# Ljubi se istok i zapad!
# Kiss, East & West!

Yugonostalgia and the second generation Bosnian diaspora in the Netherlands


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## ABSTRACT

Yugonostalgia refers to a longing for the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY), a state that existed from 1945 to 1991. This research investigates *How is Yugonostalgia experienced and expressed by the second generation Bosnian diaspora in the Netherlands?* Through the use of life-history interviews with ten participants, this research explores how Yugonostalgia influences the identities and experiences of individuals with no direct memories or lived experience of the SFRY, yet retain a sense of belonging and attachment to a perceived Yugoslav past. This research examines, therefore, how they navigate and balance their Bosnian heritage, Dutch upbringing and Yugonostalgic identities. It further looks into the role of inherited family memories, engagements with the homeland, the presence and influence of diasporic associations, as well as cultural connections to the SFRY, particularly Yu-Rock music. Additionally, this research discusses how the unique relationship between BiH and the Netherlands, influenced by collective guilt regarding the legacies of Srebrenica, affects the diaspora's identity formation. Overall, this research shows that Yugonostalgia has a strong presence among the second generation Bosnian diaspora in the Netherlands, which is maintained in light of individual negotiations and criticism. Yugonostalgia serves as a means to grapple with the impossibility of return to the SFRY, reconciliation with a violent past and the aftermath, as well as fostering a sense of belonging for individuals who position themselves outside of the dominant frameworks of ethno-national belonging. Crucially, however, Yugonostalgia in this research emerges as a placeholder for a utopian hope for a future Bosnia & Herzegovina (BiH); one that meets the second generation's ideals of unity, stability, and prosperity void of ethnic divisions. As a result, this research largely touches on the emancipatory and political potential of Yugonostalgia in shaping a new future, in light of weak, stagnant and divisive conditions in present-day BiH.

KEYWORDS: Yugonostalgia, diaspora, transnationalism, second generation, identity, Bosnia & Herzegovina, the Netherlands, ethnicity, migration, utopian hope.

## List of Abbreviations

| | |
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| BiH | Bosnia & Herzegovina |
| CSBNL | Central Statistics Bureau of the Netherlands |
| DPA | Dayton Peace Agreement |
| EU | European Union |
| ICTY | International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia |
| SFRY | Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia |

All translations from the Bosnian language have been done by the author.

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# Chapter 1: Introduction

## 1.1 Research Introduction

The title of this thesis, *Kiss, East & West!* is in reference to a 1991 Yugoslav Rock, or Yu-Rock, song from the band Plavi Orkestrar, which greatly inspired this research.[1] The song and its lyrics touch on themes of nostalgia and memory, notions of hope for better times ahead, as well as evoking a sense of unity and togetherness, which transcends both geographic and cultural divisions. Set to the soundtrack of the Mama's and Papa's 1965 hit *California Dreamin'*, this blending of musical influences further highlights the personal and collective identities that exist among the second generation Bosnian diaspora in the Netherlands. This research, therefore, examines Yugonostalgia among this unique community and generation, whereby a balancing of a Bosnian heritage, Dutch upbringing and Yugonostalgic identity shapes their complex individual experiences and senses of belonging, where it can be said that the East and West meet to kiss.

Yugonostalgia is broadly defined as nostalgia for the fantasies associated with a country, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY), which existed from 1945 to 1991.[2] This research is based on a series of life-history interviews with the second generation Bosnian diaspora, in order to explore the ways in which inherited family memories, relations to the homeland, and individual experiences of community engagement and cultural preservation shape their multiple, often diverging, identities in a transnational context. With no lived experience of the SFRY, and the influences of being raised in a vastly different backdrop, understanding how Yugonostalgia is experienced and expressed within this community, therefore, largely ties

[1] See Appendix A. for the lyrics of the song.
[2] Nicole Lindstrom, "Yugonostalgia: Restorative and Reflective Nostalgia in Former Yugoslavia," *East Central Europe* 32, (2005): 228.

together research on transnationalism, generations, diasporas, and post-socialist memory in the context of the SFRY.

The Bosnian diaspora has been selected as a focal point for this research due to the nature of the violence experienced in Bosnia & Herzegovina (BiH) during the dissolution of the SFRY, present day weak and divisive socio-political conditions, as well as the fact that from all former SFRY states, BiH has the largest diaspora in terms of population.[3] Using Yugonostalgia as a lens, therefore, particularly in the context of migration and generations, offers new insights into postwar identities, and processes of reconciliation with a violent past, and serves as a departure point for the imagination of new solidarities and futures among the second generation Bosnian diaspora.[4]

Furthermore, by focusing on the Bosnian diaspora in the Netherlands, this research contributes new insights and expands the scope of research on Yugonostalgia by further considering how the unique relationship between the Netherlands and BiH influences the identities among the second generation. With the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) (1993-2017) held in The Hague and discourses over the role of Dutch peacekeeping forces in Srebrenica, the ways in which this relationship between the two states influences integration, reconciliation, and collective memories among the second generation diaspora is explored. The individual experiences, negotiations, and influences that emerge between balancing Dutch ideals and values with their heritage offer new insights into transnationalism and transgenerationality in the context of Yugonostalgia, and how the phenomenon is situated within the second generation Bosnian diaspora in the Netherlands.

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[3] "Info about Diaspora," I-Platform, accessed 01/22/24. https://www.i-platform.ch/en/info-about-diaspora#:~:text=In%20comparison%20to%20other%20European,share%20of%20nationals%20living%20abroad.

[4] Tamara Pavasović-Trošt, **"**New Solidarities: Migration, Mobility, Diaspora, and Ethnic Tolerance in Southeast Europe," *New Diversities* 21:1 (2019): 1-7.

Yugonostalgia within this research emerges as an emancipatory tool, serving as a departure point for the second generation Bosnian diaspora to criticise and reject postwar identities and narratives rooted in conflict. The legacies of a Yugoslav past allow for the development of alternative visions of BiH among the second generation, which meet their ideals of stability, unity and prosperity. As a result, this research demonstrates how young people of migrant backgrounds do not only identify with multiple geographic locations, but also with various historical frameworks and narratives of the past.[5] It provides, therefore, valuable insights into the ongoing dialogue between the past and present, reconciliation with violent pasts, dissatisfaction with postwar conditions, and the ways in which Yugonostalgia is used to imagine new futures and solidarities. Yugonostalgia, therefore, carries great political potential, serving as a placeholder for a utopian hope that promotes a vision of unity and solidarity that challenges prevailing divisions.

Ultimately, *Kiss, East & West!* serves as a metaphor for the fusion of multiple and diverging identities, memories, and experiences that emerge among the second generation Bosnian diaspora in the Netherlands in relation to Yugonostalgia.

## 1.2 Research Question and Subquestions

The primary research question for this work is *How is Yugonostalgia experienced and expressed in the Bosnian second generation diaspora in the Netherlands?* Subsequently, a number of sub-questions emerge to accurately understand and analyse the existence and maintenance of Yugonostalgic identities within the second generation. These delve into the role of their Dutch upbringing and the influences this has had on their identities and collective

[5] Svetlana Boym, "Nostalgia and its discontents," *The Hedgehog Review* 9:2 (2007): 7.

memory, the role of inherited family memories of the SFRY, and finally, relations to the homeland through visits, community engagement, and cultural preservation.

The first empirical chapter of this research investigates *How is the Bosnian diaspora situated within the Netherlands, and what identities and dynamics are at play among this community?* This chapter will provide context to the dissolution of the SFRY, the Bosnian War and Bosnian migration to the Netherlands. The legacies of Srebrenica within Dutch society and how this influences identities in the diaspora is further discussed, as well as the intricacies of how the second generation navigates their multiple identities and places of belonging. Furthermore, this section will examine the presence and dynamics involved in diasporic associational spaces within the Netherlands. As a result, this chapter provides a comprehensive contextual background for this research, as well as outlining the identities at play among the second generation diaspora, which are developed in further chapters.

The second subquestion looks at *What is the role of inherited family memories and narratives of the SFRY in relation to Yugonostalgia among the second generation Bosnian diaspora?* This chapter, therefore, will examine how inherited second hand impressions of the SFRY influence the second generation's conceptions of a homeland and identity, and how far this informs experiences of Yugonostalgia. Furthermore, this section will examine processes of emotional selection, intergenerational positioning, and the influence of ethnic attachments and inherited trauma in regard to inherited memories of the SFRY. This chapter discusses, furthermore, the critical individual negotiation at play regarding these inherited memories among the second generation, and how this influences their experiences and expressions of Yugonostalgia.

Finally, this research will address *How do individual experiences of community engagement and cultural preservation within the second generation Bosnian diaspora in the Netherlands inform Yugonostalgia?* The maintenance of transnational ties to the homeland through frequent visits to BiH, participation and tensions surrounding Bosnian diaspora associations, and a focus on the role of Yu-Rock and music oriented diaspora spaces are explored throughout this chapter, providing an understanding of how far individual experiences and attachments to community and culture shape Yugonostalgic identities.

## 1.3 Theoretical Concepts

Throughout this research, there are three main theoretical frameworks and concepts which are crucial for understanding the presence, experiences and expressions of Yugonostalgia among the second generation Bosnian diaspora in the Netherlands. This section will expand on the concept of nostalgia in the context of Yugonostalgia, largely touching on Svetlana Boym's concepts of 'restorative' and 'reflective' nostalgia. Furthermore, transnationalism is explored as a key theoretical concept, including Peggy Levitt's theory on transnational social fields, and finally, transgenerationality as a concept in relation to the second generation Bosnian diaspora. These theoretical concepts form the framework for which Yugonostalgia is understood and investigated within my research. Utilising these theories, therefore, provides a nuanced understanding of how nostalgic sentiments, cross-border connections and generational differences shape Yugonostalgic identities and expressions among the second generation Bosnian diaspora in the Netherlands.

### 1.3.1 Nostalgia

The first crucial theoretical concept for this research is nostalgia. Svetlana Boym defines nostalgia as "a longing for a home that no longer exists or has never existed."[6] As she further

[6] Svetlana Boym, "Nostalgia and its discontents," 7.

observes, the study of nostalgia does not belong to any specific discipline, and its long history within academia has spread across disciplines including psychology, sociology, and philosophy.[7] Attempting to provide an overview of nostalgia in the modern age, Boym introduces two classifications of nostalgia; 'restorative' and 'reflective' nostalgia. Restorative nostalgia is characterised by a reconstructive longing for a specific past, while reflective nostalgia involves a critical and ambivalent engagement with the past.[8]

The introduction of a reflective form of nostalgia is a highly relevant concept for this research, whereby a fragmented version of the past is remembered, often oriented toward an individual narrative.[9] With no lived experience of the SFRY, the second generation Bosian diaspora relies heavily on inherited and fragmented memories of the SFRY, which results in processes of individual negotiation by which selective elements of a Yugoslav past are remembered and championed. This understanding offers explanations whereby reflective nostalgia is a longing for a community with a shared history and collective memory, as well as "continuity in a fragmented world," with Boym arguing that in the context of former socialist or communist Eastern European countries, nostalgia can serve as a way of "making sense of the impossibility of homecoming."[10] As a result, nostalgia throughout this research is understood as not "merely an expression of local longing," as Boym argues that nostalgia does not necessarily have to relate to a place, but can also be a longing for a specific time.[11] This further adds an emancipatory dimension to nostalgia, whereby the maintenance of nostalgic identities can be seen as a "rebellion against the modern idea of time, the time of history and progress," and can have a "direct impact on the realities of the future."[12] Yugonostalgia can, therefore, serve as a

[7] Svetlana Boym, "Nostalgia and its discontents," 2.
[8] Nicole Lindstrom, "Yugonostalgia: Restorative and Reflective Nostalgia in Former Yugoslavia," 227.
[9] Svetlana Boym, "Nostalgia and its discontents," 13.
[10] Svetlana Boym, "Nostalgia and its discontents," 10.
[11] Nicole Lindstrom, "Yugonostalgia: Restorative and Reflective Nostalgia in Former Yugoslavia," 231.
[12] Svetlana Boym, "Nostalgia and its discontents," 10.

means of longing for the continuity of Yugoslav ideals and experiences in BiH today. Existing research on manifestations of Yugonostalgia in the contemporary are further discussed in the following section 1.4.

### 1.3.2 Transnationalism

Within the field of diaspora studies, a second crucial theoretical concept for this research is the notion of transnationalism, which has been spearheaded in recent times following the 'transnational turn' within historical and migration research, which emphasises that historical phenomena are shaped by the movement of people and ideas, removed from the influence of nation states.[13] In offering a definition for transnationalism, Nina Schiller et al. coin the phenomenon "the processes by which immigrants build social fields that link together their country of origin and their country of settlement."[14] Peggy Levitt has further coined the term 'transnational social fields' to explain how migrants are able to "establish social fields that cross geographic, cultural and political borders."[15] The concept of transnationalism, therefore, is highly relevant for this research, as it underscores the ways in which the second generation diaspora balances and navigates their attachments to diverging Bosnian, Dutch and Yugoslav ideals, practices, and identities. It is often assumed within migration studies, Levitt states, that the nation-state is the "natural default category of social organisation," however Levitt strongly argues that individuals can "engage simultaneously in more than one nation-state," and that the nation-state "does not delimit the boundaries of meaningful social relations."[16] As is discussed in section 1.4, Yugonostalgia has been used by former Yugoslav nation states as a way to discredit individuals and propel nationalist rhetorics. Exploring the maintenance, therefore, of

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[13] Yogita Goyal, "Introduction: The Transnational Turn," in *The Cambridge Companion to Transnational American Literature*, ed. Yogita Goyal (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 2017):
[14] Nina Schiller et al., "Towards a definition of transnationalism. Introductory remarks and research questions," *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 645, (1992): 1.
[15] Peggy Levitt, "Conceptualizing Simultaneity: A Transnational Social Field Perspective on Society," *The International Migration Review* 38:3 (2004): 1028.
[16] Peggy Levitt, "Conceptualizing Simultaneity: A Transnational Social Field Perspective on Society," 1028.

transnational practices in relation to a nation that no longer exists - that is, the SFRY, further propels this research into relevant and emerging scholarship on the fluid and dynamic nature of transnationalism and transnational social fields. These understandings of transnationalism, therefore, largely touch on the agency of migrants, whereby they are understood to "take actions, make decisions, and feel concerns, and develop identities within social networks that connect them to two or more societies simultaneously."[17] In this regard, transmigrants are able to both develop and maintain multiple relations that span borders; including familial, economic, social, religious and political relations.[18]

### 1.3.3 Transgenerationality

Transgenerationality as a concept will further be applied throughout this research, in order to uncover insights into the multi-generational dynamics and influences of Yugonostalgia, and how it is experienced and expressed by a new, postwar generation in the Netherlands. Peggy Levitt emerges again as the pillar for this concept, expanding on her previous work on transnationalism to include a multi-generational perspective.[19] This falls largely in line with parallel, broader developments surrounding research on the former SFRY, which argues that generational differences should serve as a new lens to examine identities, solidarities and diversities following the collapse of the state.[20] Levitt argues that there is a tendency within research on migration to assume that transnational attachments are confined to the first generation.[21] Instead, she argues, there is a strong potential effect of being raised within transnational social fields which can lead to strong transnational attachments within a second

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[17] Nina Schiller et al., "Towards a definition of transnationalism. Introductory remarks and research questions," 1-2.
[18] Nina Schiller et al., "Towards a definition of transnationalism. Introductory remarks and research questions," 1.
[19] Peggy Levitt, "Roots and Routes: Understanding the Lives of the Second Generation Transnationally," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 35:7 (August 2009): 1225.
[20] Tamara Pavasović-Trošt, **"**New Solidarities: Migration, Mobility, Diaspora, and Ethnic Tolerance in Southeast Europe," 1-7.
[21] Peggy Levitt, "Roots and Routes: Understanding the Lives of the Second Generation Transnationally," 1225.

generation.[22] Levitt acknowledges, therefore, how second-generation migrants are situated between "different and often competing generational, ideological and moral reference points," which can be strongly influenced by "imagined perspectives about their multiple homes."[23] Transgenerationality, therefore, is a highly relevant theoretical concept for this research, as it offers insights into the ways the legacies of the SFRY are understood by the second generation diaspora. When combined with transnational practices over time, second generation experiences have the potential to "alter the economies, values and practices of entire regions," argues Levitt.[24] As a result, this understanding of generational differences points to the emancipatory effect Yugonostalgic identities host, which can serve as a departure point for imagining new futures of BiH.

