions beyond BiH. To a certain extent, this may be due to the fact that cultural activities are often not framed with respect to a national context, but transcend the boundaries of states in their ambitions. On the other hand, the need to travel can also be seen as linked to the situation in the former Yugoslavia where the possibility of travelling, not just within Yugoslavia, but also abroad, was one of the main perceived benefits for the people. Against this background, the Visa Liberalisation Agreements have encountered positive resonance as they come close to what people have long been proud of. It has to be said that this is not limited to cultural actors – who may be particularly dependent on travel opportunities – but the related discourse has also been penetrating wider sections of the population. Similarly, regional cooperation ties in with people's experiences in the former Yugoslavia, which served as a major frame of reference of identity. Therefore, promoting regional cooperation tends to be seen as beneficial on part of *both* the EU and local cultural actors as it responds to their respective subjective visions of peacebuilding. The fact that the EU and local actors consider those spaces as relevant then points to the necessity of engagement in areas that matter locally as well, rather than exclusively focusing on the priorities set in Brussels. The travel and regional cooperation space seem to be spaces in which this mutual interest has been particularly evident.

Second, what these examples show is that the EU seems to be most successful when its peacebuilding efforts complement those of Bosnian citizens in that they provide a structural frame (a network of regional cooperation: the legal framework with respect to travelling) in which local dynamics can unfold. The EU seems particularly strong with respect to the structural dimensions of peacebuilding in the cases where it provides frames that can be filled with more concrete meanings locally. If the EU uses its power to provide a structural context of action that is perceived as relevant locally, it seems that diverse actors do engage in the creation of meanings within that frame. They therefore engage in discourses, translate meanings between actors and thus make sense of the otherwise abstract structure. Against this background, it seems that the EU may want to build more on the synergies that thus emerge.

Third, in order to understand local dynamics in a more sensitive way, the EU needs to unpack its concepts in terms of their underlying meanings. In cases where the EU has attempted to engage on a political level, it has often taken the meanings of its own concepts, such as human rights or civil society, for granted. However, to be able to benefit from the synergies that may develop between local and international actors, it is important to engage in a discourse about the diverse meanings of certain concepts. As a result, peacebuilding must be unpacked in the light of its meanings and be open to a number of underlying assumptions and expectations. This is not to say that the EU should necessarily and completely give up on its own concepts, but to argue that an engagement with the competing versions and visions of peacebuilding as well as its constitutive elements will help create common spaces of agency in which meanings can be discussed. This in turn will not only be beneficial for local actors to channel their views into the policy-making process, but it will equally help the EU translate its concepts into local contexts to make them meaningful and relevant. The challenge here will be to find adequate strategies and venues for those discourses, as well as the interlocutors that can be particularly skilled at translating meanings back and forth. The role of cultural actors highlighted in this thesis sheds light on just one group of actors that may be in the position to engage in such a role.

It needs to be said that the framework developed in this thesis is applicable not only to this specific case study, but also to interaction processes more generally. Indeed, the ways in which actors form their identities, needs and representations can be conceptualised around spaces of agency, with specific identities developing in the context of a certain discursive space, while this may differ from how the actor defines itself in a different space. This in turn allows for taking account of the complexities of identity-formation within a structural environment, which shapes the boundaries of action on the one hand, but is always open to challenge on the other hand. Having said that, future research may want to try to apply this framework to a different case study, or to a different set of actors within the same case study, in order to identify comparable dynamics in peacebuilding settings. This may help us to understand why some spaces of agency can be translated more easily from the international to the local context or vice versa, and why others remain rather isolated and fail to connect to other spaces. This may also help identify concrete mechanisms of translation, their impacts on the

legitimacy of peacebuilding as well as their (in)ability to connect to local imaginations of peace. Future research may also want to investigate the correlations between the design of a space and its ability to connect to others in relation to the question of legitimacy. As it seems to emerge from this thesis, this is dependent on a number of factors, such as the quality of the discourse cluster, its flexibility, the users and infrastructures of space, its representational practices, its openness to translation, as well as its audiences. The assumption here is that such processes are highly fluid and context-dependent, requiring peacebuilding actors to engage with society beyond the visible in the public realm and to respond to the associated needs. This opens up more questions relating to the landscape of spaces more generally:

- How do external peacebuilding spaces impact upon the local landscape of spaces of agency in terms of their mutual relationship?
- How may this create new cleavages and bridges, and how does it contribute to the modification of societal constellations between local spaces?
- How can legitimacy emerge in the interaction of spaces?
- Which forms of interaction would one find in peacebuilding contexts, in which peacebuilding actors, such as the EU, are considered more or less legitimate, where there is less ignorance of and resistance to them, but rather constructive engagement between different actors?

In relation to those questions, this thesis has provided a case study with which I have analysed the potential of cultural agency to offer a critique of the EUPF. This critique can be considered constructive rather than destructive in that it outlines knots and bridges between the public and the private as well as between the institutional and the everyday. It reflects the extent to which cultural agencies are powerful, in influencing both institutional policies and their subjects through complex translation mechanisms between spaces of agency. The critique of the EUPF offered by cultural actors in BiH points to the limitations of the EU's approach to peacebuilding due to its distance from the everyday context of the Bosnian people on the one hand. On the other hand, the critique revitalises the promise of EU peacebuilding in that it shows how the latter can be made relevant among the people, yet may at the same time also remain distant if the

necessary translation mechanisms are lacking. The thesis has therefore broken down the often-assumed clear boundaries between the institutional and the everyday, pointing to their interlinkages and interaction through spaces of agency. I therefore conclude that EU peacebuilding cannot be viewed as isolated from local actors and structures, but it depends on those if it is to move out of its current deadlock.

