National Museums in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Slovenia:
A Story of Making ’Us’

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Summary

This study explores the history of the five most significant national and regional museums in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Slovenia. The aim is to show how these museums contribute to the construction of national and other identities through collections, selections and classifications of objects of interest and through historical narratives.

The three museums from Bosnia and Herzegovina that are included in this study are The National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Sarajevo; which was founded in 1888 and is the oldest institution of this kind in the country; the History Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina founded in 1945 (Sarajevo) and the Museum of the Republic of Srpska in Banja Luka (the second largest city in BiH), which was founded in 1930 under the name the Museum of Vrbas Banovina. As far as Slovenia is concerned, two analysed museums, namely the National Museum of Slovenia (est. 1821) and the Museum of Contemporary History of Slovenia (est. 1944/1948), are situated in Ljubljana, the capital of Slovenia. The most significant periods for the creation of museums as a part of the consolidation of political power and construction of regional and/or national identities can be labelled:

- The period under the Austrian empire (-1918) and the establishment of first regional museums.
- The creation of First Yugoslavia (1918-1941) and museum’s contribution in stabilization and universalization of the union of South Slavs.
- The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (1945-1992) and museological emphasis on socialist culture, politics of “brotherhood and unity” and regional differences.
- The proclamation of independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Slovenia and the museological focus on the narratives about the struggle for independence and national history of the newborn states.

Both the National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the National Museum of Slovenia were established as provincial museums within the Austrian empire in the nineteenth century. At the time of their establishment, the aim was, through preservation of historical artefacts of interest, to contribute to the cultivation of provincial (regional) identity on one hand and the Austrian Imperial identity on the other hand. For the museum in Ljubljana, the geopolitical and museological space of interest was much smaller during the period of the Austrian Empire (Austrian-Hungarian Empire) then it is today. In fact, it only included the province of Carniola with Ljubljana as the administrative and cultural centre. After the disintegration of the Austrian Empire in connection to the end of the First World War, the first Yugoslavia (The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes/The Kingdom of Yugoslavia) was formed. This political and
administrational change led to a shift in ideological and identification-making focus of both museums insofar as the museums had to re-orientate towards more proclaimed trans-Yugoslav and monarchical identities, with Belgrade as a political and administrative centre, while at the same time maintaining the regional character. The formation of the first Yugoslavia also meant that almost all of the Slovene-speaking population was now, for the first time, united within one political and administrative entity in which the Slovene language had predominant position. Hence, the National Museum of Slovenia had to broaden its horizon in order to include the political, social and cultural history of the majority of regions where Slovenian was used.

After the Second World War, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (also known as second Yugoslavia) was formed and it consisted of six republics, namely Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia. The political change also implied a boom in the establishment of new museums whose focus was to interpret the contemporary past in accordance to strict guidelines of the communist regime. The institutions that today are called the History Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Museum of the Republic of Srpska and the Museum of Contemporary History of Slovenia played together with the national museum’s important part in the construction of a trans-Yugoslav communist identity, legitimization of the communist system and Titoism (Titoism was socialist/communist ideology named after Josip Broz Tito, the leader of Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) as well as the assertion of the slogan “brotherhood and unity”. Parallel to this, all five museums continued to have distinct regional characters (i.e. Bosnian-Herzegovinian and Slovenian respectively). Unlike the other four museums, which had a regional (Slovenian or Bosnian-Herzegovinian) geopolitical perspective on one hand and a Yugoslav perspective on the other hand, the Museum of the Republic of Srpska had, since its establishment in the early 1930s, Bosnian and Herzegovinian, Yugoslav and explicit local vantage points, namely north-western Bosnian (since 1990’s the Republic of Srpska, which covers 49 percent of Bosnia and Herzegovina and includes northern and eastern parts of the country).

In connection to the breakup of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s, all museums changed their ideological, political and identification-making point of view. While the History Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina treated Bosnia and Herzegovina as an independent and unified entity, with a specific cultural and historical development, the Museum of the Republic of Srpska embraced the ideological standpoint that gave a special attention to the Serbian population within this Bosnian-Herzegovinian region. In this way, the museum differs from the other four museums which have had pronounced national and sovereign perspectives (i.e. Bosnian-Herzegovinian or Slovenian).
### Summary table 1. Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH)

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### Summary table 2: Slovenia

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Introduction

Like in many other countries, the five analysed museums (The National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Sarajevo, the History Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Museum of the Republic of Srpska, the National Museum of Slovenia and the Museum of Contemporary History of Slovenia) in these relatively new nation-states function as institutions that safeguard a group’s cultural heritage and significant narratives about the group’s past. The museums are, first and foremost, chosen for their size and cultural, political, ideological and historical relevance in the analysed regions/states. The National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina and its counterpart in Slovenia are the main agents in the museological presentation and mediation of history of these two states. They are also the oldest museums in the countries and were both established by Austrian (Austrian-Hungarian) Empire. The History Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina and its Slovenian equivalent The Museum of Contemporary History of Slovenia both have a communist heritage and were established as museums that were to celebrate the communist regime and the Partisan liberation of Yugoslavia during the Second World War. Finally, the Museum of the Republic of Srpska was established in the 1930s as a regional museum for the area around the city of Banja Luka (north-western Bosnia and Herzegovina), but its political and identificational dimension has changed since the 1990s because it is now a museum whose main aim is to present the history of a newly-formed entity; the Republic of Srpska. This federal entity, which is, according to The General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina (also known as the Dayton Agreement), a part of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina has had problems to come to turns with the central government of Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as the all-embracing Bosnian-Herzegovinian national identity. Furthermore, “the achievement of Serb independence from Bosnia-Herzegovina is desired – if suppressed – objective of the political parties which still command the majority of votes in the Serb Republic” (Pavković, 2000: 184). Thus, it is interesting to compare and contrast the ways that the museums balance between different forms of identities; how they relate to the past political and state constellations; and whose identities are regarded as prevailing.

The legacy of the past is through museums made available to a larger audience and they are an important force in the formation of collective identities. The notion of museum as a cartographic space of national history; a space for the preservation of cultural and natural (different forms of material) artefacts and as a part of political struggle to define a group or different groups are a starting point for this analysis (Kaplan, 1994: 1-2). Historian Flora Kaplan (1994: 9) points out that “[m]useums have long served to house a national heritage, thereby creating a national identity and often fulfilled national ambitions”.

However, it is not only national history that is the focus of this enquiry. As a matter of fact, regional and ethnicity dichotomising and unifying representations of history as well as depictions of different regions and political models of rule are also important parts of museological constructions of historical narratives within the analysed museums. Museums form and reproduce the idea of common identities and differences, history and geographic boundaries plus, and this is important to bear in mind, educate and mobilize the population. In this context, the diachronic analysis of museums makes it possible to call attention to the impetus of museums
and the processes of nation-building and eliminations of past collective identities at work. Questions given attention in this study are:

1. How is ‘ourness’ (i.e. national identity) constructed and shaped in national/regional museums in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Slovenia?
2. Which identities have been articulated during the history of the museums?

Consequently, attention is given to historical continuity and change.

National museums and cultural policies in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Slovenia

By way of introduction, the country that is today called Bosnia and Herzegovina was incorporated into the Ottoman Empire in 1463 (Herzegovina was conquered in 1483). The country was culturally, politically and economically dominated by the Ottoman Empire until the Congress of Berlin in 1878, when the Austrian-Hungarian Empire obtained administration over it. The Ottoman Empire allowed Bosnia and Herzegovina to preserve its territorial integrity while initiating several changes in the ethno-cultural and religious character of the region. For instance, the region became a melting pot for different religious groups (Catholic Croats, Muslim Turks and Bosniaks, Orthodox Serbs, Sephardic Jews etc.) and many Sephardic Jews, escaping from inquisition at the Iberian Peninsula, found a safe place in the Empire. Furthermore, many inhabitants of Bosnia and Herzegovina converted to Islam and the Slavic-speaking Muslim community, today called Bosniaks, are today the largest ethno-religious and cultural group in country (Lampe, 2000: 23-24).

During the first half of the nineteenth century, the history of the Empire's westernmost province was, among other things, characterized by political conflicts and uprisings. The political instability culminated with the agrarian unrests in 1875 in Herzegovina (southern part of Bosnia and Herzegovina with Mostar as a cultural, economic and political centre). This constant political disorder together with the political interests of the neighbouring countries and the weakening of the Ottoman Empire “persuaded the European powers to add Austro-Hungarian occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the terms of the Treaty of Berlin” (Lampe, 2000: 66). The consequences of the transformation of power in Bosnia and Herzegovina were changes in (i.e. ‘westernization’ of) urban infrastructure/architecture, other contributions in the field of culture, the creation of a new rural transport network as well as a number of state industrial enterprises. As a part of this development, the National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina was established.