## 1.4 Literature on Yugonostalgia

Whilst still a somewhat understudied phenomenon, scholars have attempted to provide comprehensive definitions and explanations of Yugonostalgia, as well as expanding research to situate it within broader academic fields and discourses. Whilst my research delves largely into the studies of identity, memory and nostalgia, this section will focus on Yugonostalgia as a distinct field. The choice to narrow the scope to solely the phenomenon of Yugonostalgia is informed by, firstly, an impracticality of covering all relevant fields for my research comprehensively, the high interdisciplinary relevance of Yugonostalgia, and as well as ensuring depth and clarity in understanding the phenomenon when it comes to my analyses among the second generation Bosnian diaspora in the Netherlands. This literature review will explore, therefore, the evolution of research on Yugonostalgia and its uses within academia, beginning with its initial, largely negative connotations and the process of reclamation and reappropriation,

[22] Peggy Levitt, "Roots and Routes: Understanding the Lives of the Second Generation Transnationally," 1225.
[23] Peggy Levitt, "Roots and Routes: Understanding the Lives of the Second Generation Transnationally," 1238.
[24] Peggy Levitt, "Roots and Routes: Understanding the Lives of the Second Generation Transnationally", 1227.

studies related to offering definitions and explanations of the phenomenon, the political elements and cultural expressions of Yugonostalgia, and concluding with the state of current research, which is expanding to scope towards the growing fields of transnationalism and generations in relation to Yugonostalgia. As a result, my research finds itself positioned within current strides in scholarship on Yugonostalgia, and my findings contribute new insights to both existing and emerging discussions on the phenomenon.

### 1.4.1 Initial uses and reclamation efforts

Early usage of Yugonostalgia was largely in a negative context, situated within political rhetoric in the former SFRY following the collapse of the state, including the rise of nationalism and new capitalist economies. The Croatian tabloid *Globus* is largely considered as the first usage of the term, during a "campaign of public harassment" in 1992 against five Croatian women due to their role in spreading awareness of Croatia's involvement in the Bosnian war.[25] The article coined them "Marxist feminists, communists and post-communist profiteers, daughters of communism and 'Yugonostalgics.'"[26]As a result, Yugonostalgia was used as a means to discredit critics, and was understood as a means of political and moral disqualification; a "public enemy" and a "traitor" to the newly established former-Yugoslav states.[27] In a similar vein, Predrag Marković and Nataša Milicević (2002), in the context of Serbia, have stated that Yugonostalgia served as an obstacle within the transition of the former states out of socialism, as well as establishing a successful democracy.[28] They argue that Yugonostalgia should be seen as a "regressive phenomenon," which does much to harm transitional goals and missions toward the "bright future of democracy and the free market."[29] These early understandings and uses of

[25] Cynthia Simmons, "Miljenko Jergović and (Yugo)Nostalgia," *Russian Literature* 66:4 (2009): 458.
[26] Cynthia Simmons, "Miljenko Jergović and (Yugo)Nostalgia," 458.
[27] Cynthia Simmons, "Miljenko Jergović and (Yugo)Nostalgia," 458.
[28] Nataša Milićević, Predrag Marković, "Srpska istoriografija u vreme tranzicije: Borba za legitimitet [translation: Serbian Historiography in the Time of Transition: a Struggle for Legitimacy]," *Istorija 20. veka* 1 (2002): 145-167.
[29] Nadiya Chushak, "*Yugonostalgic against All Odds: Nostalgia for Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia among Young Leftist Activists in Contemporary Serbia,*" (PhD diss., The University of Melbourne, 2013): 18.

Yugonostalgia, therefore, were based on very negative conceptions, which placed Yugonostalgia at risk of becoming erased from collective identities due to the politicisation of the term.

A significant shift in the focus from political disqualification to more positive and individual understandings of Yugonostalgia was popularised in academia by Dubravka Ugrešić, one of the women targeted by the *Globus* campaign. Ugrešić's *Nice People Don't Mention Such Things* (1998) framed Yugonostalgia as dissatisfaction with the newly formed states "through the comparison of the present with what she saw as a better past."[30] Ugrešić's reclamation of the term highlighted personal emotional and cultural ties to the concept of Yugonostalgia, which removed the term from its political origins and placed it into a more personal narrative.[31] This early attempt at reclaiming and redefining the term serves as a foundational shift within academia relating to Yugonostalgia, which would provide the groundwork for exploration into the individual understandings, complexities and potential emancipatory effects of Yugonostalgia. Ugrešić, therefore, emerges as one of the first champions of Yugonostalgia research, referenced frequently within scholarship and serving as a foundational understanding of Yugonostalgic identities.

### 1.4.2 Towards a definition and explanation of Yugonostalgia

Subsequent research into the specificities and explanations of Yugonostalgia largely placed the phenomenon into broader discussions within the fields of memory and nostalgia, with Nicole Lindstrom (2005) serving as the first work to propose that multiple forms of Yugonostalgia exist on individual levels. Such research fell in line with the 'affective turn' in social science and humanities research in the 1990s and 2000s, which championed the study of

[30] Nadiya Chushak, "*Yugonostalgic against All Odds: Nostalgia for Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia among Young Leftist Activists in Contemporary Serbia,*" 15.

[31] Nadiya Chushak, "*Yugonostalgic against All Odds: Nostalgia for Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia among Young Leftist Activists in Contemporary Serbia,*" 15.

nostalgia, individual experiences, social relations and everyday life, resulting in "conjectural and provisional interpretations of the past."[32] Lindstrom applied Svetlana Boym's definitions of 'restorative' and 'reflective' nostalgia to the case of Yugonostalgia, which are explored as key theoretical concepts for this research in section 1.3. Particularly in the context of reflective nostalgia, the application of this theory to Yugonostalgia did much to consider that Yugonostalgia does not have to relate to a longing to reconstruct an exact Yugoslav past, rather, there are processes of selection with fragmented memories, resulting in a critical engagement with the past. Yugonostalgia, therefore, was understood as a tool to both criticise the present and express a longing for a perceived better past, solidifying Ugrešić's original sentiments and allowing for greater autonomy to be prescribed toward Yugonostalgic identities.

In order to further expand Lindstrom's work on Yugonostalgia, Mitja Velikonja (2009) added to growing research on the phenomenon by offering various explanations as to the emergence of Yugonostalgia in postwar communities. Velikonja is also among the first to argue that Yugonostalgia should not be seen in a narrow positivist light, but rather a constructivist approach can offer further insights into how Yugonostalgia is experienced and expressed.[33] He argues that three possible explanations for Yugonostalgia emerge; the first as "passive escapism" of those who have been unable to adapt to new conditions and live in a "prolonged yesterday."[34] The second explanation Velikonja offers is Yugonostalgia as an answer to a "legitimation crisis," whereby contemporary societies "feed parasitically on the remains of tradition."[35] The third explanation is one of defiance; Yugonostalgia as a resistance strategy of preserving one's

[32] Vanessa Agnew, "History's affective turn: Historical reenactment and its work in the present," *Rethinking History* 11:3, (September, 2007): 299.
[33] Mitja Velikonja, "Lost in Translation: Nostalgia for Socialism in Post-socialist Countries," *East European Politics and Societies* 4:23 (2009): 538.
[34] Mitja Velikonja, "Lost in Translation: Nostalgia for Socialism in Post-socialist Countries," 541.
[35] Mitja Velikonja, "Lost in Translation: Nostalgia for Socialism in Post-socialist Countries," 547.

personal history and group identity "against the new ideological narratives, historical revisionism, and imposed amnesia."[36]

Beyond these initial explanations, however, Velikonja further proposed that academia should focus on nostalgia as 'hope', whereby Yugonostalgia emerges as a form of 'retrospective utopia', enabling a "utopian hope that there must be a society that is better than the current one."[37] My research largely follows an understanding of Lindstrom's reflective form of Yugonostalgia, oriented towards Velikonja's concept of 'hope,' and contributes to the discussion by exploring the ways in which the SFRY is remembered, understood and imagined by the second generation diaspora. Therefore, my research provides new insights into the forms of Yugonostalgia that are present in communities both spatially and temporarily removed from the SFRY, including the second generation diaspora, contributing to discussions on the nature of nostalgia, as well as highlighting varying individual understandings and expressions of Yugonostalgia.

### 1.4.3 The political dimensions of Yugonostalgia

Following the initial years after the collapse of the SFRY, as well as reclamation and explanation efforts regarding Yugonostalgia, scholarship also began to divert more attention to Yugonostalgia as a broader, anti-nationalist rhetoric, and understanding the phenomenon as a resistance mechanism. Based on ethnographic work in the 1990s, Steff Jansen (2005) used Yugonostalgia as a key concept in his analysis of anti-nationalist resistance within Serbia and Croatia. He presented Yugonostalgia as a "counter-hegemonic project" against nationalism within the region, largely attributing an emancipatory and positive conceptualisation towards the

[36] Mitja Velikonja, "Lost in Translation: Nostalgia for Socialism in Post-socialist Countries," 547.
[37] Mitja Velikonja, "Lost in Translation: Nostalgia for Socialism in Post-socialist Countries," 535.

phenomenon.[38] Here, the first notions of Yugonostalgia as political resistance in a positive light emerge, what Velikonja (2009) would later term "new Yugoslavism" to refer to an ideology centred around "the narrative heritage of the socialist Yugoslavia and a posteriori constructs about it."[39] Milica Popović (2016) further expanded on modes by which Yugonostalgia is acquired, formulated into two political demands; the first "against erasure of their Yugoslav identity" and the second "against neoliberal policies and for socio-economic equality."[40]

In this regard, the political dimension of Yugonostalgia was examined under the lens of a longing for a continuity of a Yugoslav past that encompassed constructed ideals about the SFRY, with the potential to serve as political acts of resistance. Tanja Petrović (2013) has argued that manifestations of Yugonostalgia in the contemporary world can include cosmopolitanism, anti-facism, and solidarity/workers rights.[41] In fact, Tatjana Takšheva (2019), in her study on postwar communities in BiH, found that Yugonostalgia served as a means by which to express dissatisfaction with dominant narratives in the region surrounding ethnic divisions and intolerance, and emerged as an "ideology of a shared cultural identity rooted specifically in the civic values of multiethnic co-existence and solidarity."[42] My research follows a similar understanding of Yugonostalgia as a form of resistance, which in turn reveals new forms of identities and solidarities that emerge among the Bosnian second generation diaspora. This further expands on Taksheva's work in BiH, by widening the scope to also focus on the Bosnian diaspora. As the findings will show, Yugonostalgic identities were informed at large by a rejection of postwar ethnic divisions and narratives, as well as a means to express dissatisfaction

[38] Stef Jansen, "Who's Afraid of White Socks? Towards a critical understanding of post-Yugoslav urban self-perceptions," *Ethnologia Balkanica* 17:9 (2005): 159.
[39] Mitja Velikonja, "Lost in Translation: Nostalgia for Socialism in Post-socialist Countries," 535.
[40] Milica Popović, "Yugonostalgia. The Meta-National Memory Narratives of the Last Pioneers," *Nostalgia on the Move* (Belgrade, September 2016): 44.
[41] Tanja Petrović, "Museums and Workers: Negotiating industrial heritage in the former Yugoslavia," *Narodna umjetnost* 1:50, (2013): 98.
[42] Tatjana Takševa, "Post-war Yugoslavism and Yugonostalgia as Expressions of Multiethnic Solidarity and Tolerance in Bosnia and Herzegovina," *New Diversities* 21:1 (2019): 87.

with the current social and political landscape in BiH. My research, therefore, contributes to discussions on the political and emancipatory effects of Yugonostalgia as resistance, and how this is manifested within second generation diasporic communities in the Netherlands.

### 1.4.4 Cultural elements and expressions of Yugonostalgia

In terms of the cultural elements and productions of the SFRY, Lindstrom was among the first to place a cultural emphasis on expressions of Yugonostalgia, exploring the phenomenon through tributes to the SFRY through art, film, music and websites.[43] Furthermore, Velikonja would later find that the most frequent cultural forms of expressions of Yugonostalgia emerge as public places, consumer goods, music and film, old graphic design, and the cyber world.[44] These identified modes have served as the groundwork for research into the cultural elements of Yugonostalgia, with works such as Petek (2010), Hoffman (2015) and Petrov (2018) using Velikonja's frameworks for their analysis. Thus, my research adds to the existing literature by examining how music, particularly Yu-Rock, emerges as the predominant form of cultural engagement and preservation among the second generation diaspora. As a result, my research allows for new insights and understandings of Yugonostalgic cultural attachments among new generations, as well as revealing how engagement with Yu-Rock music and spaces among diasporic communities serves as a means by which Yugonostalgic identities are maintained.

However, other scholars have also adopted critical approaches towards the study of the cultural elements of Yugonostalgia, directed towards concerns over commercialisation and commodification. Zala Volćič (2007) argued that Yugonostalgia has largely lost its meaning, and should be seen within a contemporary consumer culture lens.[45] Yugonostalgia, she claimed, runs

[43] Nicole Lindstrom, "Yugonostalgia: Restorative and Reflective Nostalgia in Former Yugoslavia," 227-237.
[44] Mitja Velikonja, "Lost in Translation: Nostalgia for Socialism in Post-socialist Countries," 538.
[45] Zala Volčič, "Yugo-Nostalgia: Cultural Memory and Media in the Former Yugoslavia," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 24:1 (2007): 22.

the risk of becoming largely detached from its political and historical origins due to the commercialisation of nostalgia, which leads to the "danger of defaulting to empty marketing hype" and "being packed up and sold for hard currency."[46] In this sense, Yugonostalgia is seen "merely as the byproduct" of the new capitalist economies within the former SFRY.[47] She concluded that the politics of a Yugoslav identity have "not been eliminated, but transformed and commodified."[48]

### 1.4.5 Yugonostalgia, generations, and migration

More recent scholarship, however, has further expanded the scope of research on Yugonostalgia to include migration, generationality, and multidirectional modes of memory. Popović was among the first to introduce age differences and generationality to research on Yugonostalgia, focusing on those born between 1974-1983, what she calls "the last generation of pioneers," and is based on semi-structured interviews in BiH, Serbia, and Slovenia.[49] Dilyara Müeller-Suleymanova's recent works (2020, 2021, 2022) on Yugonostalgia and transnationalism among the Bosnian second generation diaspora in Switzerland, which included life-history interviews, further places current research into the direction of migration and diaspora studies. The focus on generations, as well as using oral history methods, marks a departure from existing research on Yugonostalgia, which largely focused on providing definitions, specificities and explanations of the phenomenon, as well as largely locating Yugonostalgia within "geographically and culturally determined specific communities."[50] Popović and Müeller-Suleymanova's work, therefore, further broadens the scope by which Yugonostalgia is examined, and the use of oral history, furthermore, allows for the situating of Yugonostalgic

[46] Zala Volčič, "Yugo-Nostalgia: Cultural Memory and Media in the Former Yugoslavia," 34.
[47] Zala Volčič, "Yugo-Nostalgia: Cultural Memory and Media in the Former Yugoslavia," 34.
[48] Zala Volčič, "Yugo-Nostalgia: Cultural Memory and Media in the Former Yugoslavia," 35.
[49] Zala Volčič, "Yugo-Nostalgia: Cultural Memory and Media in the Former Yugoslavia," 35.
[50] Milica Popović, "Yugonostalgia. The Meta-National Memory Narratives of the Last Pioneers," 46.

sentiments within broader social, political and cultural contexts, allowing for more nuanced understandings of individual and collective experiences.

Popović largely argues that 'the last generation of pioneers' have generational specificities which create "more space for indirect memories and adoption and/or adaption of discourses" when it comes to the SFRY.[51] Her findings point to the fact that Yugonostalgia remains a "resistance strategy and an important element of identity" within the last pioneers, pointing to the need to focus on generational differences and the changing conceptions of Yugonostalgia.[52] Crucially, however, Popović argues that subsequent scholarship should examine Yugonostalgia under transnational and multidirectional memory concepts.[53] Addressing the previous gap in research, Müeller-Suleymanova's work looked into Yugonostalgia in relation to the second generation Bosnian diaspora in Switzerland. Her findings show that Yugonostalgia aided in processes of reconciliation with the SFRY's violent breakup, and the consequences of postwar BiH socio-political conditions in the diaspora.[54] Young people, Müller-Suleymanova argues, are increasingly addressing, reinterpreting and transforming "the legacies of Yugoslavia within the contexts of their current lives and prospects."[55] Müller-Suleymanova concluded that Yugonostalgia "opens ways for alternative articulations of belonging and trans-ethnic solidarities and friendships."[56] As a result, the scope of Yugonostalgia within research has been greatly expanded in recent scholarship, to include experiences and expressions among individuals with

[51] Milica Popović, "Yugonostalgia. The Meta-National Memory Narratives of the Last Pioneers," 45.
[52] Milica Popović, "Yugonostalgia. The Meta-National Memory Narratives of the Last Pioneers," 46.
[53] Milica Popović, "Yugonostalgia. The Meta-National Memory Narratives of the Last Pioneers," 48.
[54] Dilyara Müller-Suleymanova, ""I am something that no longer exists ..." : Yugonostalgia among diaspora youth," in *Youth and Memory in Europe: Defining the Past, Shaping the Future*, edited by Félix Krawatzek & Nina Friess (Boston: De Gruyter, 2022):191-204.
[55] Dilyara Müller-Suleymanova, "Engaging with the Country of Origin and Its Past amongst Second-Generation Youth of Bosnian Descent in Switzerland," *Gesellschaft – Individuum – Sozialisation (GISo). Zeitschrift für Sozialisationsforschung,* 1:2 (2020): 1.
[56] Dilyara Müller-Suleymanova, ""I am something that no longer exists ..." : Yugonostalgia among diaspora youth," 194.

little, or not lived experience of the SFRY, and across borders, far removed from regional influences and narratives.