Appendices

Appendix A: Oručević, Husein, “Defense of public space – defense of our future”

Video-lecture at the OKC Abrašević’s Festival of Arts in Divided Cities, Mostar, 15/04/10.

Defense of public space - defense of our future

Living in a divided city, in a city torn into two nationalities, each of which aspires to take the other piece of land, the other half, the rest of the city, unfortunately also implying a complete parallelization in the city as a whole.

Public spaces owned by the city are hostages of nationalist politics. They do not develop civil virtues or dialogues; rather, they are seeds of further divisions and antagonism. They develop politics of segregation and discrimination on all fields of organization in the local community. Even the school system, from preschool education to the university system of study, is impacted by this hatred and division.

Some of the public spaces, buildings, are to us an image of the activities of nationalist politics, by which buildings in the city are named. They add a nationalist prefix, Bosniak or Croat. If the name does not carry a nationalist mark (Croat or Bosniak), then they gladly give the schools names of significant individuals from the sphere of (one) religion, by this limiting their own story, making it mono-ethnic and discriminatory. The names of streets are changed as well; today for anyone who is well acquainted with historical incidents in the Balkans, it will be clear in which part of the city of Mostar one finds oneself simply by the name which the street bears.

The whole bloody history of Mostar and the Balkans, the names of fighters and warriors, ideologues and heroes (ordinarily only of one nationality, while for the other side these individuals are called war criminals or murderers) are present in the street titles of today's Mostar. Violence is felt in every step in the city.

Alongside the nationalist "rampage" in the titles of administrative, cultural and other city institutions which negate the public good, there has also appeared this "McWorld" which seeks new "uncultivated dollar fields", unconquered spaces which "cry out" for a consumerist world prepared and ready for the unethical (read: inhumane) media campaign which follows it. "McWorld" enters Mostar and BH and, with the uncreative and antagonistic politics of nationalist parties, establishes the "rat race".

Will the balloon burst-- and when?

From yesterday, Croats, Muslims, Serbs, divided, belligerent and wounded, have begun to be transformed into buyers and sellers. Shopping and supermarkets have been exchanged for citizens initiatives and public spaces, Agoras, places of meeting and dialogue.

Buildings of public significance are being prepared for privatization, or they are already sold, but the citizens do not even know. The ruined buildings possessed by the city are

not renovated because authorities on all levels of political engagement know neither what to do with them nor in which way to manage them. They sell valuable historical buildings for a trifle, and lacking any sense of the civil and urban, on the occasions when they do not auction them off, they allow the facades of splendid, very old buildings to be hidden by the messages of "McWorld", enormous posters which become a purpose of itself and "big profits", ignoring the violence which this procedure executes on the stranger coming into the City, walking the streets of the City, the passerby who must carry away the trace of the City, this procedure which in the end destroys, negates the citizens of Mostar.

Not to mention the violence towards the individuals inside these buildings, who work and are even educated in these darkened spaces shadowed by the "Great-New Emperor", quaking in his boots. McWorld is here. The people have no strength to oppose the global emperor in his hunt for global ideas of profit. Profits and benefits are only for the chosen.

The cosmopolitan idea of the city in Mostar lost its battle with aggressive nationalist politics. They have ravaged the city and its characteristics. They have destroyed the places of memory and identity, trying to establish new, "even older" and more distinctive identities, which no one living remembers, neither the Mostarians dispersed around the world nor the ones divided in the City. Mostar is no longer a city in which any citizen, or member of any national, religious or subcultural group, feels at home.

Thus did Abrašević – autonomous zone, "Home on the borderline", move into action to save the remaining city memories, remembrances of the urban. Everyone remembers the building of Abrašević. Here Mostarians learned and played, fell in love, but also lifted a voice for different solutions and for cosmopolitan ideas, which alone can save the city and citizenship. We were forced to enter the judicial process with municipal authorities in order to keep at least one space of memory and public activity. We won the case, and we will continue in the spirit of searching for alternatives in today's Mostar, which I described in this short introduction, to a discussion about the way in which defense of public spaces can defend our future, the future of the City.

**On the gate of the City, walking in the City, flying above the City;
About borders, agoras, bridges, and a few other more-or-less important stories.**

In the book *Post polis, Introduction to philosophy of the postmodern city*, Ewa Rewers separates our view of the city spectacle into three perspectives.

The first she called the perspective of the pilgrim, who stands at the city gates, at its threshold. "To know the city from its threshold means to ask the question: What is the city? What does it mean to live in the city? How does he suit his name?"

A small Istrian town by the name of Kastav has its own Municipal Loggia, or as some would say, Agora. The Municipal Loggia is located outside of the old city walls, immediately before the city gates. It dates back to 1571 and is uniquely constructed. It was built as a place for holding assemblies and city festivals as well as for resolving various legal matters and disputes. Right on the threshold, at the gates of the city, is this

Municipal Loggia. Those who wished to enter it, for reasons of security, or even for trading, visiting or lodging, were required to come each day to the Municipal Loggia of Kastav and to ponder, to converse about the city. This form created an “urban voluntary quarantine” – the space of agreement; in the loggia which actually arose as a space of conversation, the two worlds are touching, meeting one another, inhabiting, imbuing one another. The two worlds in no man’s land (in the land of agreement – of conversation) or on the land imagined – organized that it become at once entrance and exit, a space which leads us in both directions, outside-inside-outside. Back in the disorganized space without remembrance, wandering and unpredictable, or even in the space of memory, as some have named it, closer to the space of eternity – of the city.