The country that we today refer to as Slovenia has, since the fourteenth century, been divided into several provinces/territories controlled by the House of Habsburg and the Austrian Empire. In fact, the population of Slovene-speaking inhabitants of the empire was “scattered among six Austrian provinces and territories, most with German and Italian ethnic majorities” (Lampe, 2000: 69). Hence, this longstanding political, cultural and economic dominance had an appreciable effect on the character of the region. During the first half of the nineteenth century some Slovene-speaking intellectuals were influenced by Cultural Illyrianism, a movement whose main goal was “to unite South Slav ‘sub-groups’”, as well as the idea of the formation of “a single Slovene entity within the Habsburg monarchy” (Lampe, 2000: 43). Different forms of this cultural and political ideology continued to permeate the works of several influential intellectuals until the outbreak of the First World War (Hansen, 1996: 476). In this cultural and political era,
The National Museum of Slovenia was established as a provincial museum in the region of Carniola (area around Ljubljana).

On June 28, 1914, the pro-Yugoslav movement Black-Hand assassinated Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria in Sarajevo. This sparked off the First World War, the war that, for Bosnia and Herzegovina and Slovenia (and several other countries from the region), ended in the creation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (after 1929 renamed the Kingdom of Yugoslavia). Within this union of South-Slavs, Serbia had a dominating position in so far as the capital of this newborn state became Belgrade and the King was chosen from the House of Karadjordjević, from Serbia. The kingdom had, during the period between two wars, several parliamentary and political crises. In connection to the creation of the kingdom, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Slovenia became the administrative provinces within the kingdom. However, in 1929 the kingdom was divided in nine banovinas (provinces) and, as a consequence of this, Bosnia and Herzegovina ceased to exist as an administrative and unified entity and was instead divided amongst four banovinas.

The attack on Yugoslavia on the 6th of April 1941 by Nazi German forces led to the partition of Slovenia between Nazi Germany and Italy. Bosnia and Herzegovina was, during the Second World War, the place of the most severe fighting in the territory of Yugoslavia. Bosnia and Herzegovina also became a part of the Independent State of Croatia (NDH), a ‘puppet state’ of Nazi Germany whose “overriding purpose was to create an ethnically pure Croatian state from which Serbs, Jews, and gypsies would be permanently cleansed” (Lampe, 2000: 209).

After the Second World War, Second Yugoslavia was formed and unlike the first one that was a monarchy, the new Yugoslavia was a socialist/communist republic led by President Tito (until his death in 1980) and the communist party of Yugoslavia. This political and ideological transformation led to the establishment of the History Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Museum of Contemporary History of Slovenia. The aim of the museums was to safeguard the history of the communist regime and its importance for the liberation of Yugoslavia from German occupation during the Second World War. The new federal state was divided into six republics and, similar to the first Yugoslavia, even the socialist republic had numerous problems that could be related to economic and ideological differences between regions/republics as well as issues of ethnicity. The problems escalated after Tito’s death and culminated in 1990 with parliamentary and constitutional crises and multi-party elections. In June 1991, Slovenia and Croatia declared independence from Yugoslavia, soon followed by other republics including Bosnia and Herzegovina. As a consequence of the break-up of Yugoslavia, the world witnessed ‘the Ten-Day War’ in Slovenia, the war in Croatia and the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina that occurred between 1992 and 1995. The war in Bosnia and Herzegovina is often defined as a civil war between the three largest ethnic groups. According to the Census of 1991, the largest ethnic groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina are Bosniaks (also called Bosnian Muslims, 43.5 percent), Orthodox Serbs (31.2 percent) and Catholic Croats (17.4 percent) (Agencija za statistiku Bosne i Hercegovine, 2010: 21). Slovenia is today a member of European Union while Bosnia and Herzegovina is a federal state ethnically divided in two entities, namely The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (primarily inhabited by Bosniaks and Bosnian Croats) and the Republic of Srpska (sometimes called Serb Republic).
Case studies in chronological order

The National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina

In the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the oldest museum, namely The National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Sarajevo (Landesmuseum or Zemaljski muzej), was established by the Austrian-Hungarian Empire (1867-1918) and it operated as a provincial/regional museum until the 1990s when it became the national museum of the newly-established state that followed the breakup of The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

The National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegov ina was inaugurated in 1888 as a regional museum within The Austrian-Hungarian Empire and is the oldest modern cultural and scientific institution in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Kosta Hörmann, an adviser of the imperial government, was appointed as the director of the museum (www.zemaljskimuzej.ba/o_nama/osnivanje_muzeja.php). According to historian Robert Donia (2006b: 89), the initiative for the establishment of the museum was taken by Dr. Julije Makanec, “who founded a committee to establish a Landesmuseum or Zemaljski muzej” in 1884. However, the formation of the museum was preceded by a long period of deliberations, where many individuals pointed to the need for such an institution. The first attempt to establish an institution of this kind was in fact done in 1850 by catholic priest and writer Franjo Jukic, the founder of the first literary magazine in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Hajdarpasic, 2000: 130).

In Jukic’s preface to the collection of Folk Songs of Bosnians and Herzegovinians, published in Osijek (a city in today’s Croatia) in 1858, he points out that the motivation for the publication of the book lied in the need to make the South Slavic peoples in general and Bosnians and Herzegovinians in particular aware of their ‘glorious’ and ‘heroic’ past and make them ‘proud’ of their cultural heritage (Jukic, 1858: III-IV). Influenced by the ideas of cultural independence and the proliferation of cultural ‘uniqueness’ and ‘authenticity’, Jukic advocated the consolidation of both South Slavic and Bosnian and Herzegovinian ethnic (‘national’) identities. Under the pseudonym Slavoljub (Slavophile), Jukic had also published Geography and History of Bosnia as well as the journal ‘The Friends of Bosnian language’ (Jukic, 1858: XV). At the time of his proposal for the establishment of the museum, the country was a part of The Ottoman Empire and his cultural ideology could be construed as a part of an emerging nationalistic discourse, Pan-Slavism and a discourse of struggle for political and social independence and sovereignty.

At the Congress of Berlin in 1878, the Austro-Hungarian Empire obtained the administration of Bosnia and Herzegovina and ten years later, the museum was established. The spread of museums in Europe was prompted by the era of the construction of national identities in the nineteenth century. Political, strategic and economic goals that were set by the Austro-Hungarian government demanded the expansion of literacy and mass education as well as the establishment of power-control in the region and the preservation of the presumed cultural heritage of the region and its peoples. The Museum Society was formed in February 1888 and since then, the museum consists of three departments, namely the Department of Archaeology, the Department of Ethnology, the Department of Natural Sciences and a library. The director of the Landesmuseum (German for provincial, regional museum), as it was also called, was appointed by the Austrian-Hungarian government and the decision to move the premises of the museum, due to the lack of space, was made in 1908. The structure and organisation of the museum was
inspired by museums at Ringstrasse in Vienna and was built in the neo-classical style (Donia 2006b: 89). The construction of the new building was finished in 1913 and for many years, this was the only purpose-built museum complex in the region which was later named Yugoslavia. The museum complex consists of four buildings and a botanic garden. The annual scientific journal in Bosnian/Serbian/Croatian was first published in 1889 and a scientific journal in German, entitled ‘Wissenschaftliche Mitteilungen aus Bosnien und der Herzegowina’ (later renamed ‘Wissenschaftliche Mitteilungen aus Bosnisch-Herzegowinischen Landesmuseums’) was established in 1893. The fact that the international publication of the museum’s journal is still being published in German illustrates the importance and the influence of German culture, science and language in these areas of Europe. This also illustrates the cultural bond between Bosnia and Herzegovina on one hand and Western Europe on the other hand and indicates that Bosnia and Herzegovina, as a territorial and cultural entity, regards itself primarily as a (Western) European country. This identity construction is present in spite of its Ottoman heritage and the effects of the Empire’s influence on Bosniak identity that is, according to the Oriental institute in Sarajevo, in some ways related to Arabic, Turkish and Persian languages and cultures (www.ois.unsa.ba).