Although there is a lack of research into similar themes, these developments greatly situate my research within current trends in scholarship regarding Yugonostalgia. By applying the lenses of generations of and transnationalism to my research, as well as utilising the oral history method through conducting life-history interviews, my research falls in line with current developments surrounding Yugonostalgia. Whilst Müeller-Suleymanova's work has explored the case in Switzerland, my research is the first to apply the case to the Netherlands, further providing new insights into Yugonostalgia among second generation diasporic communities, as well as allowing for an exploration into the unique dynamic between the Netherlands and BiH, which is discussed in detail in Chapter 2. As a result, this research contributes to new understandings of how this unique relationship, in tandem with Yugonostalgic identities, influences diasporic communities in terms of identity, belonging, and maintaining transnational links. Examining Yugonostalgia within this context, therefore, not only falls in line with recent developments within the field, but also advances current understandings of the phenomenon.

## 1.5 Academic and Social Relevance

In terms of academic relevance, Yugonostalgia remains a growing study within the fields of nostalgia, memory, and identity. This high interdisciplinary relevance, therefore, positions research on Yugonostalgia as relevant for new understandings of post-socialist memory and legacies, including more nuanced understandings of the identities that emerge within the complex mosaic of post-Yugoslav communities. Furthermore, my research falls in line with current strides in scholarship on Yugonostalgia by positioning the phenomenon within the

contexts of migration and generational differences.[57] The use of oral history methods further falls in line with recent developments within broader social science and humanities research, focusing on a constructivist approach that champions individual experiences and everyday life, including social relations and cultural influences.[58] Such an approach, therefore provides a better understanding of the processes and dynamics involved among diasporic communities and identities in relation to Yugonostalgia, as well as how post-Yugoslav communities remember the legacies of the SFRY and reconcile with violent pasts.

The choice to apply the case to the Bosnian diaspora in the Netherlands further points to the social and academic relevance of my research. It explores, firstly, the unique relationship between BiH and the Netherlands, which reveals new insights into how the legacies of Srebrenica in the Netherlands influences second generation Bosnian diaspora identities, diasporic spaces, and processes of integration and reconciliation following the war. Whilst Takšheva has examined Yugonostalgia in BiH (discussed 1.3), there is a lack of research on Bosnian diasporic communities, with BiH hosting the largest diaspora in terms of population from the former Yugoslav states.[59] By expanding the scope to focus on the Bosnian diaspora, as well as the and the Netherlands, my research is further situated within highly relevant academic and social developments regarding postwar Yugoslav identities and Yugonostalgia within newer generations. My research is, furthermore, the first work to focus on the Bosnian diaspora in the Netherlands in relation to Yugonostalgia, largely contributing to this lack of research by providing new insights and findings.

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[57] Milica Popović, "Yugonostalgia. The Meta-National Memory Narratives of the Last Pioneers," 42-50. ; Dilyara Müller-Suleymanova, ""I am something that no longer exists ..." : Yugonostalgia among diaspora youth," 191-202.
[58] Mitja Velikonja, "Lost in Translation: Nostalgia for Socialism in Post-socialist Countries," 538.
[59] "Info about Diaspora," I-Platform, accessed 01-22-24, https://www.i-platform.ch/en/info-about-diaspora#:~:text=In%20comparison%20to%20other%20European,share%20of%20nationals%20living%20abroad.

Moreover, recent calls from the region, notably the *New Solidarities: Migration, Mobility, Diaspora, and Ethnic Tolerance in Southeast Europe* collection edited by Tamara Pavasović-Trošt (2019), have urged for research on postwar Yugoslav communities to examine new identities and solidarities emerging in the region, void of ethnic attachments and intolerances, and under the lenses of new generations, migration, mobility, and diaspora.[60] This shifting focus, argues Pavasović-Trošt, can do much to undo the 'Balkanisation' lens often placed on post-Yugoslav spaces and actors, which presume notions of ancient hatreds and irreconcilable differences, which in turn have given rise to alarmist warnings that the region is "sinking deeper and deeper into the abyss of ethnic intolerance."[61] Given that current political discourses and developments in BiH largely champion notions of intolerance, examining resistance to these narratives through the existence and maintenance of Yugonostalgia within new generations of the diaspora does much to assign emancipatory power to new forms of identity that emerge postwar.[62] As a result, my research does not only contribute to research calls and developments within academia, but also largely touches on important social implications for post-Yugoslav communities and identities. My research, therefore, intends to contribute to understandings of new identities, solidarities, and diversities within post-Yugoslav societies, with the intention of boosting morale and social cohesion in the region.

## 1.6 Methodology and Sources

The primary method for my research consists of recorded, in-depth, semi-structured life-history interviews with ten participants that form a sample of the second generation Bosnian

[60] Tamara Pavasović-Trošt, **"**New Solidarities: Migration, Mobility, Diaspora, and Ethnic Tolerance in Southeast Europe," 1-7.
[61] Tamara Pavasović-Trošt, **"**New Solidarities: Migration, Mobility, Diaspora, and Ethnic Tolerance in Southeast Europe," 2.
[62] Florian Bieber, "After Dayton, Dayton? The Evolution of an Unpopular Peace," *Ethnopolitics* 5:1 (2006): 16.

diaspora in the Netherlands. Whilst the interview transcripts were heavily relied on for this research as the primary source, the oral histories I gathered were also studied within the context of other traditional research methods, including secondary source collection on Yugonostalgia, diasporas and transnationalism, as well as the comparisons with similar research in order to garner a comprehensive and concrete understanding of the findings within the interview transcripts.

The choice to use oral histories, particularly the life-history method, is informed by the ability to gather close readings of an individual's life story, whilst situating it "within the context of the larger socio-political structures and changes in response to which biographical trajectories take place."[63] Furthermore, narrative-biographical interviewing is being increasingly used within migration and transnationalism studies; given that Yugonostalgia, particularly in the context of generations and transnationalism, remains an understudied phenomenon, and the use of oral history methods can do much to reveal the ways in which the second generation diaspora makes sense of their families experiences of migration, forced displacement, and violence.[64] Margaret Somers has championed the use of life-history interviews, pointing out that a person's narrative identity is defined through their "temporally and spatially variable place in culturally constructed stories."[65] In this sense, oral history methods allow for "the broader contexts of the interviewee's lives [to be] situated within their descriptions of memories, feelings, events and attitudes."[66] These narratives, therefore, are "mediated through the enormous spectrum of social and political institutions and practices."[67] Therefore, any tendency towards privileging or overstating

[63] Dilyara Müller-Suleymanova, ""I am something that no longer exists ..." : Yugonostalgia among diaspora youth," 192.
[64] Dilyara Müller-Suleymanova, ""I am something that no longer exists ..." : Yugonostalgia among diaspora youth," 191-192.
[65] Margaret R. Somers, "The Narrative Constitution of Identity: A Relational and Network Approach," *Theory and Society* 23:5 (October, 1994): 635.
[66] Peter Jackson and Polly Russell, "Life History Interviewing," in *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Geography* ed. Dydia DeLyser et al., (Sage Publications: 2010), 196.
[67] Margaret R. Somers, "The Narrative Constitution of Identity: A Relational and Network Approach," 635.

individual agency is held in check by the "detailed and sustained nature of the life-story interview."[68] As a result, using oral history methods enables the ability to capture nuances of personal and collective experiences, making it a valuable tool for exploring under-researched phenomena such as Yugonostalgia, particularly in the context of transnationalism and generations.

I gathered ten participants through my personal networks as well as reaching out to Bosnian associations in the Netherlands, utilising the 'snowball method', whereby people who I met and interviewed recommended me to other potential participants. Page 87 of this research features a list of interviews. The participants, aged between 21 and 32, consisted of five males and five females. In terms of ethnic attachments, which forms a crucial part of my research, eight out of the ten interviewees identified themselves as lacking any attachment to Bosniak, Serb, or Croat ethnicities, despite their familial heritage, whilst the remaining two interviewees identified themselves as Bosniak. The interviews lasted between one to two hours, and they were semi-structured in terms of three sections of questions; the first of which looked at the participants' upbringing, followed by their relations to BiH and the SFRY, and finally their identifications within the Netherlands. The semi-structured format, however, allowed for flexibility, and depending on conversation flows throughout the interviews, certain topics were explored more in depth. Appendix B features an outline of interview questions which were used to structure each interview. In terms of transcription, the software *Riverside.fm* was used, followed by manual verification and editing to ensure accuracy and completeness.

Using oral history interviews as the primary method and sources for this research, however, is a delicate method that pertains to a series of ethical and practical considerations which must be addressed. In terms of anonymity and ethical considerations, all participants were

[68] Peter Jackson and Polly Russell, "Life History Interviewing," 196.

provided with an informed consent form prior to the interviews, of which they confirmed the use of their interview material for my research, as well as informing them of the possibility to withdraw from the study at any given time and to request an omittance of anything they may have shared. The consent form was created using a template provided by the University detailing specific ethical guidelines, and was confirmed as adequate by the research supervisor. I anonymised all participants names using a list of common names in BiH, and metadata concerning private or personal information, including references to towns, cities and associational organisations, have been omitted from this research and stored securely.

As a result of the in-depth nature of the interviews as well as their length, this research required extensive time resources for conducting, analysing and transcribing the interviews. Crucially, processes of selection when it came to what interview material should be used for the analysis posed a difficult challenge, and whilst I believe I have done my best to include all perspectives and relevant information, there is still a large selection of information which was unable to be included in the final research. I hope that these transcripts can serve as the basis for future and more in-depth research.

An obvious consequence of the process of gathering the participants is that the sample is influenced by an interest in and to engage with the research topic, and as such, the high prevalence of Yugonostalgic identities throughout my research must be considered in tangent with the sample selection in mind. Furthermore, as the interviews were mostly conducted in English, this also points to a potential skewed effect among my respondent base, as individuals who did not feel confident in their English abilities may not have been interested or comfortable with being interviewed. In fact, English constituted the third or sometimes fourth language that my participants spoke. During the interview process, The interviewees were informed to feel free to interchange between English and Bosnian if required, and translations from any use of the

Bosnian language was conducted by myself. From the transcripts used for this interview, nine were conducted in English, with participants occasionally using the Bosnian language to express certain phrases and anecdotes, and the interview with Nejla was conducted fully in the Bosnian language.

Finally, it is important to address the implications of my own identity and positioning for this research. Whilst, like most of my participants, I do not attach myself with any ethnic labels within BiH, my first and last name, as well as my place of origin in BiH, point to a Serb heritage. This may have impacted discussions on ethnicity and ethnic conflict throughout the research project, particularly as, despite lack of ethnic attachments, the majority of my participants' familial heritage was Bosniak. Whilst I am part of the Bosnian diaspora, I have no experience of an upbringing in the Netherlands, and therefore conceptions of the Netherlands and Dutch society were relied on by the sentiments shared within the interviews. Furthermore, my own Yugonostalgic identity has not only informed this research, but is likely to have resulted in my participants feeling the ability to share Yugonostalgic sentiments openly with me, which may not be done outside of the interview space and among their usual social networks. My personal attributes as the interviewer have therefore potentially impacted the participants' openness on the subject matter, and keeping this reflexivity in mind is crucial for understanding the dynamics of the interviews and their interpretations. As such, the data from the interviews should be approached with these considerations in mind.

## Chapter 2: *"Balkan Express"* How is the Bosnian diaspora situated within the Netherlands, and what identities and dynamics are at play among this community?[69]

This chapter will provide a brief historical background and context surrounding the creation of the SFRY following WWII, its dissolution (1991-1992), and the Bosnian War (1992-1995), in order to understand the formation and processes behind Bosnian identities and ethnic divisions since the 1990s. In addition, the specificities of Bosnian migration patterns and processes of integration within the Netherlands following the collapse of the SFRY will be outlined in order to contextualise the experiences of migration among the first-generation, and subsequently, how the second generation interview participants navigate multiple identities and the complexities that arise. The relationship between BiH and the Netherlands, largely revolving around the legacies of the Dutchbat in Srebrenica, is further discussed including the ways in which this relationship impacts identities and dynamics within the Bosnian diaspora. Furthermore, this chapter will examine the presence and activities of Bosnian diaspora organisations operating within the Netherlands in order to contextualise community interactions and influences among the second generation. This chapter, therefore, will highlight the various identities and influences at play among the interviewees, which are further developed in Chapters 3 and 4.

### 2.1 Historical Context of the SFRY and BiH

General Josip Broz Tito and the Partisans witnessed great successes during WWII, and the communist party was officially elected into power in 1944 under Tito, with the existing

[69] "*Balkan Express*" is a 1983 Yugoslav film from director Branko Baletić. This title metaphorically evokes the mass migration of Yugoslav refugees following displacement from the war.

*Democratic Federal State of Yugoslavia* renamed as the *Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia* (SFRY) which encompassed six constituent republics; Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Slovenia, with Kosovo and Vojvodina serving as socialist autonomous republics.[70] Tito and the Partisan government would remain in power until his death in 1980, and under his rule the nation saw mass strides in industrialisation, economic prosperity, and ethnic harmony under Tito's leading doctrine of 'brotherhood and unity.'[71] The death of Tito, coupled with political and economic decline throughout the 1980s, led to a rise in tensions and nationalisms between and among the six republics when it came to the future of the nation, and the realities of 'brotherhood and unity.'[72] In 1991, Slovenia was the first of the republics to officially declare their secession from the SFRY to independence, triggering the collapse of the state and a series of wars witnessed in the 1990s.[73]

The Bosnian War (1992-1995) witnessed the most intense concentration of violence during the collective Yugoslav wars, largely due to the multiethnic nature of the state which encompasses three constituent people; with 50.1% Bosniak, 30.8% Serb, and 15.4% Croat ethnic identities present in a 2021 consensus.[74] The Bosnian War culminated in the Srebrenica Genocide in July of 1995, which witnessed the deaths of over 8000 Bosniak men and boys, resulting in international intervention and the signing of the the Dayton Peace Accords (DPA) to signal the

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[70] John C. Campbell, "Tito: The Achievement and the Legacy" *Foreign Affairs* 58:5 (Summer, 1980): 1046.
[71] John C. Campbell, "Tito: The Achievement and the Legacy,"1046.
[72] Tone Bringa, "The Peaceful Death of Tito and the Violent End of Yugoslavia," in *Death of the Father: An Anthropology of the End in Political Authority*, ed. John Borneman (New York: 2004): 1045.
[73]Aleksandar Bošković, "Yugonostalgia and Yugoslav Cultural Memory: Lexicon of Yu Mythology," *Slavic Review* 72:1 (Spring, 2013): 56.
[74]Connie Svob et al., "Intergenerational transmission of historical memories and social-distance attitudes in post-war second-generation Croatians" *Memory Cognition* 44:1, (2016): 847. ; Bosnia and Herzegovina Demographics Profile" IndexMundi, last modified 18-09-2021. https://www.indexmundi.com/bosnia_and_herzegovina/demographics_profile.html#:~:text=3%2C824%2C782%20(July%202021%20est.)&text=Bosniak%2050.1%25%2C%20Serb%2030.8%25,1%25%20(2013%20est.)&text=Bosnian%20(official)%2052.9%25%2C,0.2%25%20(2013%20est.)

end of the war in December 1995.[75] The DPA, attempting to prevent an imbalance of power and further tension and violence among ethnic groups, established two political entities in BiH; the Federation, which encompasses the majority of the Bosniak and Croat population, and the Republika Srpska, with a dominant Serb population.[76] Furthermore, the DPA introduced a presidential system whereby a Serb, Croat, and Bosniak representative form the presidency, with a four year rotation implemented.[77] As such, political bodies and representatives within BiH work largely towards securing their respective ethnic group's interests, which in turn has led to weak institutions and limited progress in terms of repairs and reconciliations following the war.[78] With thirty two years since the implementation of the DPA, the nation is still marked by high ethnic division and intolerance, nationalism, and a highly corrupt political sphere.[79]

[75] Birgit Bahtić-Kunrath, "Of veto players and entity-voting: Institutional gridlock in the Bosnian reform process," *Nationalities Papers* 39:6 (2011), 900.
[76] Birgit Bahtić-Kunrath, "Of veto players and entity-voting: Institutional gridlock in the Bosnian reform process," 900.
[77] Birgit Bahtić-Kunrath, "Of veto players and entity-voting: Institutional gridlock in the Bosnian reform process," 900.
[78] Florian Bieber, "After Dayton, Dayton? The Evolution of an Unpopular Peace," 16.
[79] Florian Bieber, "After Dayton, Dayton? The Evolution of an Unpopular Peace," 16.

 [80]

Figure 1. A school in Tuzla, which is divided based on ethnicity whereby Croat children attend the right side of the school, with the left side for predominantly Bosniak students to attend.