Kastav had its own “bridge” across which one must pass, the “bridge” of initiatives, its own Loggia. To be satisfied with conversation and the desire for vitality in the city, which means to spend some time in the Loggia, enables the “other” to shorten the border, the threshold of the City. The borderline of Kastav – Loggia, made famous by Simmel’s idea about the non-existence of borderlines, or the existence even of borderlines which in themselves carry at once two strategies – rapprochement and separation.

Kastav as a city did not receive its name according to its democratic Loggia.

The other city which I will mention began from a bridge, arose on a bridge. Many asked, which was first, the bridge or the City?

Before the bridge was built, many points by the river had already sprung up, busy. But only one of these points would later become a City, the point from which the bridge arose.

According to Hiedegger, the Bridge was first anyway, but my city in fact materializes from its contemplation. Mostar as a city arose on the bridge, known as the Old Bridge. The bridge opened a perspective on crossing to the other side, freedom of movement, the human desire to sweep away obstacles to one’s steps. The bridge is here a bond, but also a borderline. The bridge is the ideal solution for man’s freedom of movement, going further without stopping, the bridge bridges that which was yesterday un-bridged. The bridge is situated in the ideal. The bridge is on the borderline between two points which are connected, and the city springs up. The bridge is a tool, the conversation of hands and technology, and not the abovementioned “urban Kastavian quarantine”. The bridge is a miracle which time fades, and it ceases to be ideal. It fades, and borderlines will take its place. This will occur through strategies of separation, despite the idealized desire of man, in the beginning, for rapprochement – unlimited movement towards...

The transformation of the bridge into a borderline has its own destructive, conflicted side, the side of separation. The bridge is a mixture of the idealistic and the destructive, the final human domain. And Mostar, which is a city-bridge, because it arose from a bridge, had the characteristics of a city of finalities. In it are interwoven rapprochement and separation, conflict and contact, vitality, life energy, the world. Progress and destruction, disappearance. The goal is of course to rationalize the emergence of such characteristics, but I believe also that by them it is possible to restrain these forces. Mostar made breakthroughs by bridges, yet by destruction returned to the river-bottom,

to the hell of division and separation. Today the bridges of Mostar have been renovated, but the city is divided. It could be said that the whole world has gotten bogged down in one small Mostarian valley.

Borderlines and bridges, in all happiness are not all that is left, and which make up a City, because that would be a bleak picture of a succession of conflicts and contacts, their continuous warring, and it would be the end of my humble reflections.

We enter the city, we walk about the city, we move away from the threshold, from borderline and bridge. We have passed both the Loggia and the bridge, let us walk about the city.

However, we will not lack instructions: Do not forget that we are still strangers, the others who enter the City, those who should acquaint themselves with and understand this City. Leaving the bridge and the Loggia behind us does not mean that we will not meet them in the very center of the City, nor does it mean that we will not need them in solving and understanding the rhythms, dynamics and development of the urban tissue.

Returning to Ewa Rewers and her view of the city spectacle, we come to the strategy of the pedestrian, the walker.

“The pedestrians of the city streets ‘write’ with their own bodies according to individual principles.”

Arrival in a new city, meeting the city. Where to start? Where to go? To master this space, the map of memory and organizational movement, the freedom of movement, no longer as a stranger but rather as... a walker in the streets of the City.

Where does this stranger, this “other,” feel safe? What is he looking for when he meets with the new organism in which he must spend some time, or indeed stay forever? Does he perhaps have friends, do they have time for him?

Personal connections of course exist, but human nature is seeking, curious; it is the desire of each of us to understand and organize the space of movement just as it suits us. Actually, in this organization of space “just as it suits us”, appears an important, the most important, segment – the attribute of the city: Public space, the place where the city encounters itself, where its lines of personal organization meet, the groups which the city has nursed by its own history and touched with its remembrances, where the contemporary moment confronts that which is called the city.

There in the public space, in meetings with “strangers – others” as they are called by the inhabitants of the City, it will not be difficult for the stranger, “the other”, for the one who comes from another land or another city, different groups enter into the space of the Agora, dialogue, cultural and sociological mixture, and will find themselves as one who is in the right place, among “one’s own.” We never feel alone when we are in these sorts of spaces – Public spaces of art and social meeting. We are gathered together by its strength of contact and dialogue through the various forms of communal codes which such places offer us.

My “City” today is my individual web of attributes of the city, cosmopolitan spaces of “autonomous zones – islands” of the lonely, in the boundless sea of incommunicable spaces sufficient in themselves and in their small, closed groups. The created web has enabled me, or at least has not prevented me from, contact with the other and with others.

Today as I live in another city, to myself yet unknown, in Poland, I discover the web of “my city”, I seek the attributes of a city known from before. Actually I am seeking the places of contact, of ideas, of art, groups which the city formed through its own unique history. Actually, in these places one best becomes acquainted with the universal value of the city as well as its specificity/diversity.

The abandonment of the city space (in and of itself an “autonomous zone – island”) pleads for us animate it. These zones, abandoned, ruined, are not simply zones which must be renovated, which need street lights, or renewal of spontaneous-economic activity: parking, malls or even streets and giants of traffic infrastructure. They need to dedicate time to understanding the situation they are in – neglect and detours. Here lies the answer to the city, to its future and the need for openness to the other which at one time, much as we do even today, strolled and filled a part of the urban map of memory and significance.