The establishment of the Landesmuseum (The National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina) had quite distinct political dimensions. According to Robert Donia, behind this expenditure of cultural institutions and musealisation of presumed Bosnian and Herzegovinian cultures, natural history and geology lays a political motive in accordance to which the Austrian-Hungarian government “wanted to highlight Bosnia’s indigenous cultural heritage in its campaign to negate Serbian and Croatian nationalist influence from neighbouring lands” (Donia, 2006a: 394). As a matter of fact, Serbia and Croatia tried to win political influence over Bosnia and Herzegovina and thus make the region culturally, politically and territorially dependent on these two neighbouring states/regions. The representatives of the Austrian-Hungarian polity were, in contrast “trying to articulate a common Bosnian consciousness for all three ethnic groups” (Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs) and “spell out Bosnia’s multi-ethnic identity” (Lampe, 2000: 68). By promoting the idea of ‘bosnjastvo’ (Bosnian identity), the imperial government tried to reduce Serbian and Croatian cultural, political and territorial claims and interests. The museum encouraged research that could show that “a dualist religious heresy known as Bogumilism” preceded Islam and that “Bogomils were proto-Muslims unique to Bosnia-Herzegovina and forefathers of its contemporary population” (Donia, 2006b: 90). In this way, the scientific work was used to undermine pan-Slavism. This was, in some degree, both contrary to, and in line with, Jukic’s original intentions because his cultural orientation had emphasized both Pan-Slavic and pro-Bosnian-Herzegovinian alleged objectives.

During World War I, the museum was closed but was, soon after the war, reopened and it functioned as a regional museum in the newly-formed state The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, later renamed The Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1918-1941). This period is, according to the museum’s official history-writings and historian Robert J. Donia, characterized by a centralized administration of the government of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia that neglected the cultural institutions of all ethnic groups, except three main nationalities, i.e. Slovenes, Croats and Serbs. Hence, historians point out that there was an ostensible lack of financial support to major public institutions of cultural heritage in Bosnia and Herzegovina and other ‘marginalized’ regions on one hand and an emphasis on recognition of Belgrade, Ljubljana and Zagreb as the
main centres and transmitters of cultural heritage of The Kingdom of Yugoslavia (www.zemaljskimuzej.ba/o_nama/razvoj_muzeja-en.php) (Donia, 2006a: 236-237). Museum officials state that “the Court and the Greater Serbian bourgeoisie” were responsible for the deterioration of the status of the National Museum (www.zemaljskimuzej.ba/o_nama/razvoj_muzeja-en.php). In a way, Serbian official interests and the central government in Belgrade are described as bearers of an ideology that firstly undermined the preservation of the cultural heritage of Bosnia and Herzegovina and secondly deprived the ‘national’ interest of the region and the people living there. Following this line of interpretation, the authors of the history of the museum highlight that “Bosnia and Herzegovina abruptly found itself on the margins of the socio-economic, political and cultural mainstream” (www.zemaljskimuzej.ba/o_nama/razvoj_muzeja-en.php). Interestingly enough, Bosnia and Herzegovina ceased to exist as an entity in 1929 constitution and Bosnia and Herzegovina was divided in four regional units (banovine) so that none had a Muslim majority (Lamp, 2000: 167).

However, after World War II and during the communist regime (1945-1992), the museum received subsequent economic funding and was recognized as an institution of utmost importance. Within the communist regime, culture in general and cultural products of the ‘working-class’ and the communist party in particular were declared as special fields of importance for society. In accordance with the slogan ‘bratstvo i jedinstvo’ (‘brotherhood and unity’) all republics and the citizens living in the new Yugoslavia ‘deserved equal standing’. The communist government advocated that each of six republics in the post-war Yugoslav federation should have its own media as well as cultural and educational institutions while at the same time, it celebrated the ‘common Yugoslav spirit’ (Donia, 2006a: 394; Lampe, 2000: 236-237). Consequently, both regional (i.e. republic) and Yugoslav national identities were acclaimed simultaneously. Paradoxically, Yugoslav-identity “was first time included in the third post-war census in 1961”, the category was, at the beginning, reserved “for those who offered no particular national identity” and Yugoslavs were, de facto, a minority in Yugoslavia (Sekulic, Massey and Hodson, 1994: 84; Lampe, 2000: 337).

During the period of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (1945-1992), many exhibitions were made in cooperation with other museums in the former Yugoslavia and the usage of the term ‘Yugoslavia’ is intermittent in the list of exhibitions from this period. Exhibitions such as ‘Traditional costumes of peoples of Yugoslavia’, ‘Trees and shrubbery of Yugoslavia’, ‘Yugoslav flora’ and ‘The Folk art of Yugoslavia’ are a few of the many examples of Yugoslav-identity production by the museum and a ‘naturalization of culture’ that is to say, the ways culture and nature present and create as well as accommodate to nation (Stoklund, 1999: 7).

Parallel to this, the museum organized exhibitions that had, in its focus, the presumed authenticity of culture and nature of Bosnia and Herzegovina (i.e. ‘The Fauna of northern Bosnia’, ‘Bosnian and Herzegovinian embroidery and jewellery’, ‘The Life and culture of peasantry in Bosnia and Herzegovina’). These, and similar exhibitions, illustrate the ways in which the Landesmuseum during the communist regime contributed to the construction of a specific Bosnian and Herzegovinian identity. It should be noted that the references to Yugoslavia are marginalized in the present exhibitions at the museum and that Bosnia and Herzegovina as a nation state is in focus. It is also evident that during the communist history of the Landesmuseum
there was an almost total absence of exhibitions with religious connotations. However, this changed after the proclamation of independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The 1992-1995 war caused “not only a break in the development of the Museum, but direct devastation and damage to the four buildings of the Museum complex and to the Botanical Garden” (www.zemaljskimuzej.ba/o_nama/razvoj_muzeja-en.php). Since 1995, The National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina has been the primary beneficiary of aid and development work because the museum is regarded as “Bosnia-Herzegovina’s only museum with a national profile for all the different ethnic groups in the country” (besides the History Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Sarajevo) (Cultural Heritage without Borders, 2005). The explanation for this economic support can be found in the Dayton Peace Agreement that states that it is of great value to preserve national monuments. The law on the protection of properties designed as national monuments underlines the significance of “the restoration of damaged or destroyed property to the condition it was in prior to its destruction” (Law on the protection of properties designed as national monuments).

In the period after the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, emphasis on the ‘religious coexistence’ and so-called multi-religious/multi-ethnic nature of the country is evident in many exhibitions and the ways the museum contributes to the construction of the national identity of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Hajdarpasic, 2008: 114). In cooperation with the Catholic Church in Sarajevo, the museum exhibited painted Easter eggs in 1997 and in 1999, the museum presented exhibitions about “Bosnia and Islamic culture in Europe” that was also shown in many cities in Sweden. In 2008, the museum opened an exhibition of religious artifacts, in association with The Catholic Parish of the Holy Trinity in Sarajevo (www.zemaljskimuzej.ba/etnologija/aktivnosti-en.php). It could be argued that the museum nowadays attempts to establish Bosnia and Herzegovina as a country that encompasses ‘Occidental’ and ‘Oriental’ cultures. Thus, Bosnia and Herzegovina follows a similar development as many Western European countries insofar as multicultural discourse and the recognition of multi-ethnic and pluralistic social order seems to gain ground on many political levels and obtains acceptance (Hewitt, 2005: 15). Bosnia and Herzegovina is thus presented as a multicultural/multi-confessional country located in the middle of Europe.

However, it appears as if cooperation with Serbian cultural and religious organisations is not given the same attention and that the cultural heritage of the Serbian population of Bosnia and Herzegovina is, in some ways, marginalised. In this context, it should be highlighted that Bosnia and Herzegovina is divided into the Republic of Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina covers 51 percent of the country’s total area, while the Republic of Srpska covers 49 percent. Sarajevo is the capital of The Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the administrative centre of The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina that is primarily inhabited by Bosniaks (Bosnian Muslims) and Bosnian Croats (Catholics).

Related to the increased interest for religion, religious affiliation and religious artefacts since the latest war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, is ‘the Sarajevo Haggadah’ which has been the main exhibit item of the museum since 2002. The manuscript was created in the middle of the fourteenth century in northern Spain and it “found its way to Sarajevo with Jews who were expelled during the Inquisitions” (Hajdarpasic, 2008: 114). Surprisingly, the manuscript was not publically exhibited and did not have the role of the main cultural item of the museum until after
the war in the 1990s. Through the joint efforts of the UN Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina and international donors (such as Soros Open Social foundation, EU and Sida among others) the Haggadah was presented to the public in December 2002 and many international guests attended the opening ceremony.