The interview participants expressed great awareness as well as dissatisfaction with the political and social set up in post-war BiH, largely touching on notions of ethnic divisions and corrupt politicians. Andreja discussed how conditions in BiH are "*the fault of stupid political games and politicians, who are all criminals,*" and Marko discussed how seeing his parents yell at politicians on the TV when watching Bosnian news channels was a common occurrence at home. Nejla stated that politicians in BiH "*have no right to continue the war narrative,*" and in discussing his family in BiH, Marko remarked how his nieces and nephews are "*met day by day by those hatreds, those graffitis, those politicians on television saying tomorrow we are going to separate, and next week the army will be on standby*." Marko explained that his family identify with "*the fourth category of others*," that is, a lack of ethnic attachment to the three constituent peoples, and explained that his parents "*hate that they have to be others in their own country.*"

[80] Laura Boushnak, photograph, 2018, in *In Divided Bosnia, Segregated Schools Persist* by Barabara Surk (New York Times: 2018), https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/01/world/europe/bosnia-schools-segregated-ethnic.html.

The majority of participants echoed similar sentiments about their disdain toward ethnic divisions in BiH, with Tarik arguing that politicians should work towards "*teaching young people to stop dividing by religion, and understand we are one people*" and Andreja claiming that "*people in Bosnia are making their own torture… they want to separate all the time.*" Andreja further noted how the Netherlands is a highly multicultural country, *"even more than in Bosnia, and they can all live together here… why can't we have that in Bosnia?"* she posed. Thus, it was apparent that the weak and divisive political and social structure in BiH was an omnipresent thought among the interviewees, demonstrating an ongoing struggle for unity, as well as the pervasive impact of ethnic divisions on everyday life, even for the second generation diaspora, with no experience living in BiH and far removed in the Netherlands.

Due to the nature of the political and social set up in postwar BiH, therefore, citizens have little room to resist ethnic identities and divisions. Current reports from the region suggest that BiH is far from internal reconciliation, even in comparison to the other former Yugoslav states which have been significantly more progressive, including Slovenia and Croatia joining the European Union (EU) in 2004 and 2013.[81] The war led to much forced internal displacement within BiH as well as mass external migration, with an estimated 3 million Bosnians making up the diaspora today, which constitutes the same size as Bosnians living within BiH, and is one of the largest European diasporas today. Such extensive displacement and ongoing ethnic divisions underscore the contested nature of Bosnian nationhood as well as a complex relationship in terms of attachment to the homeland, which has a high influence on identity formation processes among the second generation, explored further in subsequent chapters.

[81] Henry Redwood et al., "Hybrid Peacebuilding in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Participatory Arts and Youth Activism as Vehicles of Social Change" *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development* 17:1 (January, 2022): 3.

## 2.2 Socio-Historical Context of Bosnian Migration & Diaspora in the Netherlands

In terms of mapping the history of the Bosnian diaspora within the Netherlands, Haris Halilovich et al. have provided a comprehensive report and analysis of the Bosnian diaspora structure and practices within the Netherlands. The report includes individuals who were born in BiH, as well as the descendants of Bosnian migrants who thus consider BiH as their homeland.[82] The migration of Bosnians in the Netherlands started in the 1970s, following the establishment of a guest-worker agreement between Yugoslavia and the Netherlands, starting a trend of economic migration.[83] However, the vast majority of Bosnians arrived in the 1990s following the breakup of Yugolsavia and the subsequent Bosnian War, with the Netherlands able to accommodate thousands of refugees in the 1990s and early 2000s.[84]

Among the participants, all of their parents had arrived in the Netherlands in the 1990s due to escalating conflict during the Bosnian War. Currently, the Central Statistics Bureau of the Netherlands (CSBNL) estimates a total of 2119 BiH citizens living in the Netherlands as of 2016, and the 2017 report found that of these, 51 are second generation.[85] Whilst this number appears low, it is important to note that the CSBNL does not differentiate among those who arrived from Yugoslavia by the respective resulting republics.[86] Furthermore, the vast majority of Bosnian refugees arriving in the Netherlands have taken advantage of the Dutch citizenship regime, obtaining dual citizenship after five years of residency.[87] These high levels of naturalisation observed, therefore, point to high levels of integration among the Bosnian diaspora

[82] Haris Halilovich et al, *Mapping the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Diaspora: Utilizing the SocioEconomic Potential of the Diaspora for Development of BiH*, MHRR BiH & IOM, 2018, 140.
[83] Haris Halilovich et al, *Mapping the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Diaspora,* 140.
[84] Haris Halilovich et al, *Mapping the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Diaspora,* 140.
[85] Haris Halilovich et al, *Mapping the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Diaspora,* 141.
[86] Haris Halilovich et al, *Mapping the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Diaspora,* 141.
[87] Haris Halilovich et al, *Mapping the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Diaspora,* 142.

within Dutch society, as well as their general acceptance within it. Nonetheless, a 2013 report for the BiH Ministry for Security Migration Profile found the total number of individuals born in BiH living in the Netherlands was 25,440. Halilovich estimates that when including the second generation, an estimated 30-35,000 Bosnians reside in the Netherlands, as confirmed by his interlocutors.[88] As a result, Bosnians today form the ninth largest immigrant group in the Netherlands today.[89]

The Bosnian population generally has experienced low levels of discrimination within Dutch society and is considered to be a highly integrated group within the Netherlands.[90] Throughout the interviews, it was evident that all participants considered themselves highly integrated, with many of them referring to themselves as 'Dutch' and stating they have received very little, if any, discrimination based on their parents' migrant status or ancestral home. The Halilovich et al. report demonstrates that migrants from Bosnia are often understood to have obtained higher education levels, and research has shown that over 40% of the second generation has a university/vocational university degree, which is higher than the Dutch national average.[91] Furthermore, Bosnian migrants are found to have nearly the same employment levels as native-born Dutch citizens, pointing to the fact that there are "successful and highly educated individuals who have connection to BiH living in the Netherlands including lawyers, doctors, business owners, and a variety of other professionals."[92]

Nejla claimed that a strong incentive and personal drive for obtaining a high level of education stems from the fact that she is the child of migrants, stating "*I always have the feeling that I have to prove myself, because I'm not a pure Dutch woman, this is why I want to be*

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[88] Haris Halilovich et al, *Mapping the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Diaspora,* 142.
[89] Haris Halilovich et al, *Mapping the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Diaspora,* 142.
[90] Haris Halilovich et al, *Mapping the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Diaspora,* 142.
[91] Haris Halilovich et al, *Mapping the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Diaspora,* 144.
[92] Peggy Levitt, "Roots and Routes: Understanding the Lives of the Second Generation Transnationally," 1230.

*successful*." Such sentiments from the interviewees demonstrate how the second generation diaspora is both aware of and seeking upward mobility within the community, which parallels trends studied by Levitt in relation to transnationalism and second generations, whereby the children of migrants feel the need to "compensate his or her parents for migrating by succeeding at school and at work."[93] There was also an observed level of pride in the interviews toward their Bosnian heritage within the Netherlands, with many participants noting this high level of integration and upward mobility. Dino discussed how other migrant groups in the Netherlands are not as well integrated, and he feels such groups should do more to educate themselves on Dutch culture. He believes migrants, including Bosnians, should not "*try to be a cool foreigner*," and should rather "*behave*" in the Netherlands. "*Your parents came here as guests, they were accepted, so you have to show your respect to those who accepted your parents and behave the way they want,"* he shared. Such sentiments further point to a positive self-image and a strong sense of community pride within the Bosnian diaspora in the Netherlands.

## 2.3 Navigating a Bosnian and Dutch Identity Among the Second Generation Diaspora

"*I'm both, but at the same time neither one.*" - Marko

Despite the high levels of integration into Dutch society, however, the interviews also revealed a set of challenges and conflicts among the participants when it came to navigating multiple identities and cultural influences. Whilst research on transnationalism often assumes the balancing of a home and host country, the addition of the 'lost' home country, the SFRY, to this mix creates an additional layer of complexity and diverging influences. The intersectionality of the participants' Yugonostalgic identities, therefore, with their existing Dutch and Bosnian identities, underscores the processes of how they reconcile with past ideals and present realities.

[93] Peggy Levitt, "Roots and Routes: Understanding the Lives of the Second Generation Transnationally," 1230.

The participants expressed the need to defend and educate their Dutch peers on both BiH and the SFRY, including addressing misconceptions about the region, as well dealing with insensitive and sometimes intrusive comments from Dutch peers. For instance, Dino noted his Dutch friends see BiH as "*the village from Borat,*" and that he feels the need to place a lot of effort into "*trying to promote how awesome it was*" in the SFRY.[94] This was echoed between Jana and Sofija, who discussed at length how they felt the need to educate their Dutch friends about their culture and the history of BiH and the SFRY, in order to allow their Dutch peers to better understand them. Despite their excitement to share their heritage with their Dutch peers, participants were also very aware that their upbringing and culture at home was vastly different when compared to their Dutch peers, with Jana sharing how as a child, she felt incredibly envious that her Dutch friends' grandparents would be in attendance for every birthday party, whereas she had to wait for the summers to visit her grandparents in BiH.

Difficulties with balancing multiple identities was highly apparent in the case of Luka, and he shared that within his Dutch circles, he is often highly disappointed by his peers' lack of knowledge about the history and culture of BiH and the SFRY. He explained how his Dutch friends have asked him how it is possible that his mother is Bosnian and that his father is Serbian, as they believed the two nations deeply hated each other, which he says largely upset him and felt very intrusive. He further shared how during an intense match of table tennis, his Dutch opponent exclaimed "*you Yugoslavs love waging war,*" which Luka explained he felt hurt by. Comments like this, Luka explained, have led to him becoming less attached to his Dutch identity as he gets older. He discussed how the election of Geert Wilders' far-right *Partij voor de Vrijheid* in the Netherlands has largely pushed him away from his Dutch identity due to Wilders'

[94] This reference is to the 2006 mockumentary film *Borat: Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan,* which portrays a satirical and exaggerated version of a Kazakh journalist exploring the USA, largely touching on stereotypical perceptions of Eastern European and Balkan countries as primitive and backward societies.

stance on migration and foreigners in the Netherlands, which many other participants echoed, and Luka further cited the Dutch stance on the ongoing attack on Gaza as something he refuses to accept. Luka explained that he thinks Dutch society present themselves as tolerable, but he disagrees, recalling times he felt pressured to use the same Dutch words and slang as his peers, listen to Dutch music, drink beer and join fraternity parties, and notes that when he does not join in, his Dutch peers make negative or derogatory comments. He stated that in the Netherlands, he feels "*its freedom gone wild*," and explained that his Dutch friends ask intrusive questions about sexuality, family, and habits, "*which does not happen with Bosnians,"* he claims. Tensions between their heritage and Dutch peers were present among the other interviewees who considered themselves highly integrated; Edin noted that he was also confronted with stereotypical misconceptions about his heritage, explaining how his Dutch colleagues often salute him when he walks into the office and call him "'*the communist,'"* and Sofija discussed how her colleagues asked her when her parents planned to return to BiH, of which she expressed great dissatisfaction towards such comments, stating "*they would never ask a Dutch person this.*"

Thus, it is clear that whilst the participants pointed to high integration, there were still conflicts when it came to how far this integration should go, with Luka boldly stating that if a Dutch person asks you to integrate into their society, you should resist,*"the only medicine is to be more proud of your origin and identity"* he claimed. Here, it is apparent in Luka's case that he experiences a significant conflict between his Dutch and Bosnian identity, and as a result, has largely distanced himself from his Dutch identity, demonstrating a higher level of identification and engagement with his heritage. Such findings point to the notion that whilst there is an acknowledgement of successful integration among the second generation diaspora, participants express ongoing struggles when it comes to their multiple identities. The participants' expressed disappointment in terms of a lack of cultural understanding and insensitivity from their Dutch peers, therefore, highlights a sense of longing among the second generation diaspora to locate

and orient themselves within their "complex (post-) migrant realities."[95] The legacies of the SFRY, therefore, which largely touch on ethnic harmony, can assist both identity challenges as well as contemporary cultural conflicts and misconceptions. Nonetheless, their attachments to their heritage, and the need to defend it among Dutch circles, demonstrates that there are strong transnational ties among the second generation in relation to the homeland.

Nonetheless, other participants expressed how they were able to find a balance between their Bosnian and Dutch identities, with Marija illustrating this by explaining that she feels like a "*chameleon,*" as she considers herself Dutch in public, and Bosnian in private. Marija explained how Dutch society values efficiency and organisation, which she practises when she is in the office at work, calling herself a *"real cheesehead."* However, she says that in her personal life she is "*always late*" and that her personal diary is very unorganised, and shared the anecdote that she often thinks, "*ma, posjle!"* (roughly translates to 'urgh, later!') in her daily life, to demonstrate her Bosnian cultural identity within private circles. She explained that she feels that her ability to balance both cultures and identities is a strength and an asset, claiming "*it allows me to better understand people, and therefore empathise with them*" and discussed how she largely uses this bi-cultural knowledge within the business world during work hours to her advantage. Marija's conceptions and navigation of her dual identity, therefore, demonstrate the potential of being raised in Levitt's concept of a 'transnational social field', whereby she is able to mobilise both identity structures and cultures in her daily life, often to her benefit. Marko shared similar thoughts, stating "*I think it's a privilege to have grown up with two cultures*," and echoed a similar narrative of utilising his Dutch identity at work, whereas he feels Bosnian at home and in private circles. Marko and Marija's experiences reveal, therefore, the ability to successfully navigate a multiplicity of identities, and demonstrate their perceived benefit of a transnational identity. These sentiments gathered from the interviews and the contrasting

[95] Dilyara Müller-Suleymanova, "Engaging with the Country of Origin and Its Past amongst Second-Generation Youth of Bosnian Descent in Switzerland," 5.

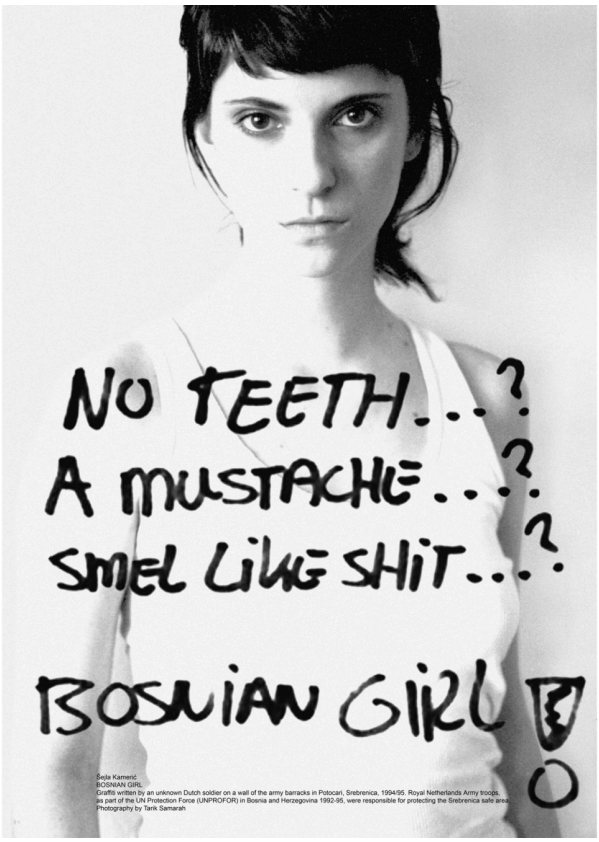
narratives, therefore, illustrate the varying conceptions and challenges at play within the second generation diaspora when it comes to both establishing and navigating identities, pointing to a complex process of identification with the homeland among second generation Bosnian diasporas. As subsequent chapters will demonstrate, this complex relationship with their heritage and a Bosnian identity translates into Yugonostalgia serving as a means by which they grapple with the contested nature of Bosnian nationhood and ethnic identities.

## 2.4 Dutch Involvement in Srebrenica and Implications for the Bosnian Diaspora

*"I can cry right now thinking about [Srebrenica], it feels like my own brothers and sisters…It makes me sick. I blame them, the soldiers"* - Andreja

Following the start of the ICTY hosted in the Hague as well as investigations and discussions on Dutch complicity in the Srebrenica genocide, Dutch conceptions of Bosnia, the Bosnian War and its diaspora were largely placed under what Marie Koinova terms a 'trauma-based identity.'[96] On July 5th, 2011, the Court of Appeal of The Hague held that the Netherlands had "acted unlawfully and is liable" for the eviction of four Bosnian generals from the compound of the Dutchbat in Srebrenica, giving way for Serb forces to begin the massacres against Bosniak men and boys.[97] *Bosnian Girl* by Šejla Kamerić (figure. 2) features the graffiti by an unknown Dutch soldier from the Royal Netherlands Army troops in the UN Protection Force in 1992-95, which was the troop responsible for protecting the Srebrenica safe area.[98]

[96] Marie Koinova, "Sustained vs. Episodic Mobilisation among Conflict-generated Diasporas" *International Political Science Review* 37 (July 2015): 501.
[97] André Nollkaemper, "Dual Attribution: Liability of The Netherlands for Conduct of Dutchbat in Srebrenica," *Journal of international Criminal Justice* 9:5 (November, 2011): 1143.
[98] Šejla Kamerić, *Bosnian Girl*, 2003, photograph, dimensions variable, accessed 12-05-24, https://sejlakameric.com/works/bosnian-girl/.