There are a great number of tyrants-hardliners in the city which we are visiting, despite the kilometers of long travel (which in the city is not very visible, because it is implied that the city as an urban whole has no problem with fast and effective movement from one of its parts to another) and anyway I rarely wonder why the road has so many detours. Why have we left some people out? Why do we ignore some? Are these mines which we ourselves have placed? Some places have been left to gape open, that they warn us of the wounds (this same real walker will encounter them), the misunderstanding of a group or groups which once dwelled in these now ruined spaces, on the whole left on purpose to become communicational currents of this “well organized urban transportation”, sidestepped. Today's communicational detour represents neglect, the lack of connectivity in the web of the urban - disregard. We visit the "settlements of memory" to keep them before our eyes, and above all, that we might not ask questions. Because questions require answers. For many today, neither questions nor answers are important, because ordinarily only the law "There is no alternative" is valid to them, and they have no time for reflection. "Time flies, we have no time for such things," "Time is money," "Who cares about that, today in the 21st century?"

Actually including those spaces which are brushed aside, forbidden, those about which one keeps silent, which are regularly ignored, are the main wounds (the centers of possible change) of the divided environment, of the cities. The observant walker, but also the one who is less observant (but still a walker), will encounter those sorts of "holes" in the city, spaces which were left neglected, and will wonder, "What happened here?, Why is it ruined and not repaired?, Why is it neglected?"

On contemplating various cities and settlements, parts of the city, I have learned that each of them has some "wound", a space which begs to be known, that its story be

returned to it, that it become possible again to remember it. Without this work on the story, the memory, we lose something which will someday again come in another form, and become again problematic, perhaps even a new tear in the city. The borderlines which are visible, those abandoned spaces, which are pushed aside from the eyes of most of the citizens, are autonomous zones of memory, but also zones of forgetfulness - "the problem which doesn't exist" (I do not see, therefore it does not exist.) All that we want to ignore, which we do not want to see, carries with it the times and the development of the city, so if you also want civilization...

"...because if the city is imagined as a bank of memories which, as a rule, by far overcomes the memory of only one people, race, language - then what can all that mean, what it all brings is the scattering of that precious deposit of "anthropological memory"? Does it not bear away one good, perhaps even one better part of the human being in general?" - as Bogdanović would ask.

Are they not those drives to destroy, which see only forgetfulness, and later, also wars, as the solution? For city-haters, as for those who hate cosmopolitan living, remembrance, conflict is only of one type - war, yet contact - one truth. The everyday creation of fear, even fear of war, freezes all attempts at contact - (greater) truth.

Borderlines are spaces of conflict but also points of contact. They are brushed aside into the darkness, into the windowless ruins which only the light of day each day spontaneously discovers. They remain unnoticed and unrecognized, they have no story or it is passed over in silence. They leave a part of their contents - "there where the wind lives", until the moment when someone does not notice and does not begin to describe and work on them - initiating an archaeological remembrance of the space.

It is not easy from the lights, the flashing-blinding neon lights, to step into the dark spaces of the unknown. They are set apart by the light - blinded, darkened. Gathered around what dazzles, we will never know the other side, the "dark" side, which can teach us once again to recognize the light, to be in the light; not dazzled, not blinded.

As though to be born again.

To gather in the light those who once made up a part of the light of the city, which has surrounded us this whole time, though we did not see it.

Removal from the eyes of the walker, forgetfulness, once created a ghetto in the time of the Second World War. Those spaces, closed for the walker, controlled, kept from exchange, removed, and then after some time also forgotten - emptied. And by this, excluded from the currents of the city. Lost forever? Brushed aside, as though they had never been.

We have the same case today in the already mentioned autonomous zones of art, and its capacity for re-socialization in divided cities. Politics divides them, placing them in the situation of long-classified spaces without light, in ruins, but also in the ruin of memories which should be forgotten as soon as possible. The fear of today's citizens (but not of the walker, because the divided cities do not allow this) of these unlighted

spaces, ruined, but surrounded by a vast sea of lighted and dazzling advertisements mixed with a sound-forest, speaks of the problem of poisoned visibility and false security which is hidden behind a cloak of big lights and cameras on our streets. There is no mystery, and therefore no curiosity. The fear deepens because there is no contact, we no longer know one another, but we purchase safety through big lights, instead of through conversation and agreement, familiarization. The night has become darker than it has ever been before. The brushed-aside, forgotten spaces are silent, almost deaf, unlit, like some house of horror which one should visit but return to the known as soon as possible, in the safe sea of the glittering city. We do not feel safe without the plugged-in cameras and screens, but the noise supplants our feeling of activity and life.

Arrival in the autonomous zones, the journey to them, seems utterly bleak, like blindman's bluff without a whisper, or a long flooded muddy road which has no end. However, just as in some virgin forest full of restless, lurking wild animals all around us, a undreamed of space is discovered, a clearing, which points to a "spring", an unending, great river with a rambling current and banks of meeting. Here people also live.

How to make accessible the flooded road of the bluffed "blindman", the brushed-aside space, to make it safer and without fear for those who approach? How to shorten, civilize, soften the crossing between the two, with the intention of sharing different, created worlds? How to connect them? How to introduce them to one another? One sure panopticon, the other seeking security in decency, agreement, conversation. One dazzling, blinding, the other flooded, barely visible. One homogenous, uniform, recognizable; the other diverse, plural. One nationalist, built from hatred; the other curious and open, but hidden from the eyes of the walker.

If these were the characteristics of two men, instead of two municipal spaces, which characteristics would you want to preserve, to protect?