Today the manuscript is on permanent public display and is, according to American historian Edin Hajdarpasic, used with the view of forming Bosnian and Herzegovinian multicultural identity. Firstly, religious as well as domestic and international political figures have emphasized the narrative of ‘religious coexistence’ and the multicultural nature of the country. Multiculturalism is, as stated by Hajdarpasic, synonymous with multiconfessionalism. In the opening ceremony, Jacques Paul Klein, the UN special representative and head of the UN Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, described Sarajevo during the Ottoman Empire when Sephardic Jewish refugees arrived as a result of inquisition in Spain as a multicultural city “that was a beacon to tolerance in Europe” (Hajdarpasic, 2008: 115). The Haggadah exhibition illustrates the way in which the international community attempts to influence public culture in post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina but also the fact that there is an “essentialist interpretation of the culture as a derivative expression of the religious” (Hajdarpasic, 2008: 116).

Historian Muhidin Mulalic asserts that Sarajevo and consequently Bosnia and Herzegovina is “a truly multicultural city situated on the crossroads between Europe and the Muslim World”. He states that Bosnia and Herzegovina enriches and strengthens “Europe’s multicultural diversity” as well as provides policymakers across Europe “with some ideas in terms of addressing contemporary challenges of multiculturalism” (Marcinkowski, 2009: 11). Accordingly, Bosnia and Herzegovina in general and Sarajevo in particular have been, in these and other examples, profiled as a meeting point between different cultures and religions (Western Christianity, Orthodox Eastern Christianity, Judaism and Islam) and the EU has, in several projects, emphasised the significance of multiculturalism within the country (i.e. European Committee of the Regions – the Western Balkans, TACSO; TAIEX, Delegation of the European Union to Bosnia and Herzegovina).

Nevertheless, cultural diversities in the country and among its inhabitants are viewed from a religious perspective and the announcement and proliferation of multiculturalism from the international community holds a reductionist understanding of culture, where culture=religion=ethnicity=identity (C.f. Baumann, 1999: 19-27). In this regard, the multiculturalist discourse is based on the politics of recognition where ethnicity and presumed embrace of religion are regarded as essential cultural and identification expressions of human beings (Cf. Taylor, 1994: 25-73). These developments entrench “the view that culture is something so ancient and so deeply spiritual that present and future generations of particular community have no choice but to carry on or in some way honour the venerable traditions” (Hajdarpasic, 2008: 119).

Secondly, The Sarajevo Haggadat is seen as a symbol of the Nazi Holocaust during the Second World War. In this respect, an analogy is made to the lack of international intervention to stop the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Hajdarpasic, 2008: 111). To the same extent, the term ’ethnic cleansing’ has been used to describe the events during the war and, according to Laura Silber and Allan Little, the term “became the defining characteristic of the conflict” (Lampe, 2000: 244). In fact, the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina “was the first international crisis during which the
American foreign policy debate routinely invoked Holocaust imagery and analogies” (Steinweis, 2005: 277).

In conclusion, the National Museum would, without international financial support, have difficulties operating. In fact, the museum has, during several occasions, been closed since the end of the war in 1995. Other museums, which have since then had various economic difficulties and have received international financial support, are the Museum of the Republic of Srpska and the History Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Museum of the Republic of Srpska
The museum was established in Banja Luka in 1930 as the ethnographic Museum of Vrbas Banovina and was the first institution of this kind in northwestern Bosnia and Herzegovina. The initiative was taken by Svetislav Milosavljevic, the first head of Vrbas Banovina, who proposed creation of an institution that would help economic development of the region, promote cultural integration and contribute to the amalgamation of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (Kulundzija, 2010: 20). Before the establishment of the museum, ethnically homogenous associations organized the cultural preservation of heritage. As previously mentioned, the division of The Kingdom of Yugoslavia into nine regions (banovine) implied that Bosnia and Herzegovina as a unified region, ceased to exist.

The museum structure stressed the importance of preservation of the ethnographic culture of the region (traditional costumes and ancient items, folk-art and handicraft); highlighted the tourist and economic interests of the city of Banja Luka where the museum and regional government were located and encouraged the strengthening of the regional identity (i.e. that of Vrbas Banovina) (Kulundzija, 2010: 25-27). In contrast to the National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina that describes this period in negative terms, the period of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia is, by the authors of the official history of the museum, considered to be a culturally flourishing epoch.

During World War II, Bosnia and Herzegovina was a part of the Independent State of Croatia and the museum in Banja Luka was first renamed the ‘National Museum of Croatian Krajina’ (Krajina stands for region or frontier) and later the ‘Croatian National Museum’. It has been pointed out that all items that were related to Serbian culture and Serbia were removed from the museum exhibits and that they were replaced by items which favoured the Croatian population and their culture (Kulundzija, 2010: 58-60). As a matter of fact, during the existence of the Independent State of Croatia, a very large number of Serbian men, women and children were killed, expelled or driven to death camps (Lampe, 2000: 211).

After the end of WWII, the first thing done was to change the museum’s name to “The State Ethnographic Museum of Bosnian Krajina” in 1945. After Second World War, the museum-workers concentrated on collecting, preserving and making public items from the so-called People's Liberation War and the history of the communist party and its officials (Kulundzija, 2010: 64-65). In 1953, the museum was yet again renamed the “National Museum in Banja Luka” and in 1962, it received a new official name ‘The museum of Bosnian Krajina’. The museum was restructured into the following scientific departments in 1961: archaeology; culture and cultural history; ethnography and folklore; labour-movement, national liberation war and the construction of socialism as well as the nature of Bosnian Krajina.
The representation of a new communist Yugoslavia and its people through modern mass institutions of education and communication was, in many cases, permeated by tales of military sacrifice and victory, images of shared destiny and unified people who fought The War of National Liberation in Yugoslavia (Sekulic, Massey and Hodson, 1994: 85). This is very noticeable in the case of the museum in Banja Luka where emphasis was given to remembering the apparent unity of all ethnic groups in the region, their struggle against Nazi occupation as well as ostensible common political interests (communist ideology) and views on the future of the country. The following slogan, which can be related to this political discourse and which was used all over Yugoslavia, also found its place in one of the exhibitions at the museum: “Comrade Tito, we swear to you that we will not leave your path” (Kulundzija 2010: 77). Such an emphasis on common goals and so-called Titoism was a part of the mobilization of people and the construction of a shared communist identity and ideology of ‘brotherhood and unity’. Symbolic for this kind of political agenda was the museum’s move into the premises of the Worker's Solidarity House in 1982.

Parallel to the construction of Yugoslav and/or communist identity and emphasis on the remembrance of the War of National Liberation in Yugoslavia, the museum organized several exhibitions which had in focus the regional cultural heritage and significant people from the region (Bosnian Krajina 1945-1985 in 1986, Postal communication in Bosnian Krajina at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century in 1989, Women of Bosnian Krajina in the war and during the rebuilding from 1962). Subsequently, the museum was an important space for the construction of regional identity and the region was defined as a part of the Yugoslav Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In November 1992, during the first year of war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the newly established government of ‘The Republic of Srpska’ pronounced that the museum was “the central museum in The Republic of Srpska”; the name was changed into The Museum of the Republic of Srpska and Banja Luka is today the administrative centre of the Republic of Srpska (muzejrs.com/about-museum,2.html; Kulundzija 2010: 89). According to Laura Silber and Allan Little, there were hundreds of thousands of Bosniaks and Bosnian Croats in northern Bosnia and Herzegovina before the war and the newly formed Republic of Srpska used “ethnic cleansing” in order to “render territory ethnically pure” (Silber and Little, 1997: 245-246).

The war was also a period of change in the focus of the museum and its presentation of cultural heritage. Today, the central points of interest for the museum workers are Serbian cultural and religious objects. The point of departure for The Museum of the Republic of Srpska was the exhibition ‘Serbian traditional clothing in Bosnian Krajina’ in 1993. The exhibition was followed by the one-hundred-year anniversary of the publication of the first Serbian ethnographic anthology and a few other anniversaries that celebrated works of influential Serbian intellectuals. In these, and similar exhibitions that followed, the emphasis has been given to the ‘ethnic’ and ‘religious’ perspective, something which had not been so appreciable during the communist era. In the following decade, the museum, for example, held the exhibition ‘Icons – Reflection on the 800th anniversary of Hilandar Monastery’ in 1999 and in 2006, the museum accommodated “Survival in Kosovo – the restoration of sacred” (Kulundzija, 2010: 92-97).