[99]

Figure 2. Graffiti by Dutch UN Peacekeepers in Srebrenica, 1992-1995.

Koinova's study on Bosnian-diaspora mobilisation in the Netherlands has revealed that the failure of the Dutch peace-keeping forces (Dutchbat), which Sofija refers to as "*the blue helmets*" and Edin as "*the Smurfs,*" has become deeply embedded within Dutch domestic politics.[100] This 'Srebrenica trauma' within Dutch society, further argues Dubravka Zarkov, led to an overwhelming sense of humiliation within Dutch society, contrasting with its "commitments

[99] Šejla Kamerić, *Bosnian Girl*, 2003, photograph, dimensions variable, accessed 12-05-24, https://sejlakameric.com/works/bosnian-girl/.
[100] Marie Koinova, "Sustained vs. Episodic Mobilisation among Conflict-generated Diasporas," 501.

to human rights, international law, and the naming and shaming of noncompliant states."[101] In fact, Marko claimed that Srebrenica is "*the blackest page in Dutch modern military history*." As a result, argues Koinova, "there has been an increased sense of guilt within Dutch society and a need to "recapture the lost sense of international acclaim."[102] As such, the tragedy of Srebrenica has become embedded within the relationship of Bosnia and the Netherlands, with the Bosnian diaspora "locked into a traumatic identity."[103] This may offer some explanations as to why Bosnian migrants in the Netherlands have found integration relatively easier than other migrant groups, as there has been a commitment from Dutch society to acknowledge and repair their mistakes surrounding Srebrenica and offer the Netherlands as a secure home for victims of the Bosnian War.

Among the participants, Edin had a slightly different experience in terms of facing discrimination based on his migrant status, which is likely the result of his arrival in the Netherlands before official recognition of the role of the Dutch peacekeepers in Srebrenica. Edin was born in 1990, and is the only participant to be born in BiH, arriving in the Netherlands as an infant. He recalls that obtaining Dutch citizenship happened very quickly, yet his experience of being a Bosnian immigrant in the Netherlands was met with far more criticism in comparison to the other participants, particularly as a child. He recalls how his Dutch schoolmates would call him a "*vieze Yugoslav,*" in Dutch, which translates to 'dirty Yugoslav.' Furthermore, following the 9/11 attacks in the USA and the rise of Islamophobia across the West, Edin recalls how he faced discrimination for being a Muslim, and that a group of 8-10 Dutch teenagers threw rocks at him and shouted anti-Islamic insults at him. He reiterated that being from Yugoslavia, or broadly Balkan or Eastern European, did not seem to be much of an issue, but rather his family's Bosniak

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[101] Dubravka Žarkov, "Srebrenica Trauma: Masculinity, Military and National Self-image in Dutch Daily Newspapers" in *Postwar Moment: Militaries, Masculinities and International Peacekeeping*, ed. Dubravka Žarkov and Cynthia Cockburn (Lawrence and Wishart, 2002): 183.
[102] Marie Koinova, "Sustained vs. Episodic Mobilisation among Conflict-generated Diasporas," 501.
[103] Marie Koinova, "Sustained vs. Episodic Mobilisation among Conflict-generated Diasporas," 501.

heritage, which whilst Edin claims they are not strongly attached to, their first names and family names served as a giveaway, was the main source of discrimination he faced. The commencement, therefore, of the ICTY trial and official acknowledgement of the Dutch failure in Srebrenica and subsequent collective guilt has largely curbed discrimination based on Bosnian heritage resulting in the other, younger participants sharing a lack of any discrimination based on their migrant status. In fact, practising Muslim participants expressed their gratitude for being able to practise their religion peacefully in the Netherlands, and Dutch recognition of a Bosniak identity, which can largely be attributed to shifting attitudes within Dutch society following Srebrenica investigations.

## 2.5 Bosnian Diaspora Associations in the Netherlands

There are a number of active Bosnian diaspora associations within the Netherlands which typically operate under the umbrella organisation *Platform BiH*, established in 1997.[104] As of 2018, *Business Club BiH, MladiBiH and Naučno Akademski Umjetnički Klub* are the largest associations and operate throughout the whole of the Netherlands, with a further 23 smaller associations operating regionally.[105] These include women's associations, diaspora activism clubs, and Bosnian regional clubs with the intentions of creating and fostering translocal ties with homeland communities.[106] The Halilovich et al. findings show that most diaspora organisations centre around ensuring that the second generation speaks the Bosnian language and inherits a Bosnian identity, which includes religious organisations and events, and others focusing on heritage, such as the *Kolo* dance and folklore.[107] Noteworthy, he states, are political mobilization efforts from the organizations which overwhelmingly focus on memorialisation

[104] Haris Halilovich et al, *Mapping the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Diaspora,* 144.
[105] Haris Halilovich et al, *Mapping the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Diaspora,* 144.
[106] Haris Halilovich et al, *Mapping the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Diaspora,* 144.
[107] Haris Halilovich et al, *Mapping the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Diaspora,* 144.

claims and awareness campaigns for the atrocities witnessed during the Bosnian War, often centering specifically around the Srebrenica Genocide.[108] Halilovich et al. note that among the existing associations, "there are none that are expressly organised only for [Bosnian] Serbs or Croats.[109]" As a result, Serb and Croat Bosnians tend to be "absorbed" into Serbian and Croatian diaspora networks, which are considered relatively weak in the Netherlands.[110] Although most Bosnian organisations are "expressly inclusive of all ethnonational groups in BiH, they often have a challenging time recruiting members of all three major constitutive peoples."[111]

As discussed, the Bosnian population in the Netherlands sits within a unique position that binds together the diaspora, host-state and home-state, due to the Dutchbat failure in Srebrenica as well as the commitment of the Netherlands to resolve the conflict, including the ICTY trials. As a result, the Bosnian diaspora becomes "locked into a traumatic identity," within the Netherlands, further exacerbated by transnational influences from the homeland which situate the Bosniak community within the position of victimhood.[112] Such a conflict-generated identity within the Netherlands has led to sustained mobilisation among the diaspora in terms of raising awareness for Srebrenica and championing a Bosniak identity, offering some insight into the role of Bosnian associations in the Netherlands, of which there are a vast majority in comparison to Serbian or Croatian associations.[113] In this sense, the Netherlands has provided a space among the Bosnian diaspora to flourish and celebrate their culture, however the focus falls largely on Bosniak identities which can be said to disregard the multiethnic nature of BiH. As a result, the emphasis on a Bosniak identity within diaspora organisations in the Netherlands has led to many interviewees distancing themselves from such groups, due to their perceptions that ethnic

[108] Haris Halilovich et al, *Mapping the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Diaspora,* 147.
[109] Haris Halilovich et al, *Mapping the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Diaspora,* 147.
[110] Haris Halilovich et al, *Mapping the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Diaspora,* 147.
[111] Haris Halilovich et al, *Mapping the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Diaspora,* 147.
[112] Marie Koinova, "Sustained vs. Episodic Mobilisation among Conflict-generated Diasporas," 501.
[113] Haris Halilovich et al, *Mapping the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Diaspora,* 147.

polarisation is being reproduced in the diaspora through the associations. The ways in which the interview participants have encountered and engaged in Bosnian associations is discussed in further detail in Chapter 4.

## 2.6 Concluding Statements

This chapter has outlined how the Bosnian diaspora is situated within the Netherlands, and some of the influences and dynamics at play. The findings indicate high levels of integration, upward social mobility and a lack of discrimination witnessed among the interviewees, of which there was an observed level of pride among the community. Nonetheless, this discussion has also covered a set of challenges and conflicts that are experienced by the second generation when it comes to balancing their Dutch and Bosnian identities, demonstrating varying perceptions among the interviewees, with participants like Luka becoming gradually detached from their Dutch identities, and others expressing the ability and perceived privilege of balancing multiple cultural identities. High integration efforts, however, are likely the result of the 'Srebrenica trauma' and collective guilt within Dutch society, leading to a recognition of the violence witnessed in BiH in the 1990s and a Bosniak identity. Lastly, this chapter has provided a framework for understanding the presence and role of Bosnian diaspora organisations in fostering community ties and maintaining cultural heritage within the Netherlands, including the emphasis on a Bosniak identity, which is further explored in later chapters. This contextual groundwork, therefore, situates the second generation Bosnian diaspora in the Netherlands, providing an understanding for both the individual and collective identities present and how these can influence the emergence of Yugonostalgic identities. The following chapter will examine the role of inherited family memories and narratives in relation to the SFRY to further explore how homelife influences feelings of Yugonostalgia among the second generation Bosnian diaspora.

## Chapter 3: *"Once upon a time, there was one country"* What is the role of inherited family memories and narratives of the SFRY in relation to Yugonostalgia among the second generation Bosnian diaspora?[114]

This chapter will explore the ways in which inherited family memories and narratives regarding the SFRY influence Yugonostalgic identities within the second generation Bosnian diaspora in the Netherlands. The central role of family narratives was evident across all the interviews, with every participant acknowledging that their memories and conceptualisations of the SFRY were directly influenced by their parents' narratives and experiences, often reminding me throughout the interviews that the SFRY did not exist anymore. A reliance and attachment to inherited memories, therefore, of the participants' families played a foundational role in shaping the second generation's conceptions of a homeland and identity, as well as informing their experiences of Yugonostalgia. This section will analyse, therefore, how inherited memories are subject to processes of emotional selection and intergenerationality, the overwhelmingly positive memories of the SFRY, and the influence of stronger ethnic attachments and inherited trauma. As such, this chapter will demonstrate how inherited family memories, whilst pointing to a potent influence on the second generations' Yugonostalgia, is still subject to processes of individual negotiation among the second generation resulting in new conceptualisations and attitudes towards the SFRY.

### 3.1 Emotional Memory

"*I think Yugonostalgia is more the memories of our parents and for us, I think, seeing their joy and thinking about those things, joining their joy."* - Dino

[114] *"Once upon a time there was one country"* is used as the subtitle for the 1995 film *Underground*, directed by Emir Kusturica, to reference the SFRY. It metaphorically evokes the idea of parents sharing stories of Yugoslavia with their child.

The interviews with the second generation revealed how there was a process of selection when it came to the participants' family memories, choosing largely to focus on more positive memories in order to evoke pleasant emotions, as well as to avoid more negative ones. The participants further demonstrated an acute awareness of the emotional factor and influence of their parents' memories towards the SFRY. For instance, Luka noted that when discussing Tito at home, his mother, "*gets goosebumps, still today,"* and said that they have no pictures of Tito in their home, "*because if we did, she would just cry all day.*" In contrast, Luka never discusses the war with his grandmother, as she experienced "*extreme trauma*" living in Sarajevo during the 1992-1996 siege by the Yugoslav People's Army. Dino further stated that preserving the positive memories of Yugoslavia within the family is very important to him, and claimed the main motivating force behind his Yugonostalgia is making his family happy by bringing up memories of the SFRY, of which he felt "*great fulfilment*." Andreja echoed a similar sentiment, stating that she chooses to only focus on the more positive memories her family has when discussing the SFRY, because she enjoys seeing them happy. Andreja shared that she once asked her grandparents about their experience during the war, and upon seeing them cry, she decided that she would "*never talk with them again about it… I don't want to bring back memories that are not fun*." Luka, Jana, Andreja and Marko recalled that war-time Yugoslavia was rarely discussed at home with their families, with Marko's understanding being that "*the nineties were the dark ages for them.*" In contrast, however, when Marko's parents discuss the SFRY in the 1970s or 1980s, their sentiments towards the Yugoslav era are very different; "*they're close to saying that they were Gods of the world, that Sarajevo was the capital of the world,*" he stated.

This selective remembering can result in skewed understandings by the second generation regarding the SFRY. This is further outlined in the findings by Müller-Suleymanova in her research on the Bosnian diaspora in Switzerland, who claims that whilst parents can be

reluctant to talk on difficult matters regarding the homeland and migration experiences, "children themselves also refrain from asking about the details of what might have been painful experiences," which Müller-Suleymanova coins a 'double wall of silence.'[115] This demonstrates that there are still unresolved tensions and emotions regarding the Bosnian War apparent in various Bosnian diaspora communities, pointing to the notion that the first generation is still at large unwilling to discuss the tragedies and violence of the 1990s. Coupled with current challenging conditions in post-war BiH, it is not by surprise that the Yugoslav era evokes strong emotions and attachments among the older generations who experienced it. Moreover, their families' sudden and forced relocations to the vastly different culture of the Netherlands serves only to intensify their memories of the SFRY and subsequent Yugonostalgia. As such, some participants demonstrated features of 'emotional transnationalism', coined by Ernstberger and Adaawen.[116] The participants' acknowledgement of the emotional factor of these memories, including purposefully trying to evoke positive memories in their parents, is what Müeller-Suleymanova refers to as 'moral practice' or 'practical wisdom.'[117]

## 3.2 Intergenerational Positioning

The participants also demonstrated an ability to conceptualise generational differences and influences when it came to inherited memories of the SFRY, and how this has impacted their own perceptions of the state, and subsequent feelings of Yugonostalgia. Throughout the interview process, participants noted repeatedly that their grandparents lived in the 'golden age' of industrialisation and post-WWII Yugoslavia, whilst their parents largely formed the 'new

[115] Dilyara Müller-Suleymanova, ""Shadows of the past: violent conflict and its repercussions for second-generation Bosnians in the diaspora," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 12:10 (September 2021): 1791.
[116] Melissa Ernstberger & Stephen Adaawen, "A transnational family story: A narrative inquiry on the emotional and intergenerational notions of 'home,'" *Emotion, Space and Society* 48, no 1 (2023): 3.
[117] Dilyara Müller-Suleymanova, ""Shadows of the past: violent conflict and its repercussions for second-generation Bosnians in the diaspora," 1791.

wave' of 1980s, characterised in the interviews as the time of social and cultural prosperity; Yu-Rock, the Yugoslav alternative/punk scene, and the height of Yugoslav cinema. Nonetheless, participants shared that they repeatedly reminded themselves that their parents also fall under the 'war generation', having experienced the extreme violence in BiH throughout the 1990s, leading to their eventual migration to the Netherlands. Tarik noted how the Yugoslav era was "*not so nice*" for his parents, yet he acknowledges that his grandparents talked very fondly about the SFRY, "*because it's all they knew*." These findings demonstrate how generational differences can influence and shape feelings of Yugonostalgia, with the participants' parents' generation largely influenced by repercussions of a violent past, which appear in large to have not yet been reconciled. Katie Barclay and Nina Koefoed have argued that family stories should not be seen as linear descendants of information, but rather, family stories involve the reconstruction of information across generations, as part of a "group negotiation at times", and reflects in the notion that different generations will have different views and ideas about what stories should be told and remembered and in what form, and what should not be passed on.[118]

Generational differences, therefore, can further result in processes of selective remembering of the SFRY, and in this regard, later generations, including my participants, are left with fragmented stories and memories of the SFRY. In fact, Marija shared that she would like to teach her own child about the SFRY one day, and claimed that when the time comes, "*it's up to my parents to tell her about Yugoslavia… I want her to remember the same things I do."* As a result, these findings show that the reliance of these inherited memories is not only confined to the second generation, but newer generations' memories are also dependent on those with lived experiences of the SFRY. This implies that the memories of the SFRY are somewhat 'stuck in time,' and the narratives of the first generation are an incredibly potent source of Yugonostalgia as the last carriers of lived experience in the SFRY. The reliance and influence of their

[118] Katie Barclay & Nina Javette Koefoed, "Family, Memory and Identity: An Introduction," *Journal of Family History* 46:1 (January 2021): 4.

grandparents' stories of the 'golden age' and their parents' 'new age' experiences of the SFRY has, therefore, resulted in positive memories of the SFRY and observable levels of inherited Yugonostalgia among the second generation, which are likely to continue among newer generations.