Instead of the enclave, ghettoization, which is considered the "place of transition" "of the other", because in the structure is contained the works of a recognized body of emigrant remembrances, remembrances of the other, the stranger; the time has come for diverting transitions in the direction of "autonomous zones - islands", public spaces, in the direction of the space of exchange and offering different visions of community.

Emigrants, foreigners, "the other": where are they born?, What do they bring with them, what cargo of memory?, What sorts of stories of evil in this world?, What kinds of fairy tales and myths do they bring with them into the cities?
Into the cities, yes.

To them cities are the main arrival stations. Cities are found on the road of connections and urban infrastructure of the contemporary world, in them are the virtual highways developed. In this mixture in which we find ourselves, how to stay ourselves and to offer ourselves to others.

Only the one true city may protect and secure humanity for these unknown people, who come to us and leave a part of themselves. They bring cargo unknown to us or

undiscovered, the cargo of reality which already today knocks on our doors or hides in the darkness of forgetfulness, the unlit places of the third world. Here beside us the borderlines are being developed, whose exiles have already reached us, in meeting with our city...

...Exile obliges us to be born again, to open one dimension in time and space which can be used to find the true weight of things. We must open our eyes: that we can help to change reality, we must begin from what we see... Exile, to which it is understood one comes only after some great defeat, not simply a painful experience. Close one door but open another; this is the punishment but at the same time, freedom and responsibility. There is one black but also one red face... sounds the conclusion of E Galean, quoted from his work "Homeless."

This new birth is a new discovery of the world, or a first contact with it - birth. In any case, whether it is a case of rebirth or simply birth, reality is seen differently, more clearly. The newly heterogeneous reality of the city is essential.

The city cannot be surprised by anything, and it cannot be, inasmuch as it is created and organized as a city, a space of cosmopolitan values.

Assimilation, multiculturalism, separation, integration... all questions which are posited in fear of the other, not knowing him.

And always a mistake.
The wrong question.

The results of failure, the visible divisions. As an emigrant comes to know the achievements of the city, not of one nation, not of one religion, not of only one part/settlement, but of all nations and religions and cultures and others. Often we mutely encounter the "brushed-aside" emigrants, and with them the poor, in the suburbs or the city institutions which are presumably still common to all. Far away are they from our eyes, brushed aside, invisible, we do not know that they are here. At least for a long time we did not know them. They come to us because we did not want to approach them or to try to understand their world.

We thought that a crust of bread would ensure that this newcomer, stranger, would already be a part of our world and our cosmopolitan (read, economic) story. Presumably, along with this, the stories about our cities today.

We did not create these spaces, these essential agoras of meeting, these which will truly show us all that the city possesses in its interiors, and by which we will tomorrow come into contact, encounter. The agoras encourage people to begin to speak about themselves that they would reveal a part of themselves to us.

To emigrants, strangers, the others, we must open the door to meeting with the city, the common spaces of the city which give them support and a feeling of belonging. They have passed the threshold of the city, we opened the door to them. They now make up yet another piece of the collage in which the city must ensure its development.

We dare not leave them abandoned to themselves and dependent only on themselves and those similar to them (the poor, the homogeneous.)

At that time frustrated groups are born, which, instead of being curious about the other, enter into his spaces with a destructive energy. First impacted are the open spaces, those which attempt to build up a different sort of city from that which is today torn apart, divided. Interest in the other has the strength of childlike curiosity to accept, but there is another unconscious side of curiosity - childish, irrational brutality. The aggressor reaches to the other side, destructively trespassing the borderline, entering the home of the other and hurriedly destroying whatever he wants.

We come to the place of meeting-conflict, on the borderline. The spaces which are either places of conflict or places of reconciliation - dialogue.

Whether they will fulfill the function of one or the other depends on us, it depends on preserving the city. It depends on preserving the public spaces on the borderlines, on their encountering what is already clearly defined and being encountered as a whole, group, ghetto.

The third perspective emphasizes the privileged position of viewing: »of Ikar, the sunny or divine Eye, blazing above the city, freed from movements of earthly things, independent of the current of street movement.«

To look down on the world from above, to describe it, means to understand it. To consider the development of the city, to plan its directions means to sketch out and to realize ideas. The city has become a priceless new vocabulary, which similar to poetry can open new solutions in the human, lost and fragmented field of vision. The city expert, the city-builder, Bogdan Bogdanović sees the city as a major technical tool:

The city in itself is a major technical tool, superior in relation to all previous tools - but also because of this, and yet even more so, what the city immediately shows itself to be is a new "tool of thinking". Only after the phenomenon of the city, and from then on, man could see himself retrospectively, that the entirely tangible could state the currents of his own fate, just as it could explain also the fated stage of his cities. In principle, before the phenomenon of the city, man was an ahistorical being, and not only because of these two phenomena, "city" and "writing", on the whole overlapping, but rather because the city itself, as soon as it appeared, was one kind of powerful, super-linguistic writing - a complicated and precious ideography.

Large, contemporary cities are lost to us in the field of view, regardless of how high on the nearby mountain we climb, but a bird's-eye view does not allow us to see all that has emerged in the city in the last decades. Satellite pictures scan the streets in the search for all that is aesthetically dazzling, and by the brightness of the streets, control and protect us from ourselves. In these pictures there is recorded not one trace, nor sound, nor even one humanly delineated story from the space of the City.