Furthermore, it should be noted that, in the contemporary history of the museum and its exhibitions, there is an almost total absence of history of the Bosniak population in the area and...
the history of Bosnia and Herzegovina as an independent state. As a consequence of the latest war, “all of the city mosques and eleven Roman Catholic churches in the Banja Luka area were destroyed” as “a signal for the exclusion” of all non-Serbs (Riedlmayer, 2002: 118; Sells, 2003: 314). One of the buildings destroyed during the war was the pre-war cultural symbol of the city, namely the sixteenth century Ferhadija mosque. Nonetheless, its significance as a part of the cultural heritage of the Republic of Srpska is not recognized by the museum. However, the significance of the Catholic order Trappists (The Order of Cistercians of the Strict Observance) was highlighted in an exhibition from 2009 and the members of the order were praised for their importance to “economic development of the city during the past one hundred years” (Kulundzija, 2010: 124). As a result, the significance of the pre-war and present Bosniak population is marginalised while the Islamic cultures of Bosnia and Herzegovina in general and the Republic of Srpska in particular are not recognised by the museum as parts of the religious and cultural identities of the region.

Religious architecture and sacred space are at the centre of identity construction, both for those working for religious exclusion (i.e. silencing of the importance of Islam as religion and cultural heritage of the region) and those working for religious pluralism (i.e. inclusion of Catholicism). The struggle over religious/ethnic symbols articulates both ethnic inclusion and exclusion and the museum has formative and reflective role in the society and is a contributing factor in so far as some artefacts, monuments and historical perspectives fall to oblivion while others get an increased representation in the voices presented at the museum. Following this line of argumentation, “in order to remember some things properly we have to forget others” (Peralta, 2009: 105). In the case of The Museum of the Republic of Srpska, the presence of Bosniaks and Islamic cultures before the war in the city and the region are silenced and it could be argued that the articulation/remembrance of the expulsion of non-Serbs “could bring a threat to national cohesion and self-image” (Misztal, 2009: 118). Remembering and forgetting are not opposites; instead they are an integral part of identity construction. In this museum, Christianity and not Islam is put forward as a signifying religious carrier of cultural heritage.

As an institution for the preservation of the heritage of the Republic of Srpska and as the memorial centre for Serbian collective identity, the museum has also a vital position in maintaining the remembrance of Jasenovac, the site of the largest death camp in the Independent State of Croatia during World War II (Denich, 1994: 370). Just before the latest war, Jasenovac also became a site of a ‘symbolic war’ and of ‘historical disputes’. The participants were (and still are) historians as well as politicians, and John R. Lampe describes the situation in the following way:

Postwar Communist historians claimed that over one-half million people […] died at Jasenovac alone, a figure doubled by recent Serbian pseudo-history and then […] reduced to slightly less than 100,000 by Croatian scholars. It has since been further reduced and its consciously racist purpose denied by Croatian pseudo-history. (Lampe, 2000: 211)

The most significant participant in the Croatian public debate about genocide during World War II was former Croatian president Franjo Tudjman who “supported calculations that greatly reduced the number of Serbian victims and referred to Jasenovac as a ‘myth’” (Denich, 1994: 376). The consequence of ‘historical disputes’ about Jasenovac (and ‘symbolic war’) and the
actual war in the Balkans was that the nationalists on both sides exploited traumatic memories and different events in history. History became an instrument of the power struggle and an important element in the construction of ethnic identities and self-image. In the case of the Republic of Srpska, Jasenovac is both the symbol of experiences during World War II and the expulsion of Serbs from Kosovo, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina during the latest conflicts in the Balkans.

Finally, I would like to remind that genocide as a part of museum exhibitions is also an integral part of The National Museum in Sarajevo where genocide is, through The Sarajevo Haggadah, implicitly associated with Serbian atrocities during the latest war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Unlike the museum in Sarajevo, the genocide during Second World War symbolises, in the case of the Museum of the Republic of Srpska, the Serbian population in Croatia, Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina as victims of oppression, both during World War II and the latest war. Thus, Jasenovac is tacitly used to highlight the necessity of the independence of the Serbian population and the preservation of Serbian culture and their presumed cultural heritage. As a part of the promotion of preservation of Serbian culture and on the request of Serbian Orthodox Church in south-eastern Bosnia and Herzegovina, religious icons were “protected, conserved and presented to the public on a successful exhibition” in 2009 (Kulundzija, 2010: 126). The religious icons came from Serbian communities where maltreatment of Bosnian Serbs and destruction of their property have been reported by Human Rights Watch (Human Rights Watch, 1993: 316-327, 376).

In conclusion, in spite of the consequences of the latest war, the museum managed to establish extensive collaboration with cultural institutions in Serbia during 1990s and after the war, the museum received financial support from international organizations and institutions for preservation of its cultural heritage. The museum can be regarded as a contributory factor in the creation of identity of the Republic of Srpska; an identification which is closely linked to Serbian ethnic identity.

**The History Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina**

The museum was founded in 1945 with the purpose to “collect, preserve and display all documents related to course and development of the national liberation fight and its achievements, to collect, study and reveal to public all source materials which relate to history of national liberation war, and to preserve and cherish remembrance to national heroes and victims of fascism, to heroism and devotion of our peoples in the liberation war” (Kanjanac, 2010: 7). This predominant focus on the events and consequences of World War II, as interpreted by the Communist regime, is reflected in the original name of the museum, The Museum of National Liberation in Sarajevo.

The museum was, during the existence of the second Yugoslavia (1945-1992), funded by the assembly of the Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and it was this institution that, in November 1945, made the decision to impose “the Law on foundation of the Museum of the national liberation as a state institution under the direct control of the Ministry of education” (Kanjanac, 2010: 7). During the first two decades of its existence, the museum had moved several times into different buildings and exhibitions were often held in improvised premises. Until 1950, it was located in *Landesmuseum* (Sarajevo), when it was moved into the Sarajevo Town Hall. Since
1963, the museum has been located in a purpose-built building, which at the time of its construction was praised for its architectural innovation. In 1967, the name of the museum was changed to the Museum of Revolution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, while the current name, the History Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina was officially given in the midst of war in June 1993 by the government of independent Bosnia and Herzegovina. The change of name also implied a shift in perspective and the museum widened its temporal scope of work to include the history of Bosnia and Herzegovina from the arrival of Slavs to the Balkans to the formation of “modern and independent Bosnia and Herzegovina” (Kanjanac, 2010: 17). At the same time, the geographic horizon was narrowed.

While the primal focus of the Museum of Revolution was during the period of communist regime, the national liberation war; the communist party and labour unions in Yugoslavia in general as well as Bosnia and Herzegovina in particular, the museum became, in the 1990s, a scientific and educational arena for the systematic research, collection and cataloguing of artefacts of special interest for the history of an independent Bosnia and Herzegovina. Consequently, the pre-1990s period could be outlined by numerous exhibitions about battles held in the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina during Second World War; the history of the worker’s movement and socialist revolutions; history of the communist party of Yugoslavia and its Bosnian and Herzegovinian branch as well as post-war socialist development until the 1960s. The geographic horizon of the museum was both Bosnian and Herzegovinian and Yugoslav while the ideological perspective was communist. The implicit aim of the museum was to legitimize communist rule through an emphasis on: the importance of the partisan movement (i.e. People’s Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Yugoslavia) for the liberation of peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as Yugoslavia, the remembrance of the suffering of its peoples during the war, the danger of divisive ideologies such as fascism and nationalism and the representation of Titoism as well as socialism as progressive and modernist ideologies. Similar to the Museum of Bosnian Krajina in Banja Luka, even the Museum of Revolution was influenced by the ‘brotherhood and unity’ slogan in accordance to which there exists a danger of disintegration if communism is to lose its dominant ideological position. In this sense the National Liberation War is used as a symbol of unity of different ethnic groups in the territory of Yugoslavia in general and Bosnia and Herzegovina in particular. Correspondingly, the slogan “Death to fascism, freedom to people” is in the museum’s exhibitions and within its program declaration used to define the communist party and partisans as the only liberating forces during World War II. Both regional (i.e. Bosnia and Herzegovina) and Yugoslav national identities under the umbrella of communism were acclaimed at the same time. Correspondingly, the disintegration of unity was seen as something threatening.

While the period of the communist regime is, within the official history of the museum, described as the “period of flourishing of the Museum”, the museum has, in the period after the latest war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, had many economic problems and was, during the war, heavily damaged. So, in spite of the fact that the parliament of the independent Bosnia and Herzegovina has, de facto, proclaimed the History Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a museum of public interest for the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the museum has had difficulties to operate and find a new focal point after the fall of communism (Kanjanac, 2010: 18). Because the museum’s archive predominantly consists of artefacts that symbolize the
communist past, it has had difficulties to re-orientate and find new goals that would give it continuous financial support.