### 3.3. Positive Memories of the SFRY

*"When you talk about Yugoslavia, Yugoslavia will never die. ...I want to live there now, but I can't, because it doesn't exist anymore"* - Andreja

All interview participants recalled similar, overwhelmingly positive second hand impressions and inherited memories of the SFRY. Adjectives used by the participants in relation to the SFRY included 'strong', 'equal', 'easy', 'positive', 'united', 'beautiful', 'great', 'dreamlike', 'utopian'. Strong social and economic conditions in Yugoslavia were frequently brought up as part of the memories inherited by the second generation, coined numerous times as a 'golden age,' with participants sharing memories about strong healthcare, education, and administrative institutions, memorable cultural productions, geographical freedom, ethnic harmony, and equality. "*[The SFRY] had things that weren't available here in the Netherlands, back then*" stated Dino. The terms 'easy' or 'slow' life were used repeatedly throughout the interviews when describing their parents' memories of the SFRY, with stories about "*driving to the coast for a day*" (Tarik), "*sleeping on a bench without anyone disturbing you*" (Dino), "*everybody seemed to get the opportunities that they wanted and needed*" (Marija), "*nobody could do anything to us.*" (Luka), and "*just a beautiful time to live in"* (Andreja). These positive sentiments were expressed largely in conjunction with comparisons to conditions in post-war BiH, of which participants were overwhelmingly negative about the current state of social, economic and political affairs. As a result, the romanticised memories of the SFRY serve as a means by which to compare and critique present day conditions in BiH, which in turn serves as a

strong influence on their experiences of Yugonostalgia. Here, it was apparent that the second generations' inherited positive memories of the SFRY pointed to Velikonja's 'retrospective utopia' explanation of Yugonostalgia, whereby the participants' attachments to positive inherited memories of the SFRY embody "a utopian hope that there must be a society that is better than the current one." The impact of visits to BiH and negative sentiments towards the state in relation to Yugonostalgia are further discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

Processes of negotiation towards their inherited positive memories were evident when many participants demonstrated an awareness and critical stance on their own positioning and the influences that have contributed to their memories of Yugoslavia. For instance, Luka claimed that whilst he sees the SFRY as a very positive time due to his parents' stories, he is aware of religious discrimination, human rights violations under Tito, including the suppression of freedom of speech, and believes that the SFRY ultimately was "*putting nationalism in a freezer*" for "a *few good decades of time*." Dino explained how he thinks that feelings of Yugonostalgia are "*playing games with yourself*," echoed by Tarik who stated that Yugonostalgics within the diaspora "*are trying to preserve a zeitgeist that no longer exists*," noting the impossibility of return. Nejla admitted that it is easier for her to criticise the state in hindsight, and Andreja acknowledged that she would not be as Yugonostalgic as she claims to be if she lived in BiH, stating "*you might meet people who killed in the war, or who could have killed you.*" Tarik further argues that his feelings of longing for the SFRY are "*really just nostalgia by proxy*," and Edin notes how only during his own research into the SFRY did he learn about suppression of political dissent, including Goli Otok, Tito's political prisoner island. As such, Edin discussed how whilst "*the idea of Yugoslavia in 2024 somehow sounds very appealing,*" he acknowledges that he would not return to a pre-war Yugoslavia, due to his awareness of the more negative and repressive elements of the state and Tito's rule. Marija shares a similar sentiment, and cites how when she was younger she longed for the return of the SFRY. However, as she got older, she

stated that she became very disillusioned about its likelihood and recalled seeing bullet holes all over buildings, holes in the ground from grenades, mass graves, and ethnic intolerance in post-war BiH. "*It's not an option or possibility to return [to the SFRY], and I know that*," she says. Here, we see how the interview participants, despite incredibly positive second-hand impressions, demonstrated negotiations towards their inherited Yugonostalgic identities and positive memories of the SFRY by challenging dominant narratives, and acknowledging memories and narratives that do not fit in with their parents' experiences. This further points to generational differences in terms of Yugonostalgia among the second generation diaspora, whereby the historical memory of the SFRY from older generations undergoes a process of critical reassessment, and is situated within the broader historical context of the SFRY. The juxtaposition, therefore, of the idealised second-hand impressions of the SFRY with more nuanced understandings present among the interviewees results in a more balanced and critical Yugonostalgia among the second generation. These findings uncover, therefore, the complex process by which the legacies of post-socialist memory have lingering effects among newer generations.

Nonetheless, despite these processes of negotiation, participants demonstrated the maintenance of Yugonostalgic identities, despite both individual and cultural criticisms of their Yugonostalgia. For instance, Dino mentioned how he has been told several times that he should talk and think about BiH more by some family members and peers, "*but they forget that Yugoslavia is our history, and we are part of it*" he says. This was apparent among other interviewees, with Edin, Andreja and Marija sharing they have also been told by peers to focus their attention and attachments to post-war BiH, often pointing to the futility of being Yugonostalgic. Andreja noted that some members of her family remind her of her Serb ethnicity when expressing her Yugonostalgia as a point of criticism, and Marija noted how she has had "*many heated discussions*" regarding her Yugonostalgia, mostly with people with "*strong ethnic*

*attachments, but I often give up, because nobody will convince the other.*" Here, Velinkonja's explanation of Yugonostalgia as a resistance strategy, whereby an individual's (inherited) personal history and group identity is preserved "against the new ideological narratives, historical revisionism, and imposed amnesia."[119] The persistence, therefore, of Yugonostalgic identities among the interviewees, despite facing individual and cultural criticisms, underscores a strong level of Yugonostalgia among the second generation diaspora, whereby the longing to override pressures to conform to national identities and narratives in post-war is able to transcend critical and realistic understandings of the SFRY.

## 3.4 The Influence of Ethnic Attachments and Inherited Trauma

Stronger ethnic attachments, as well as trauma experienced in the war, emerged as significant influences for a more negative conceptualisation of the memories of the SFRY among the second generation diaspora throughout the interview process. Despite the overwhelmingly positive recollections of inherited memories regarding the SFRY, both Tarik and Nejla expressed more negative sentiments about the state, which largely focused on politics, state structure, and Bosniak discrimination. Important to note is that both Tarik and Nejla were the only two participants to explicitly identify with Bosniak ethnic-attachment, with both of their families engaged Islamic religious traditions and cultural practices. Tarik remembers whilst the bigger cities within the SFRY witnessed economic and social prosperity, more rural regions such as the Bosanska Krajina (western BiH), where his family heritage lies, conditions were poor. Tarik recalled how his family grew up "*very, very poor,*" citing how his grandmother's village only received electricity in the late 1960s, serving as a contradiction to the more positive memories other participants hosted. Nejla shared similar sentiments, claiming that her family did not experience the levels of prosperity that other interviewees emphasised, and that they "*were not*

[119] Mitja Velikonja, "Lost in Translation: Nostalgia for Socialism in Post-socialist Countries," 547.

*the biggest communists,*" recalling how prior to the collapse of Yugoslavia, there were in fact many people within BiH actively criticising the state and Tito's rule. Nejla notes that she often hears a lot about 'brotherhood and unity' within the SFRY, but she doesn't *"believe it was really like that,*" mentioning that there were high levels of discrimination against religious believers under the SFRY, particularly towards Muslims in BiH, which she cites as a main point for her difficulty expressing feelings of Yugonostalgia. Similarly, Tarik wrote his Bachelor thesis on the legal structure of the SFRY, and his conclusions were that the seven states were not equally powerful, and that the concentration of power in Belgrade points to contradictions of a state run by the notion of equality and 'brotherhood and unity'. This is, again, in stark contrast to the overwhelmingly positive and romanticised memories that other participants recalled about the SFRY, which often echoed sentiments about unity, peace and ethnic tolerance. Furthermore, Tarik's family experienced extreme violence during the Bosnian War, with his father fighting for the Bosnian army and members of his family being forcibly placed in Bosniak concentration camps. As a result, he claims that the SFRY should be seen as a "*golden coated era,*" and says that he finds it hard to express Yugonostalgia due to his family's negative experiences. Tarik and Nejla family experiences, therefore, reveal how negative family narratives and inherited traumas can result in a rejection of a Yugonostalgic identity and romanticised narratives about the state.

The findings here point to the influence of family narratives and stories in regard to violence and discrimination witnessed in the war, leading to a disruption of the seemingly dominant positive narrative ascribed to the SFRY. Given that the brutality of the war in BiH was largely concentrated toward the Bosniak population, it comes to no surprise that both Tarik and Nejla's perceptions and memories of the SFRY have been directly impacted by their parent's negative experiences. As such, their negative perceptions of the SFRY are largely rooted in ethnic conflict, demonstrating how violence experienced by the family can in turn create collective traumas that are inherited by the younger generations, gradually turning into a

collective memory. Particularly in the context of ethnic, religious or ideological conflicts, write Baser & Toivanen, this collective and cultural trauma can "linger for generations" both in the minds of those with direct experience, and those who have inherited the memories.[120] Tarik & Nejla's Bosniak identity and inherited trauma, therefore, provides a starkly different perspective from the more romanticised view of the SFRY demonstrated by the other interview participants, and highlights the influence of stronger ethnic attachments and unresolved tensions over the war on experiences of Yugonostalgia.

The inherited memories of Nejla and Tarik further challenged the dominant narrative of the SFRY present among the other interviewees when it came to the question of whether or not the Bosnian War should be considered a part of a continuous Yugoslav history, or whether the two can be conceptualised as different. Both Tarik and Nejla were firm in their position that the war should not be separated from the memory of the SFRY; Nejla argued that the war is a part of Yugoslav identity and history, and Tarik believes that the Yugoslav era was what led to the war in the first place. Conversely, the majority of interview participants shared that they believe the 1990s war period should remain a separate history of the region, disconnected from the era of Yugoslavia under Tito's rule. In this sense, we can see how the inherited memories of Nejla and Tarik not only challenge the dominant narrative of the SFRY, but also demonstrate "personal costs in admitting to a personal identity that does not fit into the national memory."[121] These diverging views on the war, which were almost identical to the findings of Müeller-Suleymanova in Switzerland, point to a challenge within processes of reconciliation among the second generation across different diasporas and the pervasive impact of the Bosnian War on Bosnian communities across different places.[122] Furthermore, the awareness of the events in wartime BiH

[120] Bahar Baser & Mari Toivanen, "Inherited traumas in diaspora: postmemory, past-presencing and mobilisation of second-generation Kurds in Europe" *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 47:2 (2024): 300.
[121] Katie Barclay & Nina Javette Koefoed, "Family, Memory and Identity: An Introduction," 7.
[122] Dilyara Müller-Suleymanova, ""Shadows of the past: violent conflict and its repercussions for second-generation Bosnians in the diaspora," 1786-1802.

in the Netherlands, culminating in the ICTY trials, as well as the Dutch collective guilt surrounding Srebrenica, is likely to have impacted this perception of Yugoslav history as well as Bosniak victimhood among second generation Bosnians living in the Netherlands. Thus, this conflict observed within the interviews over historical narratives highlights both unresolved tensions among the second generation diaspora in terms of their ancestral home's violent history, as well as how this can affect processes of reconciliation, shaping sentiments towards the SFRY and subsequent varying levels of Yugonostalgia.

Nonetheless, a strong emphasis on a Bosniak identity as well as inherited trauma has not led to a complete distancing and rejection of a Yugoslav heritage among the second generation. For instance, despite their negative associations and conceptions of the SFRY, both Nejla and Tarik claimed to feel Yugonostalgic when it came to more cultural elements of the state, including music, clothing, graffiti and cinema. This notion of cultural Yugonostalgia has been explored within Zala Volčić's study on cultural memory in Yugoslavia, whereby the mobilisation of Yugoslav culture attempts to re-create a shared cultural memory which "paradoxically harkens back to a shared cultural history," despite new forms of national identities that continue to divide the former SFRY states.[123] Material culture productions of the SFRY, therefore, have led Yugonostalgic sentiments, even among those with inherited traumas and families with negative sentiments about the SFRY. These findings have been consistently echoed within other research on Yugonostalgia, whereby cultural identifications, particularly with music and Yu-Rock, are incredibly prevalent.[124] Furthermore, both Nejla and Tarik shared the sentiment that the Yugoslav era was better than post-war BiH today, in terms of socio-cultural characteristics. This paradox, therefore, illuminates the notion that cultural elements of the SFRY emerge as significantly strong influences and avenues of Yugonostalgia, even among participants with stronger ethnic

[123] Zala Volčič, "Yugo-Nostalgia: Cultural Memory and Media in the Former Yugoslavia," 21.
[124] More works focused on Yu-Rock and Yugonostalgia include Polona Petek (2014), Ana Hoffman (2015), and Ana Petrov (2018).

attachments and inherited traumas. Nejla shared her thoughts, explaining "*for me, Yugonostalgia is music, and how you dress and all that, but it's not really connected to that political country that existed*." This demonstrates the complexities behind transnational ties with the ancestral home, as well as the fragmented nature of Yugonostalgia, whereby cultural elements are fondly remembered, yet political elements, including the wartime period, emerge as points of contention and unresolved tension among the second generation.

## 3.5 Concluding Statements

The central role of inherited memories and second-hand impressions from family stories and narratives emerges as a significant influence for Yugonostalgia among the second generation, with the majority of participants expressing overwhelmingly positive impressions of the SFRY. Emotional selection as well as generational differences, however, regarding these memories is likely to have resulted in skewed understandings of the SFRY, with a dominant focus on positive memories in order to evoke pleasant emotions and avoid discussions on the collapse of the state and subsequent wars. Thus, selective remembering as well as emotional inheritance largely contribute to romanticised second hand impressions of the SFRY and subsequent Yugonostalgia among the second generation. Despite these romanticised memories, the interviewees also revealed a process of negotiation towards these inherited memories and their contrast with historical realities, resulting in a more balanced and nuanced understanding of both their SFRY and their feelings of Yugonostalgia. Strong ethnic attachments and inherited traumas, however, resulted in a more critical position towards Yugonostalgia, largely going against the dominant narrative of a 'golden age' and pointing to unresolved reconciliations with a violent past. Nonetheless, the maintenance of Yugonostalgic identities, despite individual negotiation and inherited negative memories, points to firstly, to the strong drive behind rejecting post-war narratives and conditions in BiH, as well as strong Yugonostalgic identities within the second

generation diaspora. The following chapter, therefore, will focus on how community engagement and cultural interactions and preservation with the homeland further influence relations to the homeland, identity formations and Yugonostalgic feelings.

## Chapter 4: *"Look at your home, angel"* How do individual experiences of community engagement and cultural preservation within the second generation Bosnian diaspora in the Netherlands inform Yugonostalgia?[125]

This chapter will examine the intricacies and dynamics of the second generation Bosnian diaspora's connections with BiH through community engagement and cultural preservation, and how far this informs their experiences and expressions of Yugonostalgia. It will examine, firstly, the role of transnational visits to BiH and how this shapes perceptions of the homeland, resulting in feelings of disappointment and insecurity towards postwar conditions. Furthermore, community engagement through participation and views on Bosnian diaspora associations will be discussed, whereby despite the associations' strong role in preserving cultural heritage, there is a rejection of these spaces among the interviewees due to perceptions of ethnic divisions being reproduced within such spaces. Finally, this section will examine engagement with cultural elements of the SFRY, with an emphasis on the role of Yu-Rock and music oriented events among the diaspora. The findings will show how an attachment to Yu-Rock subculture results in diasporic spaces that are void of an ethno-nationalist framework for identification, allowing for new identities and solidarities to emerge based on shared cultural heritage among the second generation diaspora.

### 4.1 Visits to Bosnia & Herzegovina

"*Sometimes it makes me really sad to see what could be and where we are now. And that's the point where the Yugonostalgia kicks in hard*." - Marko

[125] *"Look at your home, angel*" or *"Pogledaj dom svoj anđele"* is in reference to a 1985 song by Yugoslav band Riblja Čorba, of which the lyrics detail the horrors of present society to metaphorical angels.

All participants stated that they visited BiH at least once a year, often during the summer, with many sharing positive memories including enjoying the local food, nature, weather, and seeing family. Last summer, Marko and his wife were married in BiH which he says was a "*dream come true,*" and expresses how exciting and fulfilling it was to show their Dutch guests their home city. Visits to the homeland are a central feature of the migrant experience, with Jørgen Carling stating that visits are part of the "human dynamics of migrant transnationalism."[126] The short distance between BiH and the Netherlands, as well as the option to travel by air, coach and train demonstrates a level of freedom of movement between both places among the participants, facilitating the ability to frequently visit the homeland. In this sense, the participants are categorised as 'routine visitors', following Md Farid Miah's et al. categorisations of transnational visits to the homeland.[127] Their frequent visits to BiH, therefore, highlight the importance of transnational mobility when it comes to sustaining identities and belonging across borders.

Visits, however, also resulted in tensions and disillusionment among the second generation towards post-war BiH, with lengthy discussions throughout the interviews about the poor conditions they experienced, pointing to a large discrepancy between their inherited stories of the SFRY and their lived experiences visiting BiH. Marija recalled how she grew up "*hearing about a place that was beautiful*" and that she *"believed in the charm and magic,"* but noted how when she got older she felt "*very frustrated and shocked*" due to the conditions she witnessed. She explained how when she was a child she would cry whenever she was in BiH because of how happy she felt to be 'home', but states that as she got older, "*you think about it all too long, and stuff starts to boil*." Marija told me about how she had talked at length with her Dutch boyfriend about her love of her hometown in BiH, but when they went to visit together as young adults, she realised the discrepancies between her inherited stories and childhood naivety, and the

[126] Jørgen Carling, "The human dynamics of migrant transnationalism" *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 31:8 (2008): 1452.
[127] Md Farid Miah et al., "Visiting migrants: An introduction," *Global Networks* 23:1 (2023): 152.

reality, thinking to herself, "*oh, is this really it?*" and noted how the destruction of the city from the war period is still highly evident, and that ethnic divisions remain strong. Dino also recalled a lack of repairs to damages from the war, including desecrated graves and monuments, and discussed how he believed that BiH has no equal rights or views, and poor healthcare and education systems, and using the words 'mess', 'dated', 'absurd', 'insecurity' and 'paperwork' to describe BiH. Dino further explained how he initially wanted to move to BiH to complete an internship in 2022. However, his parents did not give him their permission, as they were not in favour of him moving to BiH, mostly due to a lack of social and economic security, and even acknowledged their own insecurities towards the prospect of returning to BiH after retirement. Dino stated that "*country-wise, of course, I love Bosnia and the culture and everything. But if I look at day-to-day life, I would love Yugoslavia more*."