...why was the city given to us? Wasn't it so that we could make it our own and enjoy it how we choose and as we can? And that case is legitimate. However, a gift of this rank

imposes an obligation. I suppose that the City is given to us, above all else, that we would be enriched by the advantages of civil wisdom in order to understand ourselves better. Actually, we have received a marvelous toy! We gaze into it: and see ourselves. We place it between ourselves and the world: we see the world, the universe, the whole. It turns out as though the City were colorful, illuminating device, one could almost say: a tutor, a cognitive model... In the older Near Eastern cosmologies, "the world" and "the city" were often born suddenly and in succession. Two series of phenomena, on one side: city/civilization/environment, on the other: nature/world/cosmos, inseparably connected in the consciousness of archaic man.

On the borderlines of divided cities

What sort of infrastructure will the borderlines of divided cities need in the future?

Thoroughfares, passages, tunnels, bridges... or control points, barbed wire, mine fields?

Both one and the other are well-trying to us. Both one and the other are parts of our infrastructure, "historical enterprises" and architectural ideas how spatially to continue this road which does not stop (which steps forward) and how to make an end to that road (to stop - to stop the "other").

I must use this metaphor "bridge on dry land". Therefore there is no river, there are no visible obstacles, but there exists a real wall or canyon, a chasm which is present as a division in the minds of the inhabitants.

This "bridge" which, in an architectural sense, does not look like a real bridge, because in and of itself, it has the habit of a construction intended as something else. This sort of construction is located on the borderline of two or more bodies which sees in the same place (a point of contact on the borderline) the ends of "mine" or "me", this construction fulfills the function of the abovementioned architectural or infrastructural constructions, constructions whose function naturally is worth translating into the language of society, politics and culture.

Passages; to secure undisturbed extension of movement, not based on what is existing between the wall in their minds. Especially if on the borderline a building functions as a passage in which one enters from one place, while its exit is on the other side. Such a space fills the function of security, because "the other", from one or the other side of the borderline, not on the exposed position, is not visible; he crosses unhindered to the other part of the city. Curiosity about the other must today, at the beginning of the process of destroying the division, be protected. Curiosity should give security, to encourage it to "come out".

Tunnels; passages which seem safer to us for crossing to the other side. With these, that the infrastructure of the entrance and exit to the tunnel, or many of them, would need to be deep inside the ghetto, in the depths of the territory of the "other". The interior of the tunnel more closely resembles the spaces of an underground city, a labyrinth which leads everywhere, and not only one-way or two-way, to one or the other side. Consequently, such a tunnel-space does not fill the function only of crossing an

uncrossable boundary, which is of course our goal, but also of opening other entrances and exits in parts of the city which, until now, were not connected by this kind of web-labyrinth underground.

Bridges and “Bridges on Dry Land”; an unusual idea, that one can live on a bridge, not only cross over on a bridge. When you live on a bridge, all passersby who cross over become guests to you, become indeed your own guests, because you live in middle of the bridge. A bridge-home. In this case there do not exist merely passersby (although they will always be the most curious), to those, crossing over the bridge will be only an extension of the path to the goal which they intended to reach. Who will live on a “bridge”? Who is capable of living on a bridge? Who will guard this sort of “bridge-home”? By which values will the “bridge-home” be decorated? From all that is in question, tomorrow it will depend whether or not the borders will be less visible. The bridge-home teaches us and prepares us to cross over to the other side, for the one whom we will meet in the other part of the city-world. Our unease will be diminished and our fear of that which we know only a little or perhaps not at all.

The tradition of life on a bridge, a bridge as a space of the city, is not strange in the Balkans. All social groups inapprehensively dedicated a bridge-space (no one’s, although belonging to us all), they performed and they participated in the colorful spaces which ennobled them for their return to their own small, often closed, groups. Enriched by the other and in contact with the other, they return back to their own cities, villages, without fear that they will there come across someone whom they have not already met, with something with which they have never been acquainted, ready, rather, tomorrow to encounter the unknown. One such space-bridge is best described in the works of Ivo Andrić:

“On the bridge and beneath it the boys play, their first loves are born, they work and quarrel; on the stone walls the merchants exhibit their wares, the world sits, discusses and sings, the beggars and the lame gather. The travelers reach the gate and pass it, stopping for weddings, and also for funerals; invitations and announcements are placed, even for those condemned to death. Here, before anywhere else, arrives news from the district, those which are auspicious and those which are unpleasant, this is also the place where eminent people meet to speak about their affairs. In difficult times here people meet from three laws, from three sides of Višegrad – the imam, the priest and the rabbi – to understand one another’s opinions and to come to a decision together about city matters.”

All the ideas mentioned have come out of my years-long battle against the division of Mostar, against the ideas and divisions which even today keep some of the cities in the world in the jaws of division and of constantly threatened war and conflict. Thus, I have chosen for the end some photographs of the borderline, the street of the Boulevard (Bulevar), which divides Mostar into east and west. Additionally there are also some public spaces which are prepared for privatization or which are intended for demolition.

For the end I wish to say that for Mostar, today is not too late to initiate the process of creating community. It is not too late at least to establish infrastructure/architecture which will serve as a “bridge on dry land” for communication between the two parts of the divided city of Mostar.

Revitalizing the Boulevard and the street of A. Šantića would be an attempt to mitigate to an extent the consequences of the politics of division, which have ruled and rule as evil forces in Mostar. Renovation of the Third Elementary School as a building whose function should not be changed, complete reconstruction of the Mostar Gymnasium, support for the cosmopolitan idea of the UWC project, building one university library as a space of gathering and meeting for students of Mostar, renovation of the residential buildings which will return life to the central zone, as well as the renovation of Abrašević – the first building which truly represents a place for open dialogue with all the abovementioned themes in this presentation, which for years has warned about the “ruin” of the idea of the city and its cosmopolitan values through continuously destroying ideas of public space – the AGORA and its significance for the future of the city, and its openness to new challenges which today’s world brings. I reintroduce the Boulevard (BULEVAR) as a “bridge on dry land” by which we could heal one great “wound” of the city of Mostar, and in doing so, to give the CITY the strength to overcome accumulated tensions and fears.