The way to go was to focus on the history of Bosnia and Herzegovina in general and military history of the region/country/nation in particular. In this way, there is a continuity of the perspectives of the museum but a shift in the geopolitical focus of the museum. Today it is a museum with a particular focus on the articulation of historical continuity of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The first exhibition organised during the wartime was opened in July 1993 under the name “Sarajevo’s war pictures”. During the first decade of the twenty-first century, the museum organised the following exhibitions: Paper Money in Bosnia and Herzegovina from 1918 until Present Day, Fleur-de-lis in Medieval Bosnia (Golden Lilies were, in the 1990s, used as a symbol of an independent Bosnia and Herzegovina), Hundred years of Trade union movement in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ban of Bosnia and ‘Surrounded Sarajevo’. The main objective of the preservation, collection, documentation and presentation of three-dimensional objects and photos from the War in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1992-1995) is to depict life in war conditions and show “the strength, resourcefulness, persistence of the citizens of this country to survive” as well as to document the “suffering of citizens, urbicide and life in period 1992-1995” (Kanjanc, 2010: 53-54). In this way, the museum also functions as a memorial space of the most recent war and a place for the construction of Bosnian and Herzegovinian national identity and the representation of the struggle for the independence.

The Slovene National Museum

The National Museum of Slovenia, as it is called today, was founded as Carniolan provincial museum within The Austrian Empire on the 15th of October 1821 and the official proposal for the establishment of the museum was presented by the Bishop of Ljubljana, Avgustin Gruber (later the Archbishop of Salzburg), who advocated formation of “a centre in which all new discoveries would find ways and possibilities of being exploited to the general benefit and gain” (Stamcar, 2007: 9). The proposal was approved by the Imperial administration in Vienna and during the first years of the work of the museum, it was called Krainisch Ständisches Museum, but was soon renamed Krainisches Landesmuseum (the Provincial Museum of Carniola).

The reason for its provincial character lies in the fact that during several hundred years, the territories in which the Slovenian language was used were divided between different political units such as the provinces of Carniola, with Ljubljana as the administrative and cultural centre, Styria, Carinthia, Gorizia-Gradisca and Istria (Dezman, 2006: 9). Therefore, during the first half of the existence of the museum, it primarily operated as a provincial museum with the aim of improving the economic and cultural life of Carniola. In the early years of its existence, special attention was given to “the collection of the objects of contemporary craft and industrial production” (www.nms.si/slovensko/12_oddelki/uporab_umetnost/zgodovina/zgodovina.html). This laid the foundation for the establishment of applied arts and design collections.

Even though there was, among the founders and guardians of the interest of the museum, an observable notion of modernity and faith in the future, the museum staff also had a particular interest in objects from the past. In fact, the newly established provincial museum in Ljubljana received private donations; including the collections of minerals, preserved plants and zoological specimens, “archaeological artefacts from the bed of the Ljubljanica river”, and numismatic and
ethnographic collections; during the first decades of its existence (Stamcar, 2007: 10). Besides these fields of interest, attention was given to collections of “national” literature and traditional clothing of Carniola and remembrance of some great “men’s” achievements (Petru, 1971: 15-16). It is possible to link the process of the formation of the museum to the celebration and inclusion of the important figures of the time in historical writings. Consequently, the exhibits had a particular political, ethno-cultural and gender outlook and they mirrored social stratification of the time.

As a consequence, two explanations for the formation of the museum have emerged. Firstly, there was an appreciable emphasis on the modernity and the future development and industrialisation of the region (Carniola). The descriptions that emphasise the significance of the Austrian Empire for the development of the region are closely related to the discourses of progress and teleological views on history. They also justify the power of the Empire. Secondly, there are, in the proclamations presented by Bishop Gruber, no references to presumed pan-Slovene political and ideological interests. Instead, the museum had predominantly provincial (i.e. Carniola) and imperial identity-forming influence. These two points of view complement each other in so far as the presumed idea of the common past and heritage of all Slovene speaking inhabitants of the Austrian Empire are underplayed. But the question is whether it is possible to make a clear demarcation line between notions of Carniola, “Slovene” and imperial identifications.

According to Peter Petru, the director of the museum between 1970 and 1983, the establishment of the museum was preceded by a vivid discussion about the need for an educational institution whose aim would either be the preservation of cultural heritage of Carniola or, and this is important to have in mind, the struggle for Slovenian domestic/national/provincial interests as well as the interests that were related to pan-Slavism and the Illyrian-movement (Petru, 1971: 1-2). It should be added that Illyria was a region in the western part of the Balkans. The Roman province of Illyricum stretched from present Albania in the east to Istria in the west and from the River Sava in the north to Adriatic Sea in the south. However during the Napoleon era Illyrian Province occupied the area which we today call Slovenia as well as parts of today’s Croatia. The capital of the province was Ljubljana. It is possible to look upon the above discussed ideological standpoints and views on cultural life of the province as illustrations of the preservation of the regional character of the museum as well as the safeguarding and further development of ties between Carniola and the Imperial government in Vienna on the one hand and the enhancement of different forms of Slovenian nationalism on the other hand.

In general, the emphasis on the culture and central role of the Austrian Imperial Power was combined with the provincial character of the museum, whose main focus was the preservation of the presumed cultural authenticity of the province. In this context, the museum contributed to the solidification of identity which was directly connected to Austria and Vienna on one hand and on the other, the local (i.e. regional, provincial) identity which had a character of the presumed authenticity of Carniolan culture and was possibly, to some extent, influenced by pan-Slavism and the pan-Slovenian movement, United Slovenia.

The core of the United Slovenia programme was the unification of all the Slovene lands, irrespective of existing historical provincial borders. The idea was for it to evolve into an
autonomous administrative unity under the protection of the Habsburg Empire, thus moving from traditional provincial borders and the legacy of being tied to the historical provinces of Carniola, Styria, Carinthia, Gorizia-Gradisca and Istria. (Dezman, 2006: 9)

However, Petru concludes that, during the imperial era, Slovenian “national” history was regarded by the museum administration as “an inappropriate and unworthy” point of interest (Petru, 1971: 27). This seemingly complex relation between provincial, imperial, pan-Slovene and pan-Slavic identities continued to permeate the work of educational and cultural institutions until the end of World War I.

On the whole, the museum was opened to the public in 1831 and the museum-curator had to be “a man from the province of Carniola, who has a public reputation and the knowledge of natural sciences and arts” (Petru, 1971: 22). While the museum had only a handful of donors during the first years of its existence, the number of contributors rose steadily during the whole nineteenth century. At the end of the nineteenth century, “[c]ollectors across the country, from parish priests, landowners and farmers to the urban middle class were encouraged to send local folk material and other items of interest to the museum, where the collections were systematically catalogued” (Stamcar, 2007: 12). The museum functioned as a guardian of both Carniolan and Austrian culture and history and it had an impact on the preservation of cultural heritage of many, but not all, social classes. It appears as if the cultural artefacts of the working class were not represented here; this due to ideological reasons and the fact that Carniola was considered to be, relatively, industrially undeveloped and a peripheral region of Western Europe (Ferfila, 2010: 3-4; Dezman 2006: 9).

The significance of the Austrian Imperial Power, the ideological work of the museum and the effects of the museum on identification-construction are mirrored in the fact that the museum was renamed the Provincial Museum of Carniola – Rudolfinum (Krainisches Landesmuseum – Rudolfinum) in 1882 in honour of the Crown Prince of The Austrian-Hungarian empire (Rudolf Franz Karl Joseph). In 1883, construction of the new museum building began as a part of the 600-year anniversary of the accession of the province of Carniola to the Duchy of Austria. The new museum building, which was built in a neo-classical style, saw public light in 1888 (www.nms.si/slovensko/13_zgodovina_muzeja/ zgodovina.html). It should be added that the cornerstone was laid by Emperor Franz Joseph I and that the so-called dominantly Slovene-speaking provinces of Styria, Carinthia, Istria, Trieste, Gorizia-Gradisca and Carniola “were incorporated into the Habsburg domain” during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (Fersila, 2010: 1).

Not only was the new museum building constructed in honour of the Crown Prince and implicitly, the Austrian-Hungarian Empire, but the regional history of iron production was, for example, in an exhibition defined as a part of “Geschichte den Eisens in Inner-Österreich von der Urzeit bis zum Anfange des 19. Jahrhunderts” (Petru, 1971: 18). Correspondingly, the museum was entitled “des Landesmuseum Rudolfinum in Laibach” and the absence of Carniola in the designation indicates that the museum and the artefacts collected and exhibited there were regarded as an integral part of Austrian-cultural heritage and not only Carniolan (or Slovenian). Furthermore, German had a dominant position among museum-workers and intellectuals during the whole nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth century. For that reason, many journals were published in German (Jahreshefte des Vereines des Krainischen Landesmuseums,
As a consequence of World War I, the Austro-Hungarian Empire disintegrated and new countries emerged in its territory. The newly established State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs (the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, later renamed the Kingdom of Yugoslavia) brought a certain degree of independence to Slovenia as well as unification of the majority of territories where the Slovenian language was used (Dezman, 2006: 15-19). The museum changed its focus from primarily being a provincial (i.e. Carniolan) museum to becoming a pan-Slovene museum and governance over the museum was given to the Provincial Government of Slovenia in 1920 (Petru, 1971: 25). In line with this ethno-geographic and political change, the name of the museum was changed to the National Museum in Ljubljana in 1921 (www.nms.si/slovensko/13_zgodovina_muzeja/zgodovina.html). This change of name was not only a symbol of a new era but also a proclamation of an alteration of the vantage point of the museum.