In fact, all interviewees, even those participants with more negative sentiments towards the SFRY and Yugonostalgia, agreed that the SFRY was a more prosperous time for BiH, with Nejla stating "*the situation down there was much better during Yugoslavia."* Nejla's departure from her negative sentiments towards the SFRY (discussed in Chapter 3) demonstrates that the conditions in BiH result in a longing for the more stable and prosperous socio-economic and political conditions perceived under the SFRY. These tensions surrounding conditions in post-war BiH, therefore, reveal a high level of dissatisfaction among the second generation in relation to the homeland, as well as the complexity of maintaining a transnational identity. The participants have over time become increasingly exposed to the realities of daily life in BiH, and as such, visits to the homeland are categorised by feelings of insecurity and disappointment. The contrast between the participants' inherited memories of a perceived stability in the SFRY, therefore, both strengthened their Yugonostalgic feelings, as well as heightened their dissatisfaction with the post-war BiH landscape. In this sense, the participants expressed Yugonostalgia as a longing for an alternative reality in BiH, demonstrating a reflective utopian

form of nostalgia as identified by Velikonja. This allows for Yugonostalgia, therefore, to aid in the imagining of new realities in BiH among the second generation, which largely follow an understanding of prosperous times under the SFRY.

[128]

Figure 3. Damaged buildings from the Bosnian War in Mostar, 2011.

Nonetheless, repeated visits to the homeland among all interviewees point to the fact that visits are still considered a vital form of cultural engagement and preservation among the second generation, for both their Bosnian and Yugonostalgic identities. This demonstrates how despite these largely negative views on postwar BiH, there is still a desire among the second generation diaspora to engage with their ancestral land, including Marko's choice to host his wedding in BiH, and with Marija reiterating that despite her disillusionment with post-war BiH, she still is

[128] Gyn Thomas, *War damaged buildings in Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina*, 2011, photograph, 41.1 x 27.1 cm, Alamy, https://www.alamy.com/stock-photo-war-damaged-buildings-in-mostar-bosnia-and-herzegovina-38153849.html.

deeply attached to BiH, and intends on taking her daughter there one day. These findings illustrate how there is a persistent desire among the second generation to connect with their ancestral home despite very negative sentiments, further highlighting the complex relationship at play among the second generation when it comes to their identifications with the homeland. It further shows that despite Yugonostalgic identities, there is not a rejection of their Bosnian identity, rather there is a desire to transcend beyond the poor conditions witnessed, and further points to the potential of Yugonostalgia in shaping improved conditions in BiH today.

Contradictions surrounding what the role of the diaspora should be in relation to BiH further point to the complexity of the relationship between the second generation and the homeland. For instance, Tarik stated that he is driven by the prospect of returning to BiH to improve conditions, "*it's an obsession for me,*" he claimed, and added "*I want to do it, and I feel like I need to do it, and it's a duty of mine*." Marija recalled how when she was younger, she believed she could "*fix things down there*" and return to BiH one day, however she says that these feelings faded over time as she became older and grasped the severity of post-war realities in BiH. In contrast, however, Dino was firm on his position that he does not believe it is the duty of the diaspora to improve conditions in BiH. Rather, he stated that "*it's the duty for the people who live there… but us, as diaspora, we should promote ourselves and not let us be seen as stupid Balkan countries*." Such differing views, therefore, underscore the complexity and multiple ways of identifying with the homeland among the participants, as well as their role as the 'diaspora' in the context of post-war BiH. Interestingly, when I asked Sofija if she pictured herself returning to BiH one day, she responded with a firm no, and cited, firstly, the differences between her environment in the Netherlands and conditions in BiH, but also, "*just because I'm a woman. … I'm always in favour of raising your voice when you need to. I think that it's not so much appreciated in Bosnia like how it is here in the Netherlands*." This statement from Sofija points to the direct impact that Dutch society values and norms have had towards her

conceptions and ties towards BiH, and the majority of participants claimed they do not have plans to return to BiH. Such sentiments further highlight the diverse nature of how the second generation navigates their relationship with the homeland, including the need to balance their cultural ties with BiH, their disillusionments with postwar conditions, as well as the realities of living in the diaspora.

## 4.2 Associational Life Within the Diaspora

*"That was really the first time that I was among so many young Bosnian people, and I really enjoyed that. It's not something that I thought I was missing in my life, but it filled a sort of gap. I don't know how to explain it, but it felt like coming home, you know? These people understand me. I can make jokes about something that happened at home that my Dutch friends wouldn't understand."* - Sofija

The majority of participants stated that they had been in contact with Bosnian diaspora associations to varying degrees throughout their upbringing. Sofija mentioned how around the age of fifteen she joined an association, and remembered how it was the first time she was among many young Bosnians, which she greatly enjoyed, and recalled how it "*felt like coming home*." Nejla also began to join Bosnian associations during adolescence, and recalled how she met a lot of "*raja*" or 'folk' at the associations, which she says meant a great deal to her, with her current peer network largely made up of other members of the associations. Nejla has been attending meetings for ten years, and notes that it is "*easier for Bosnians to connect with Bosnians,*" using the example that when she now meets someone from Croatia, she does not feel a connection, "*because there is no longer a Yugoslav identity, and of course everyone is looking for their own*," and stressed the importance of Bosnian associations for maintaining her identity. The Halilovich et al. findings, as discussed in Chapter 2, largely focus efforts on ensuring the

second and third generations inherit a Bosnian identity and engage in Bosnian cultural customs within the community. As such, the presence and active participation within Bosnian diaspora associations in the Netherlands points to the significant role such organisations can play when it comes to maintaining cultural heritage, as well as feelings of community and belonging among the second generation.

The emphasis on a Bosniak identity among the associations, however, was a major point of contention for many interview participants. For instance, Sofija explained how her family was ethnically mixed, and did not associate themselves with any ethnic labels, and that she had picked up a lot more *"Bosnian-ness"* within the associations. She recalled that the associations greatly distinguished Bosnian culture from Serbian and Croatian customs, focusing largely on Bosnian folklore, and that the language school that exists for younger children explicitly distinguishes the language as'Bosnian' from the umbrella term 'Serbo-Croat' or the commonly used *'naš*' or '*our*' language. Marko, who also expressed a lack of ethnic attachment despite his family's Bosniak heritage, claimed that the religious and ethnic component is the main reason he never joined a Bosnian association. He stated that he has a different opinion of what a post-war Bosnian identity and cultural practice should look like, and believes that the associations should do more to consider that "*Bosnia is made by all different ethnicities, historically*." He acknowledged, however, the importance of promoting Bosniak culture and traditions in light of the violence witnessed during the Bosnian War and suppression under the SFRY, and does not disagree with the notion, but that his lack of ethnic and religious attachment maintains his disinterest in joining such groups. Sofija further recalled that she is far less interested in joining parties and events organised by the associations in comparison to her other Bosnian peers, and that she has noticed it is "*weird*" that she has a Dutch boyfriend. She explained that young women in the association tend to seek Bosnian or Turkish partners, largely for the maintenance of a cultural identity, and Levitt's findings have shown similar patterns, whereby second

generation migrants who may have shown little regard towards their parental homeland and culture activate their connections within transnational fields in search of a spouse.[129]

Moreover, Edin discussed how he often shares his feelings of Yugonostalgia among his family and peer networks, including both former-Yugoslav and Dutch circles, but stated he "*would not feel comfortable doing that [at the associations]*" due to the strong emphasis on Bosniak culture and identity. He mentioned how he feels he is "*disrespecting the independence of Bosnia*" by initiating conversations on BiH's Yugoslav history, and says he "*would never, never*" wear his favourite bag, with a print of the map of Yugoslavia, at the association gatherings. Edin felt strongly that there is a religious component to the group, which he is "*just not a fan of " and* feels that the emphasis on religion may be reinforcing existing hateful narratives between the ethnic groups. The emphasis on a Bosniak identity among the associations was also echoed by Marija, who claims that she has no interest in joining the groups. She notes that her family is ethnically mixed, and hosts no attachments. "*'I've never really wanted to very much associate myself with one part of former Yugoslavia and say, this is where I'm from and this is what I stand for"* she stated. A participant who preferred to remain anonymous for this discussion talked about a professional within the field of war-related trauma who was scheduled to conduct a workshop. They claim that last minute the event was cancelled, as the association learnt that the speaker's ethnic origin was not Bosniak. The participant says they felt "*appalled*" about the cancellation and "*could not believe it,*" but felt unable to voice concerns to members of the group. The participant further voiced concern about their sibling who is a member of Bosnian associations, and states their sibling is "*just not fond of Serbians, not fond of Croat*s' ' and believes that the associations have had an influence on this despite their non-political stance.

[129] Peggy Levitt, "Roots and Routes: Understanding the Lives of the Second Generation Transnationally," 1228.

As a result, the findings from the interviews demonstrate a reluctance among the participants to join Bosnian associations that were perceived to reinforce a Bosniak identity, which in turn, largely disregarded the multiethnic nature of Bosnian nationhood. A strong emphasis on Bosniak culture and religion was seen as isolating to many participants, who expressed negative sentiments towards the perceived othering of Bosniak identities to other (and lack of) ethnic attachments present within the Bosnian diaspora. This ongoing conflict with ethnicity, therefore, is situated within the wider struggle between ethnic identifications in BiH in a post-war context, and demonstrated by a reluctance of those with mixed and/or weaker ethnic attachments to join the associations due to perceived ethnic and religious biases present in such spaces within the Netherlands. As such, many participants echoed their dissatisfaction with post-war ethnic divisions being reproduced within the diaspora, and expressed Yugonostalgia as a longing for a more inclusive and multiethnic social landscape of Bosnian nationhood witnessed in the SFRY.

This becomes even more significant when considering the influence of the 'Srebrenica trauma' within Dutch society, whereby the 'traumatic' identity of Bosnian migrants in the Netherlands has led to the Netherlands emerging as a space whereby Bosniak culture is not only recognised, but celebrated, with strong emphasises of being 'Bosnian'. Here, it is observed how the acceptance of Bosniak culture within the Netherlands has pointed to differences between my findings and that of Müeller-Suleymanova, uncovering new insights into the specificities of the Bosnian diaspora in the Netherlands. In her research, Bosnian migrants were often categorised under the label of 'Yugos', commonly used in Switzerland, as such, there was a lack of specifically Bosnian associations, and most diaspora spaces functioned under the label of 'Balkan' or 'Ex-Yugo'.[130] Thus, it becomes apparent how the Dutch recognition of specifically Bosniak identities has resulted in the dominance of Bosniak ethnic attachments within Bosnian

[130] Dilyara Müller-Suleymanova, ""Shadows of the past: violent conflict and its repercussions for second-generation Bosnians in the diaspora," 1790.

diaspora organisations, significantly influencing the second generation's conceptions of post-war BiH identities. As such, the prevalence of Yugonostalgic identities and desire to transcend ethnic identifications among the second generation diaspora in the Netherlands is a highly interesting finding, which demonstrates a sustained Yugonostalgic identity within the participants void of the influence of a 'traumatic' Bosnian identity.

### 4.3 Engagement with Yu-Rock and Diaspora Music Events

"*We can dance all night and we can totally forget about our differences."* - Nejla

Music emerged as the most prevalent form of cultural engagement among the second generation, which was overwhelmingly attributed to Yu-Rock. The so-called 'golden era' of Yu-Rock was experienced across the 1980s, during the youth of the participants' parents, and each participant discussed at length their attachment to Yu-Rock, repeatedly citing the bands Bijelo Dugme, Plavi Orkestrar, and Zabranjeno Pusenje. Dino demonstrated a very strong attachment towards music from the SFRY, and has been collecting Yugoslav records for the last three years. "*These vinyl records are a piece of history,*" he stated, and discussed how he has his own social media pages to promote and share his collection and connect with other former-Yugoslav collectors. He noted that he observed significant levels of Yugonostalgia among online groups based around Yugoslav records, recalling "*you see all the way from Slovenia to Macedonia people still have this Yugonostalgic feeling, and there's a reminder of no historical and ethnic comments."* Interestingly, Dino noted that he has "*never been into*" post-war music productions from BiH, and recalls how when he hears Buba Corelli (a current very popular rap artist from BiH), "*I just can't really enjoy it.*" Zala Volčić, in her study on cultural Yugonostalgia, cites Yu-Rock as a major cultural production that was seen as "linking the youth cultures of the

different republics."[131] Volčić has written how media and other cultural practices are being mobilised across former-Yugoslav communities as an attempt to re-create a shared cultural memory by harkening back to a shared cultural history. She claims that to say such expressions of nostalgia are merely romanticising the past "misses the point," and that rather, these cultural productions have become tied to the "relative peace and prosperity of the 1970s and early 1980s."[132]

In this regard, attachments to music and Yu-Rock served as a means by which the memories of the SFRY were circulated transnationally and intergenerationally. Other material and cultural expressions of Yugonostalgia included Andreja and Edin showing me mugs they owned with a printed photograph of Tito's face on them, and Edin told me about his favourite bag which has an outline of Yugoslavia on it. Furthermore, Jana remembers how her family home in the Netherlands had a collection cabinet of Yugoslav items, including coins, stamps, and photographs, complete with a portrait of Tito. These expressions, therefore, of Yugonostalgia in terms of attachments to cultural productions of the SFRY demonstrate a longing for "a time when nationalistic tensions and conflicts were, if not eliminated, at least suppressed by the image of an imagined Yugoslav community."[133] These findings point to the notion that, firstly, there is significant cultural engagement with the homeland among the second generation diaspora, however, these cultural attachments are ascribed more to a Yugoslav past in comparison to current day BiH.

Aside from associations, diaspora events centred around music provided spaces for alternative memories and narratives of a Yugoslav past and identity to be expressed, as well as providing a space for the shaping and celebrating of a shared cultural heritage among the second

[131] Zala Volčič, "Yugo-Nostalgia: Cultural Memory and Media in the Former Yugoslavia," 23.
[132] Zala Volčič, "Yugo-Nostalgia: Cultural Memory and Media in the Former Yugoslavia," 25.
[133] Zala Volčič, "Yugo-Nostalgia: Cultural Memory and Media in the Former Yugoslavia," 25.

generation diaspora. Among the interview participants, many shared that they greatly enjoyed participating in music oriented activities within the diaspora, including 'Balkan Night' discos and Yu-Rock themed parties across the Netherlands. Müeller-Suleymanova remarks at first sight, within such diasporic spaces, "extensive partying and celebration of Balkan pop music seems to bridge and make ethnic distinctions obsolete."[134] Marko noted how he and his father organised concerts in the Netherlands featuring popular former-Yugoslav singers, and recalled that people from Bosnia, Serbia, Croatia, Montenegro and Slovenia were in attendance. Edin noted how he attended a 'Balkan Party' in Arnhem this year, and talked at length how he danced and socialised with people from all of the former Yugoslav states; sharing anecdotes about their parents' Balkan customs, including, as Jana put it, never going outside with wet hair, having to wear a '*potkosulja*' (vest), a looming fear of a '*promaja*' (draft), and eating traditional food such as *grah* and *pita* at home, which most felt disdain towards, yet also a warm familiarity. Edin claimed that during such interactions, "*that's when I feel most Yugonostalgic, at social gatherings where it's not only Bosnians*." Andreja attended a Lepa Brena concert with her mother last year in Amsterdam, which meant a great deal to her and recalled how "*everyone had the [Yugoslav] flag*" and that "*everyone was crying, Lepa Brena was crying, everyone was hugging, she sang* 'Jugoslovenka' *twice, and there was a feeling that [Yugoslavia] is always in our hearts.*[135]*"*

[134] Dilyara Müller-Suleymanova, ""Shadows of the past: violent conflict and its repercussions for second-generation Bosnians in the diaspora,"1796.

[135] Lepa Brena was a very popular pop-folk singer in the SFRY. Her song *"Jugoslovenka,"* roughly translating to 'Yugoslav Girl' was released in 1989, and Rory Archer (2012) has discussed how the song has become an iconic anthem for Yugonostalgics.

 [136]

Figure 4. A screenshot taken from a YouTube upload of Lepa Brena's concert in Amsterdam in 2023, where she is seen holding a flag of the SFRY on stage.