Appendix B: Dosta! website,

<http://dosta.ba/latinica/o-pokretu-dosta/> (accessed 16/08/11)

Aktivistički pokret građana DOSTA!

Misija:

„DOSTA!“ je aktivistički pokret građana Bosne i Hercegovine koji se bori za dostojanstvo građana BiH, utiče na aktiviranje i angažiranje ljudi na rješavanju akutnih problema društva i želi da stvori aktivnu i svjesnu građansku opoziciju u BiH kroz javno izražavanje građanskog nezadovoljstva, aktivnu i direktnu participaciju što većeg broja građana, te direktni uticaj na društveno-političke procese. Pokret ovo radi sa angažovanim grupama i pojedincima, te organizacijama i institucijama koje dijele vrijednosti i načela pokreta.

Problemi:

- Inertno i pasivno građanstvo
- Kritičan nivo građanske participacije u javnom životu
- Nepostojanje snažne i nezavisne aktivističke građanske inicijative u BiH
- Neodgovoran i ignorantan politički aparat
- Alarmantno socijalno i ekonomsko stanje i veliki broj pitanja koja treba riješiti
- Kritičan položaj ugroženih populacija u BiH
- Osjećaj nemoći građana BiH da bilo kako utiču na odluke koje ih se tiču
- Nekvalitetna komunikacija građana sa vlastima i političarima uopšte

Ciljevi:

- Stvoriti i omasoviti angažovanu i kredibilnu građansku inicijativu za javno izražavanje građanskog nezadovoljstva
- Osnajivanje uloge građana u procesu donošenja odluka kroz iniciranje i jačanje građanske participacije
- Prepoznati ključne socijalne i ekonomske probleme građana BiH i angažirati javnost na njihovom rješavanju
- Uticati na odgovornost političkog aparata i institucija na svim dijelovima BiH i na svim nivoima vlasti
- Na kreativan, angažovan i beskompromisan način utjecati na razvoj građanske svijesti o moći aktivne i masovne participacije kroz reagovanje na tekuće probleme i insistiranje na rješavanju istih

Pravila ili principi djelovanja:

- Pokret mora biti nezavistan od svih političkih partija, inicijativa, kao i od nevladinih organizacija i bilo kakvih institucija
- Članovi pokreta moraju biti disciplinovani i predani.
- Pokret mora biti otvoren prema različitim tipovima ljudi, interesa i aktivnosti, ukoliko one odgovaraju ciljevima i vrijednostima pokreta
- Pokret mora biti javan i dostupan svima
- Pokret ne pravi nikakve kompromise sa bilo kakvim instancama vlasti ili političarima, nego beskompromisno insistira na ostvarenju svojih ciljeva i zahtjeva

- „DOSTA!“ je pokret građana BiH i jednako je dostupan svima
- Svaka aktivnost pokreta ne smije ni u kojem slučaju biti protiv vrijednosti i ciljeva pokreta

Vrijednosti:

- Povjerenje
- Solidarnost
- Beskompromisnost
- Istrajnost
- Socijalna pravda
- Dostojanstvo
- Osviještenost građana
- Apsolutna moć glasu naroda
- Bez nacionalizma i isticanja nacionalnih interesa
- Kreativnost
- Popularizacija

Appendix C: Žbanić, Jasmila, “European Commission Made Disastrous Mistake”,

http://www.deblokada.ba/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=46&Itemid=37&lang=en (accessed 16/08/11).

European Commission Made Disastrous Mistake

The European Commission’s decision not to propose lifting visa restrictions for citizens of Bosnia-Herzegovina will, in my opinion, have disastrous consequences for the future of my country, its citizens and the future of the European Union.

Because visa restrictions no longer exist for Croatian, Serbian, and Montenegrin citizens, the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina, including those of Bosniak and “Other” ethnicities, are placed in isolation, while the choice of “belonging” to neighboring countries is encouraged (Bosnian Croats have the right to Croatian and Bosnian Serbs to Serbian passports).

European bureaucrats are misleading the public by claiming that Serbia and Montenegro have fulfilled the conditions for visa liberalization while shifting the blame for visa exclusion of Bosnia-Herzegovina exclusively on incompetent local politicians while ignoring the fact that the partition of Bosnia -Herzegovina, and keeping it out of the EU, are those nationalist leaders’ goals.

Mr. Olli Rehn must be aware that his speech following the publication of the European Commission’s decision provided encouragement for nationalists to abandon nationalist rhetoric and start taking action for the total destruction of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Instead of strengthening the Bosnian passport, as one of the rare symbols of unity of today’s Bosnia -Herzegovina, the European Commission has fully degraded its value, “sanctioning” Bosnian citizens. In this way, they deepen the fears and the sense of isolation and strengthen the belief that aggression and war crimes are something worthy of award – all factors on which nationalists in our country thrive.

We have been denied a basic human right, the right to the freedom of movement, but we still have the freedom of thought and we think that the members of the European Commission have made a terrible mistake, because their recommendations are in conflict with all human and moral values of the European Union which should guide them in their work and for which they should be held accountable by their citizens.