Which nation was primarily the focus of the museum exhibitions?

According to Petru, the explanation for the shift in the viewpoint can be found in the wish to "enlighten Slovenian nation" about its history. “Slovenes were then given a museum which displayed their centuries-old history” (Petru, 1971: 27). During the interwar years (1918-1941), the museology of Slovenia entered an extensively vigorous period and an independent Ethnographic Museum was established through separation from the National Museum while in 1933, “a large part of the painting and sculptural fund was transferred to the National Gallery” (Stamcar, 2007: 13). In relation to the consolidation of the Slovene national identity, the Slovene University was founded in 1919 and it “incorporated many distinguished Slovene academics, who had until then taught at Vienna and other universities” (Dezman, 2006: 18). All this political and cultural development after World War I led to the situation where the museum became, to a large extent, orientated towards the preservation and mediation of political, social and cultural history of Slovenia (Petru, 1971: 26).

The formation of the first Yugoslavia and the incorporation of Slovenia in the union of South-Slavs, meant that Slovenia’s point of economic, cultural and political interests changed to some extent. The orientational shift from Western Europe towards so-called Eastern Europa also influenced the scientific work of museums in Slovenia insofar as Serbian historians and anthropologists published their contributions in Slovenian museology journals in Serbian (Ferfila, 2010: 4; Dezman, 2006; c.f. Zupanic, 1926/1927; Trojanovic, 1926/1927). Thus, both Slovenian and Serbian/Croatian became officially recognised as languages used in different political, cultural and scientific contexts in Slovenia. At the same time the importance of German was reduced.

However, during the whole interwar period, there existed an internal division in Slovenian cultural and political life. While some groups supported a centralised/federal system for Yugoslavia, others were asserting an autonomy declaration (Dezman, 2006: 18; c.f. Lampe, 2000: 147-149). This dualism between Slovenian and Yugoslav identities influenced the work of cultural institutions and museums, and it had continued to characterize the work of the National Museum in Ljubljana until the disintegration of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. In 1971, the director of the museum wrote that the presentation of Slovenian history and statehood within the framework of the National Museum is, in many ways, unique and he asserted that the museum
had helped Slovenes to “form the present - in a joint effort with South Slavic Nations – and their future skills and knowledge” (Petru 1971: 26). Furthermore, he explained that important historical decisions require that every individual personally confront the past. By emphasizing the educational and identificational nature of the museum, he highlighted that “an important task of the museum is to present the society with historical evidence and illustrate the prehistory and history of Slovenes” (Petru 1971: 28).

Consequently, even though Slovenia was a part of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and later the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the main task of the museum was representation of history and culture of the Slovene people. Examples of this historical and political point of view are visible in the following exhibitions: Turkish raids on Slovenian soil (1958), The art of Alpine Illyrians and Venets (1962), The Illyrian Provinces during Napoleon Era (1964); the Illyrian Province was a province of the Napoleonic French Empire established in 1809 with Laibach (Ljubljana) as the administrative centre; as well as Secession in Slovenia (1984).

Since the beginning of the 1990s, the museum has mainly had a national focus, something that in many ways permeates the exhibition on “Slovene Language: Identity and Symbol. A short History of Slovenes” (2006). The exhibition was part of the fifteenth anniversary of the independence of Slovenia (1991). Slovenian language is represented here as the primary symbol of Slovenian identity and it is explained that Slovenes “had to wait until the end of the twentieth century to form a state in which a large majority of the population for the first time could fully assume responsibility for its own existence and the survival of their language” (www.nms.si/slovensko/10_razstave/stalne/IdentitetainSimbol.html).

Today, the museum consists of six departments that are, according to the authors of the museums official history, responsible for the collection, protection and preservation of historical artefacts, the study of portable cultural heritage of the Slovenian ethnic space and exhibiting them to the public (www.nms.si/slovensko/18_ijz/katalog-informacij-javnega-znacaja.html). Subsequently, during some 190 years of the existence of the museum, it has transformed from being a provincial museum within the Austrian Empire (later The Austrian-Hungarian Empire) to today being one of the leading museums that contribute to perpetuate the identity of the citizens of The Republic of Slovenia, which was established on the 26th of June 1991 via separation from the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

The Museum of Contemporary History of Slovenia

The forerunner of the museum was established in the midst of World War II (on the 12th of January 1944) under the name the Scientific Institute of the Executive Committee of the Liberation Front. The first exhibitions of the institute called attention to the Partisan press and Bozidar Jakac's works of art (www.muzej-nz.si/slo/zgodovina.html). Jakac was one of the key organizers in the establishment of the Ljubljana Academy of Fine Arts and was a member of the Partisan movement and communist party (Razstave muzija noveje zgodovine Slovenije). Out of this institute, two different institutions were formed in 1948, namely the Institute of National Questions and the Museum of National Liberation. The Museum of Contemporary History of Slovenia is the direct successor of the Museum of National Liberation and is situated in Ljubljana.
The history of the museum during the communist regime is analogous to the Museum of Revolution of Bosnia and Herzegovina (later called the History Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina). This is evident in the fact that the Bosnian-Herzegovinian museum exhibited some of its paintings produced by partisan artists at the museum in Ljubljana in 1977 (Gostujoče Razstave v Muzeju Novije Zgodovine Slovenije). In a similar manner, the primary focus of the Slovenian museum was military history as well as the history of the communist regime/party and the sociocultural development of communist Slovenia/Yugoslavia. In line with the ideological viewpoints of the museum, it was, for few years, a part of the Institute of the Workers’ Movement but it gained independence again in 1962 when the name was changed to The Museum of the People’s Revolution. Its primary collections consisted of “records of the revolutionary Communist movement before the Second World War, Partisan resistance” and affirmative representations of socialism/communism after the war and Tito’s leadership (www.muzej-nz.si/eng/eng_zbirke.html).

As a consequence of Slovenian separation from Yugoslavia in 1991, the name of the museum was changed in 1994 to The Museum of Contemporary History. Since 2003, this national museum, with a purpose to collect, preserve, document, study, present and communicate the intangible “heritage from the history of Slovenian ethnical territory from the beginning of the 20th century onwards”, has been called The Museum of Contemporary History of Slovenia (http://www.muzej-nz.si/eng/eng_zgodovina.html).

The central point of departure during the period of Second Yugoslavia was the representation of the Partisan struggle against Nazism during World War II and the Partisans’ merits during the war. The discourses of liberation of Yugoslavia, the significance of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia and Slovenia in this matter and the construction of post-War Yugoslavia and Slovenia as well as the images of sacrifice were an important part in the legitimization of the communist regime and the construction of both Yugoslav national identity and Slovenian ethno-regional identity. The history of so called People’s Liberation Army was, in this and other museums of this kind, given an epic dimension and Partisans were celebrated as the only liberating force and the military formation which signified the union of all peoples living in the territory of Yugoslavia. The communist party was, at the same time, depicted as the solitary guardian of the Yugoslav federation and its principals.

On the one hand, the museum was part of the political construction of new communist and trans-Yugoslav identity which, in a wider sense, was associated with an idea of progress, so-called working class ideals, Titoism as well as militarist discourse. In this context, the communist regime in general and the People’s Liberation Army in particular were not criticized until the break-up of Yugoslavia. The museum played a part in the construction of the ‘socialist person’, which would embody communist ideology and the dogma of ‘brotherhood and unity’.

On the other hand, the museum embodied a Slovene regional identity and history. In this context, usage of the Slovene language and other ethno-cultural symbols were quite important. The pre-Yugoslav history of Slovenia is, in fact, embodied in the mansion which has, since 1951, been used to house the museum. The mansion was built by Austrian count Leopold Karl Lamberg and it had, during its early history, housed several figures that are seen as important for the construction of Slovenian culture. One of them is poet France Preseren, who worked here as a teacher between 1818 and 1819. One of his poems “The Toast” is used as the Slovenian
national anthem and the date of his death is, in fact, a national holiday that celebrates Slovene culture. As a matter a fact, the “political program advocating a united Slovenia (but still inside Austria) was formulated in 1848 by a small group of intellectuals associated with this romantic movement” and among them France Preser en holds a special position (Hansen, 1996: 476). Another person who is seen as an important figure in Slovenian historical writing and cultural representation of the country and who lived in the mansion is Peter Kozler, the author of Short Slovenian Geography, which was published in 1853 (www.muzej-nz.si/slo/cekinov_grad.html).