Here, it is clearly observed that Volčić's conclusions on the mobilisation of Yugoslav culture in order to re-create shared cultural memories by "harkening back to a shared memory" is at play among the second generation in the Netherlands when it comes to music events, serving as a significant avenue for expressions of Yugonostalgia.[137] The Yu-Rock subculture, in particular, allows for a "different ideological universe" to emerge among the second generation diaspora, whereby divisions based on ethno-national belonging were rejected and renounced. In this regard, solidarities based on a common, shared identity and heritage are championed and provided with spaces to flourish. As such, Yugoslav cultural productions, particularly music, serve as a point of attraction for individuals within the second generation diaspora who see themselves outside of the frameworks of ethno-nationalist identifications. These findings were

[136] Mamauzemljilala775, "Lepa Brena u Amsterdamu 2023", screenshot from YouTube video, 10.43, 12.18.2023, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TXob_Uxzmrk&ab_channel=MamauZemljilala.
[137] Dilyara Müller-Suleymanova, ""Shadows of the past: violent conflict and its repercussions for second-generation Bosnians in the diaspora," 1793.

largely seen within Müeller-Suleymanova's participants in Switzerland, whereby they "often referred to a feeling of closeness with peers from former Yugoslavia," and above all, shared culture including language, food and music, and specific patterns of interaction and communication within the family emerged as the most binding factors for community engagement.[138] Thus, in both the Netherlands and in Switzerland, such settings allow for the second generation to "form alliances on a non-ethnic basis and articulate alternative forms of solidarity."[139] Such findings demonstrate that Bosnian second generation diaspora networks in varying locations are actively seeking and forming new identities based on Yugonostalgic identities and a dismissal of post-war ethnic divisions within diaspora music spaces pointing to the emancipatory power Yugonostalgia has among younger generations of Bosnians. "*We are more alike than we are different,"* shared Edin, *"I drink coffee from Bosnia, swim in the Croatian sea, and then drink rakija from Serbia."*

## 4.5 Concluding Statements

This chapter has demonstrated how community engagement and cultural preservation serves as a strong means by which Yugonostalgic identities are maintained and expressed. The interviews revealed that there is a strong desire among the second generation diaspora to engage with their ancestral land, with all participants practising routine visits to BiH which are sustained in light of disillusionments and disappointments with postwar conditions. Lengthy discussions about poor socio-economic conditions and divisive politics in postwar BiH served as a means by which Yugonostalgia was strengthened, due to the perceived stability and prosperity of BiH under the SFRY. Even among the participants who did not consider themselves Yugonostalgic, there was a consensus that conditions were better under the SFRY, revealing Yugonostalgic

[138] Dilyara Müller-Suleymanova, ""Shadows of the past: violent conflict and its repercussions for second-generation Bosnians in the diaspora," 1796.
[139] Dilyara Müller-Suleymanova, ""Shadows of the past: violent conflict and its repercussions for second-generation Bosnians in the diaspora," 1795.

serving as a means by which the second generation could both criticise postwar conditions, but also imagine a new future for BiH, pointing to the emancipatory effects of Yugonostalgia. In terms of community engagement, associational spaces were largely rejected by the interview participants, who understood the associations as exclusive to Bosniak identities which were perceived to reinforce ethnic divisions in the diaspora. Diasporic spaces relating to music, which served as the most common form of cultural engagement, provided an alternative space devoid of ethnic or religious labels. As such, musical events and parties allowed the participants to recreate shared cultural memories with peers from the former SFRY, allowing for new identities, solidarities and diversities to emerge among the second generation diaspora. Yugonostalgia, in terms of community engagement and cultural practice, therefore, serves as a lens by which the participants actively rejected postwar identities and narratives, and informed their longing for communities that are able to transcend narratives of irreconcilable differences and ethnic division. These findings, therefore, set the stage for the final chapter, which will conclude the ways in which Yugonostalgia is both experienced and expressed by the second generation Bosnian diaspora in the Netherlands, and the implications of the presence of these Yugonostalgic identities.

## Chapter 5: Conclusion

This research has examined the ways in which Yugonostalgia is experienced and expressed by the second generation Bosnian diaspora in the Netherlands. Through the use of life-history interviews with the ten participants, supplemented by secondary literature, this research has uncovered a strong presence of Yugonostalgic identities. These identities are maintained in light of individual negotiation and criticism, and are expressed through rejections of postwar identities, narratives and conditions in BiH, demonstrating a longing for the continuation of Yugoslav ideals and values of unity and solidarity today. Throughout this research, the context of the collapse of the SFRY and the Bosnian War, resulting in migration to the Netherlands, has been outlined, as well as the ways in which the participants navigate between a Bosnian and Dutch identity, further complicated by their Yugonostalgic identities. The role of inherited family memories, as well as individual experiences of the homeland, community engagement and cultural preservation, have further been examined in relation to Yugonostalgia in order to explore how these identities and places of belonging are shaped among the second generation.

An incredibly potent authority in shaping experiences of Yugonostalgia among the second generation diaspora emerged as inherited family memories and narratives of the SFRY. With no lived experience of the SFRY and an impossibility of return, the second generation relies heavily on the memories of their parents and grandparents in order to better understand their homeland. Processes of emotional selection and intergenerational positioning, however, result in skewed, highly positive memories of the SFRY being retold among the second generation. Nonetheless, these second hand impressions were also subject to processes of critical individual negotiation among the second generation, which resulted in a more nuanced and balanced view and understanding of the SFRY and subsequent Yugonostalgia. In fact, even those

with stronger ethnic attachments and inherited traumas from the war shared in the thought that the SFRY was a more prosperous time for BiH, despite knowledge of ethnic discrimination and unresolved tensions over the war. As a result, the maintenance of Yugonostalgic sentiments and identities, despite individual negotiations and critical approaches, points to a strong level of Yugonostalgia present among the second generation Bosnian diaspora in the Netherlands. It further demonstrates the reflective nature of Yugonostalgia, as it becomes adapted to accommodate the personal histories and contemporary contexts of the interviewees.

Visits to BiH further strongly influenced experiences of Yugonostalgia among the second generation, due to the stark discrepancy between the realities of life in postwar BiH and the romanticised memories of the SFRY. Disillusionment and insecurities surrounding postwar conditions were largely rooted in weak socio-political conditions, and strong ethnic divisions maintained by political rhetorics. Comparisons, therefore, between the realities of postwar BiH and inherited memories of the SFRY serve as a means by which Yugonostalgic feelings are strengthened. The collapse of the SFRY and the Bosnian War have had an undeniable, deep impact on Bosnian communities, and as a new generation born after the war and raised in a vastly different landscape in the Netherlands. Yugonostalgia is experienced, therefore, as a tool to grapple with an impossibility to return to the SFRY, and reconciliation with the war and its aftermath.

As a result of these experiences of Yugonostalgia, the second generation Bosnian diaspora is further subject to a complex process of balancing multiple and diverging influences on identity formation in a transnational context. The findings within this research have demonstrated how the Bosnian diaspora is highly integrated within the Netherlands and is actively seeking upward mobility, as well as experiencing relatively low levels of discrimination. The interview participants demonstrated a sense of pride towards this high integration, with

many of them referring to themselves as ‘Dutch.’ Nonetheless, the participants also articulated a set of challenges and conflicts that emerged from the need to balance multiple identities, cultural influences and places of belonging. The participants discussed the need to defend and educate Dutch peers on their heritage, as well as navigate insensitive comments, which presumed notions of ancient hatreds and stereotypes of a primitive and backwards society. References to perceived prosperity of the SFRY, therefore, were used as a mechanism to promote their heritage and dismiss negative comments.

High integration, however, is influenced by the ‘Srebrenica trauma’ and collective guilt in Dutch society, which in turn has led to a recognition of the events of the 1990s in BiH, as well as a Bosniak identity. Not only has this resulted in the Bosnian diaspora being generally welcomed into Dutch society, but it also demonstrates the contested nature of Bosnian ethnic identities within the diaspora. The need to address the mistakes of the Dutchbat through a recognition of Bosnian nationhood and its constituent ethnicities by Dutch society prescribes power to the victimhood of the Bosniak community. Whilst this does much to provide a space for the culture to flourish and be celebrated by newer generations, this recognition inadvertently reproduces ethnic divisions within the diaspora due to a high emphasis on Bosniak identities within associations, further influenced by ongoing tensions and postwar narratives coming from BiH. These findings point, therefore, to the unique positioning of the Bosnian diaspora within the Netherlands in comparison to other destinations of migration, and how the second generation navigates these influences.

As a result, tensions surrounding ethnicity appear as an omnipresent force among the second generation Bosnian diaspora. Their lack of ethnic attachments and rejection of postwar narratives have resulted in a longing for the ethnic harmony and prosperity perceived to exist in the SFRY, and these rejections serve as the strongest means by which Yugonostalgia is

experienced. In this regard, Yugonostalgia becomes an emancipatory tool, whereby the second generation uses Yugonostalgia as a departure point for which to imagine new futures and solidarities based on Yugoslav values in BiH today.

These sentiments were largely expressed through cultural attachments to the SFRY, of which music, particularly Yu-Rock, was used as a means by which to reminisce on a shared cultural history. Diaspora events centred around music provide spaces, furthermore, for the reproduction of this shared history and community engagement void of ethnic divisions. These spaces allowed for all former-Yugoslav nationalities and ethnicities to socialise and bond over their collective memories, similarities in upbringing and a shared attachment to music from the SFRY. As a result, these spaces allow new solidarities and diversities to emerge among the second generation Bosnian diaspora that largely go against the current state of ethnic tensions and divisions in BiH. This allowed the second generation, therefore, the ability to foster new senses of identity and belonging grounded in shared cultural values and collective Yugoslav heritage, rejecting the dominant frameworks of ethno-national belonging.

These findings are not to imply, however, a complete rejection of a Bosnian identity among the second generation diaspora. Rather, these findings point to a longing for a perceived past BiH under the SFRY, void of ethnic divisions, corrupt politicians and a weak economy and infrastructure. Yugonostalgia, therefore, serves as a reflective nostalgia that undergoes a process of selection and negotiation of fragmented and inherited memories, and is reproduced through these longings. In fact, interview participants explicitly stated that despite the appeal, there is not a reconstructive longing for the SFRY to return, with many noting the impossibility of return in light of the wars of the 1990s. As a result, Yugonostalgia serves as a placeholder for a utopian hope among the second generation for a future BiH that meets their ideals of unity, stability and prosperity.

These findings demonstrate not only the emancipatory effects of Yugonostalgia, but also point to the potential power of Yugonostalgia in shaping the future of BiH. The similarities in this research to Müeller-Suleymanova's study of the second generation diaspora in Switzerland points to the fact that young Bosnians across various diasporas are creating informal networks, centred around music, whereby Yugonostalgic identities are given the space to socialise and articulate their rejections of postwar narratives and conditions, and express a longing for Yugoslav ideals and values of ethnic harmony and prosperity. These findings, therefore, have shown the existence of an identity based in resistance under the label of Yugonostalgia. Diasporic communities, such as my participants, are far removed from the homeland, yet nonetheless carry an influence when it comes to imagining a new BiH. Future research should consider, therefore, the potential effect of transnational ties and social fields that are based on the new forms of identities and solidarities that have been shown in this research, and uncover the potential political effects that sustained actions of resistance can have for BiH.

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## List of Interviews

Personal interview with Andreja , conducted on 23-04-24.

Personal interview with Dino, conducted on 03-03-24.

Personal interview with Edin, conducted on 07-03-24.

Personal interview with Jana, conducted on 09-04-24.

Personal interview with Luka, conducted on 30-03-24.

Personal interview with Marija, conducted on 12-04-24.

Personal interview with Marko, conducted on 29-04-24.

Personal interview with Nejla, conducted on 28-02-24.

Personal interview with Sofija, conducted on 08-03-24.

Personal interview with Tarik, conducted on 22-02-24.

## Appendix A.

*'Ljubi se istok i zapad,'*or '*Kiss, East and West'* is a 1991 song from the Yugoslav band Plavi Orkestrar.

**Lyrics in original language:**

Jos pamtim onaj dan kad si otisla
u ljeto osamdesete, kisa je padala
sedam godina sam te cekao
svaki mi je telefon nadu budio

Neka ljubi se istok i zapad
neka ljubi se sjever i jug
skini prasinu sa starog kofera
i krenimo na put
hajde budi mi drug

Sve je uzalud, srusio se most
drugovi su zalili moju strpljivost
o Boze predugo je mrak
daj mi svjetlosti
i neka pocne na tvoj znak
doba njeznosti

**Lyrics in English, translated by the author:**

I still remember the day you left
In the summer of 1980, rain was falling
I waited for you for seven years
Every phone call got my hopes up

Let East and West kiss each other
Let North and South kiss each other
Dust off an old suitcase
And let's go on a trip
Come on, be my friend

Everything is in vain, the bridge has fallen
Friends felt sorry for my patience
Oh God, it's been dark for so long
Give me light
And let is begin on your sign,
The period of tenderness

## Appendix B

Semi-structured interview questions used in this research to explore Yugonostalgia among the second generation Bosnian diaspora in the Netherlands.

**1. Upbringing**

- *What is your name/age/nationality/occupation?*
- *Where were you born? How long did you live in Bosnia?*
- *What was your family home like, when you were a child?*
    - *Did you have things from Yugoslavia or that represented your place of birth? (portrait of Tito, etc)?*
    - *How does it compare with your home now?*
- *What did your parents do when you were growing up?*
    - *Did you speak Bosnian at home?*
    - *Did your parents discuss Yugoslavia at home?*
    - *What did they tell you about Yugoslavia?*
- *What was your parents' experience of living in Yugoslavia, before and during the war?*
- *How do your parents feel about current day Bosnia?*
- *Why did your parents choose to move to the Netherlands?*
- *Are there things in Dutch society that they miss from life in Yugoslavia?*

**2. Relation to Bosnia & Herzegovina & Yugoslavia**

- *Did you have many Bosnian friends growing up?*
    - *Did you speak in Dutch or Bosnian?*
    - *Did you ever discuss Yugoslavia / the Bosnian war?*
- *How often did you visit BiH?*
    - *Where did you go?*
    - *What did you do?*
    - *Would you return to live in BiH?*
- *Do you feel represented in Bosnian society?*
    - *What do you think BiH will look like in 20 years?*
    - *How would you like it to look?*
    - *Do you feel more connected to BiH, or Yugoslavia?*
- *How connected do you feel to your Bosnian heritage while living in NL?*

    - *Have you ever attended Bosnian association meetings/events?*
    - *How often do you engage with diaspora organisations/events?*
- *What is Yugoslavism to you?*
    - *Do you consider Yugoslavism as part of your identity?*
    - *Is there a difference between Yugoslavism and Yugonostalgia in your opinion?*
- *Are there any specific rituals/traditions/cultural practices from Yugoslavia that you still uphold (labour day, Tito's birthday, etc)?*
    - *Do you think the diaspora does much to preserve Yugoslav history / practices?*
    - *Do you think they should?*
- *What does Yugonostalgia mean to you personally?*
    - *How do you think Yugonostalgia manifests within your everyday life in NL?*
    - *How do you think Yugonostalgia manifests within the Bosnian diaspora community?*
    - *How does Yugonostalgia make you feel emotionally?*
    - *Do you have specific feelings/memories attached to it?*
    - *How does your experience of Yugonostalgia intersect with other elements of your identity (gender, religion, socio-economic status, etc)*
    - *Can you think of any ways Yugonostalgia can impact how you think about the future?*
    - *How do you see Yugonostalgia evolving as younger generations continue to shape their identities?*
- *Can you think of specific aspects/elements of Yugosav culture/society that tend to be remembered the most/ feel most fondly about (music, film, family history, socialist values, etc.)*
    - *Why do you think this is a significant trigger for Yugonostalgia?*
    - *How does this influence your understanding of Yugonostalgia?*
- *Have you ever had moments of conflict or criticism with your feelings of Yugonostalgia?*
    - *How did you deal with this?*
- *Have you noticed generational differences when it comes to Yugonostalgia?*
    - *Are there different experiences?*

  *Are there different expressions?*

**3. Identifications in NL**

- *Do your Dutch friends know a lot about Yugoslavia / BiH?*

    - *What things did they know?*
      *What is the general outlook on Yugoslavia / BiH?*
- *How were you seen as a former-Yugoslav immigrant in the Netherlands?*
    - *How do your Dutch circles discuss Yugoslavia / BiH?*
- *How do you navigate your dual identity as Bosnian and Dutch?*
    - *Do you feel a conflict between these identities?*
- *Did you learn about Yugoslav or Bosnian history in school?*
    - *What things were taught, what was the general view on Yugoslavia / BiH?*
    - *Did this contradict what you knew from home?*
- *What is your perception of the role of the Dutchbat in Srebrenica?*
    - *Was Srebrenica ever discussed during your time at school?*
    - *Do you discuss Srebrenica with your Dutch peers?*
    - *Did your parents ever discuss the role of the Dutchbat?*
- *How do you think your Dutch identity has influenced your experience of Yugonostalgia?*
- *Do you find it easy to express Yugonostalgia within NL? Among Dutch people?*
    - *Do you think the Bosnian diaspora experiences and expresses Yugonostalgia differently to other diaspora communities?*
- *Do you feel represented in Dutch society?*
    - *Do you feel represented in Dutch politics?*