Jasmila Zbanic,
Internationally awarded film director
Citizen of Bosnia and Herzegovina and holder of B&H passport

Appendix D: Sarajevo Center for Contemporary Art, “New Monument. De/Construction of Monument”, 2006”

http://www.scca.ba/deconstruction/about_new_monument.php?lang=en (accessed 16/08/11)

ABOUT NEW MONUMENT

The "New Monument" is the last chapter of the "De/Construction of Monument" Project, initiated in 2004. The goal of the realization of the 'new monument' – i.e. the art work in public space – is the continuation of 10-year long program practice of the Sarajevo Center for Contemporary Art, i.e. of the support for those art projects which publicly and openly raise issues related to our time and start a direct dialogue with citizens in a new and untraditional way, both in form and in content. The 'New Monument' is an attempt at re-defining the notion and form of materialization of monuments (as we know them), their function, connotation and message they convey. That is why we have put the 'New Monument' in inverted comas.

The meaning of the multi-disciplinary "De/Construction of Monument" project was to demystify and de-mythologize the past, to deconstruct the realities of transition in post-socialist, particularly in post-Yugoslav countries, so that our time could be thought in a new and creative way. The foundation and the starting point of the Project were the material remnants of the monuments from different periods of our recent or distant past, as well as newly erected ones. They represent a materialization of ruling political, ideological and esthetic values, and, as such, they are an ideal material for critical analysis of the state in numerous areas, from philosophy to history, education and art.

In the course of the Project, besides the seminars, panels, lectures, film screenings, the interventions in public space and exhibitions were organized too. The focus of artistic actions was also put on the thematic elaboration of different symbolic aspects of monuments, tackling the issues of their meaning and purpose. In the first part of the project, entitled "Public Art/Art in Public Space", a series of artists' presentations to show various contemporary artistic "practices" were organized, ranging from 'monuments to a negative past' by Jochen Gerz, to 'anti-monuments' by Braco Dimitrijević and Sanja Iveković. This was a 'pedagogical' overture for artists (particularly those who attended various programs during 2004 or participated in them) into the final phase of the project entitled 'New Monument', consisting of a public competition, exhibition of received material, voting of the audience for the best New Monument idea and the work of an international jury – selection of works for realization, production, and installation in public space.

The final phase, the realization of New Monuments, the interval between the production and the installation (from September 2005 until the end of 2006) was spent on requesting the permits for monument's locations from the municipal and city authorities, on the basis of duly submitted documentation. The communication with the authorities relating our entry into public space is an exceptionally

important part of the whole story about art in public space. That is why I am quoting here an excerpt of the text of the "De/Construction of Monument" project.

"The process of realization, besides the construction, implies also negotiation with local (municipal, city and cantonal) authorities relating the location, permits etc.

□ New monuments will be offered to the city as a gift, alongside the obligation of their installation and maintenance. This will be a test of how the relationship between governments and civil initiatives functions and an answer to the question: Who owns public space? "(November 2003)

After more than a year of searching and waiting for the permits, the result is as follows: □ Communication is reduced to written and telephone calls, on the one hand, and "silence of administration", on the other. It exists in neither the bureaucratic, nor in the written form. It is almost impossible to get directly in touch with the authorities, with the "owners of public space". The experience so far has been reduced to the conclusion that this is the case of total lack of responsibility and interest for the initiatives launched by local organizations and cultural institutions (both governmental and non-governmental) that relate to the supporting and promotion of domestic artists. Only the calls from the "higher places" can, although reluctant, lead towards certain results... Here one usually says at the end of every story: things will get better.

Dunja Blažević □ October / November 2006

Appendix E: Ethical approval



University of St Andrews

International Relations School Ethics Committee

14 January 2011

Stefanie Kappler
School of International Relations

Ethics Reference No: <i>Please quote this ref on all correspondence</i>	IR7121
Project Title:	EU Peacebuilding in Bosnia and Herzegovina
Researchers Name(s):	Stefanie Kappler
Supervisor(s):	Professor Oliver Richmond

Thank you for submitting your application which was considered at the IR School Ethics Committee meeting on 24 March 2010. The following documents were reviewed:

- | | |
|--|---------|
| 1. Ethical Application Form | 24.3.10 |
| 2. Participant Information Sheet | n/a |
| 3. Consent Form | n/a |
| 4. Debriefing Form | n/a |
| 5. External Permissions | n/a |
| 6. Letters to Parents/Children/Headteacher etc... | n/a |
| 7. Questionnaires | n/a |
| 8. Enhanced Disclosure Scotland and Equivalent
(as necessary) | n/a |

The University Teaching and Research Ethics Committee (UTREC) approves this study from an ethical point of view. Please note that where approval is given by a School Ethics Committee that committee is part of UTREC and is delegated to act for UTREC.

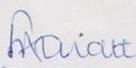
Approval is given for three years. Projects, which have not commenced within two years of original approval, must be re-submitted to your School Ethics Committee.

You must inform your School Ethics Committee when the research has been completed. If you are unable to complete your research within the 3 three year validation period, you will be required to write to your School Ethics Committee and to UTREC (where approval was given by UTREC) to request an extension or you will need to re-apply.

Any serious adverse events or significant change which occurs in connection with this study and/or which may alter its ethical consideration, must be reported immediately to the School Ethics Committee, and an Ethical Amendment Form submitted where appropriate.

Approval is given on the understanding that the 'Guidelines for Ethical Research Practice' (<http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/media/UTRECguidelines%20Feb%2008.pdf>) are adhered to.

Yours sincerely


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