The above mentioned ‘whitewashing’, that is to say glossing over political and military vices during the communist regime as well as a biased presentation of communist system, was gradually abolished in connection to the formation of an independent and democratic Slovenia during the 1990s. On the whole, there has been a shift towards a deconstruction and a critical representation of the communist past as well as an increased emphasis on the processes of democratization and the struggle for independence of Slovenia. According to museum workers, the democratisation of Slovene public life, which started in the 1980s, has permeated a wide range of public and (sub)cultural institutions and organisations (www.muzej-nz.si/slo/stalna_razstava_06_01.html). The transition of the viewpoint of the museum is anthropomorphized in the exhibition entitled “Posters – Elections of 1990” (the year when the first multiparty parliamentary elections were held in Slovenia) from 1992 as well as several temporary exhibitions which were dedicated to the formation of the multiparty system in Slovenia (“Twenty Years since the Foundation of the Democratic Opposition of Slovenia, DEMOS”, “Twenty years since the Foundation of the Slovenian Christian Democrats” and “Twenty Years since the Foundation of Greens of Slovenia”) (www.muzej-nz.si/eng/eng_obcasne_razstave_2009.html).

In 1996, the permanent exhibition “Slovenes in the 20th Century” was opened and a part of this exhibition is “United in Victory - Democratization and Independence of Slovenia”. Here, the so-called Yugoslav People’s Army was, and still is, seen as an aggressor and somebody who tried to hinder our political objectives and our struggle for freedom from communist oppression. All things considered, the museum gives important attention to the Slovenian national identity and its premises are today used to display the narrative about democratic Slovenian citizens as well as their struggle for independence and against oppression from the communist totalitarian regime. For instance, in 1997 a photo-exhibition displayed photos from the war for independence. Furthermore, the museum points out in the exhibition about Cultural and Technical Heritage of Blind and Visually Impaired (2010) that people with these disabilities helped in the War for
Slovenia from 1991 (www.muzej-nz.si/slo/obcasne Razstave_2010_01_slepi.html). In conclusion, the museum educates its citizens about the significance of democracy and political participation and elections.

Unlike the two analysed museums in Bosnia and Herzegovina, namely the Museum of the Republic of Srpska and the History Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina, where there is no substantial critique of the communist era, the museum in Slovenia has noticeable critical perspective on usage of history during the communist regime. It seems as if one of the aims of the museum is to discover, reveal and make public as well as reconstruct problematic issues from the communist past and past wrongdoings. According to Istok Durjava (1998:10), the former director of the museum, “[a]fter the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia and beginning of independent Slovenia, a period of attempts at ‘museum lustration’ arrived, the aim of which was to get rid of the so-called ‘red’ museums, and ideologically and physically to ‘cleans’ the Slovenian museum network”.

In the exhibition “Slovenes in the 20th Century”, attention is given to the economic and political system in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in general and Slovenia in particular. The Yugoslav system is, in “Slovenian economy since 1945”, denoted as problematic while the story about the socialist revolution, the liberation war and the socialist system is differentiated (www.muzej-nz.si/slo/stalna_razstava_05.html). In other words, there are no footprints of so-called “Yugonostalgia”. Yugonostalgia, which exists among a considerable number of people living in the areas of former Yugoslavia or among those who have identity ties to the country; is, according to political scientist Nicole Lindstrom (2005: 235-236), longing “for the past that appears better than the present”. Lindstrom states that it is nostalgia “for the fantasy of the Yugoslav state itself” and is “most often expressed towards the charismatic leader who personified it: Josip Broz Tito”.

The critical perspective towards the socialist/communist regime is most vividly expressed in the temporary exhibition called “Huda Jama (Cave of evil)” which opened in December 2009. Huda Jama is labelled “the burial and killing site” and the purpose of the exhibition was to reconstruct and revile the truth about “the worse crime of all times on the territory of the Republic of Slovenia” as well as open up critique of “Titoistic taboos” (www.muzej-nz.si/eng/eng_obcasne Razstave_2009_13_huda%20jama.html). The discourses of the search for truth and critique of the so-called Stalinistic Dachau trials permeate the analysis. Pavel Jamnik, the Senior Criminal Police Superintendent who led the project Sprava (Eng. Reconciliation), describes the site in the following words.

After changes in the political system in Slovenia in 1990, experts started investigating criminal offences perpetrated by the Yugoslav authority that do not fall under the statute of limitations. On 1 January 1995, the police started investigating post-war mass killings, and that date can be considered as the day when the new Slovenian state recognised the post-World War Two events as crimes that do not fall under the statute of limitations. According to data collected so far, the territory of Slovenia witnessed the killing of about 100,000 people in the first months after the war ended. Most of the victims were of other Yugoslav nationalities and were captured in Slovenia fleeing from the Partisan army. According to that data, at least 15,000 of the murdered were of Slovenian nationality. (Jamnik, 2008: 207)
By doing this, the museum workers hope to resolve conflicts and historical controversies left over from the communist past. Political scientist David Mendeloff points out that, since the 1990s, there has been a growing interest among many organisations and states to “address past crimes and misdeeds” and according to him “truth-telling” or “truth-seeking” are seen as important parts in democratization of societies and a necessary mechanism for achieving reconciliation (Mendeloff, 2004: 335-336).

Another example of truth-seeking processes and the obvious shutting up of the new Slovenian nation from the communist past is the exhibition “Unite, unite poor peasants: Prosecution of farmers in Slovenia 1945-1955” from 2009 (www.muzej-nz.si/eng/eng_obcasne Razstave_2009 _14_le%20vkup.html). At this juncture, discourses used to define communist regime are filled with war-like depictions. Proclamations such as “killing”, “murder”, “the war against religion and church”, “aggressive de-agrarization” and “the class war strategies” point to the fact that there is a strong antipathy towards the former communist regime and that the museum possibly attempts to renegotiate the interpretation of Yugoslav and Slovenian history as well as come to grips with that which, in former Eastern Germany, is called Ostalgie and in the countries of former Yugoslavia, Yugonostalgia. The problematizing interpretation of the communist past is feasibly used to reduce a nostalgic interpretation of the former system and the country that once existed. However, the extent to which Slovene nationals are associated with these violent acts is still arguable. In fact, it could be argued that those who were involved in the above-mentioned misdeeds are depersonalized and associated with abstract groups called Partisans or communists. Nevertheless, this is still an example of the rewriting of Slovene history. Another illustration of the renegotiation of the history of the Slovenes is a conference that is organised by the museum and that will be held in October 2011 (www.muzej-nz.si/eng/eng_index2.html). The conference pays attention to the mobilization of the Slovenes into Wehrmacht (armed forces of Nazi-Germany). This also demonstrates the museum’s growing interest in oral-history traditions, history-from-bellow and an attempt to give voices to the victims and their families.

In this and many other ways, a complex history of the Slovenes is presented to the public today. In spite of the fact that the museum has a pronounced aim to present the heritage of “national minorities, emigrants and immigrants”, it primarily serves as an important contributory factor in the construction of the Slovenian identity which emphasizes the importance of “the rights to self-determination and statehood”, “the needs for democratic changes”, the “ideas and lifestyles of western societies” and thus, increasingly, the place of Slovenia in the EU (www.muzej-nz.si/slo/stalna_razstava_06_01.html). In 2008, the museum organised an exhibition entitled “Slovenian European Union Council Presidency 2008”. According to the organisers of the exhibition, “Slovenia played an international role which it had never played before” (www.muzej-nz.si/slo/obcasne Razstave_2008_07.html). Consequently there has been a shift in interpretation of Slovenian identity, a shift that mirrors the dissociation of Slovenia from former Yugoslav republics and a shift towards an increased importance of the European Union for the self-image of citizens of the Republic of Slovenia. However, this does not mean that cooperation with other countries of the former Yugoslavia has ceased to exist. In fact, the museum has toured with its exhibitions in former countries of Yugoslavia and visiting-exhibitions from former Yugoslavia have been displayed at the Museum of Contemporary History of Slovenia (Gostujunce Razstave v Muzeju Novoje Zgodovine Slovenije).
Bibliography

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Internet resources and unpublished material
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# Annex table 2, Slovenia

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