

'PRIMITIVE, CRUEL AND BLOOD-THIRSTY SAVAGES': STEREOTYPES IN AND ABOUT THE WESTERN BALKANS¹

Abstract. This paper focuses on national stereotypes in the area of former Yugoslavia used by members of one ethnic community to describe members of other ethnic communities. The countries in the Balkans have a long history of ethnic fragmentation so it is no surprise that its ethnic groups are often stereotyped based on Western perceptions of the Balkans and the relationship between oppressors and the oppressed, which led to the development of stereotypes. The theoretical framework of stereotypes and prejudices and research on these topics show that stereotypes in former Yugoslavia have developed in relation to socio-political circumstances and that the stereotypes have been used for a long time, even after the potential reasons for their initial application ceased to exist.

Key words: stereotypes, social distance, the Balkans, former Yugoslavia

Introduction

Countries in the Balkans² have a long history of fragmentation and its nations are often marked by prejudices and stereotypes that can also be defined as generalisations about members of a certain social group as a result of natural cognitive reduction (Musek, 1994; Velikonja, 2002; Ule, 2005; Lowengart and Zaidman in Rašković and Svetličič, 2011: 88).³

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² Some prefer the term South-East Europe over the Balkans as it is supposed to contain less political motivation. In addition, use of this term can also be problematic. As noted by Todorova (2001: 61), *Südosteuropa* was an important concept in the geopolitical plans of the Nazis and had a well-defined space in their organisation as *Wirtschaftsraum Grossdeutschland Südost*, naturally determined economic and political fulfilment of the German Reich in the southeast. For more on the debate the Balkans vs. South-East Europe, see Todorova (2001: 60–63).

³ Ule (2005: 388) defines stereotyping as the process of describing people on the basis of their cultural group belonging, not on the basis of their individual characteristics and peculiarities. According to Lippman (in Ule, 2005: 388), stereotypes are a selective, self-fulfilling and ethnocentric judgment, which

According to Musek (1994: 7), such labelling is common because as we ascribe various personality traits to others (and consequently to ourselves), others also do the same for us. Group identity is always defined by the relationship towards other groups or group identities; a group that threatens us, our interests or even our survival. The others – often minorities in society – are ‘different, unadjusted, privileged’ and, generally speaking, perceived as intruders (if not even invaders) in the relation to the majority population. In times of crisis, they – by their sole existence – may even be portrayed as a threat (Šiber, 1997: 4-6).

The main focus of this paper is on ethnic (hetero)stereotypes in the Balkans used by members of one ethnic community to describe members of another ethnic community. Thus, the paper will not explore national “auto-stereotypes”, which can be defined as perceptions of one’s own nation. In this paper, we will examine in what kind of historical circumstances the stereotypes in the Balkans were created, what were their characteristics and if those stereotypes still exist today.

The paper’s relevance lies in the fact that it is important to understand the circumstances which led to the development of stereotypes so as to understand the development of possible future conflicts and the relations between different ethnic groups in the Balkans. Inter-ethnic hostility, for example, is especially promoted during a time of uncertainty, which is characterised by an increase in fear of the unknown and a spontaneous search for the culprit responsible for a situation to whom pre-determined, usually negative, characteristics are attributed. In addition to the above-mentioned factors, cultural factors (stereotypes) have an important role (Brown et al., 1997).

The paper proceeds as follows: first, the theoretical framework for studying stereotypes will be established. Second, the historical development of stereotypes in the Balkans with a particular focus on the countries of former Yugoslavia will be discussed. Third, the stereotypes valid today in this area will be discussed, also focusing on cultural stereotypes in the region.

Theory of stereotypes

Prejudices and stereotypes are interlinked with ethnocentrism – the belief that your own social group is put on a pedestal and is superior in its position towards other groups of people. “Prejudice and stereotyping are biases that work together to create and maintain social inequality. Prejudice

constitute a partial and inadequate way of representing the world. For Musek (1994: 27) however, stereotypes are a collectively valid, stable, simple and generalised cognition (judgements, ideas, opinions and beliefs), which refer to different objects.

refers to the attitudes and feelings – whether positive or negative and whether conscious or non-conscious – that people have about members of other groups. In contrast, stereotypes have traditionally been defined as specific beliefs about a group, such as descriptions of what members of a particular group look like, how they behave, or their abilities” (Vescio and Weaver, 2013). Even though stereotypes often include elements of wit and are not necessarily negative, according to the theory of social identity ethnocentrism connected with prejudice can be dangerous. This kind of categorising and assigning of characteristics to someone on the basis of their affiliation with a specific social group can lead to a decrease in confidence at a time of a tough socio-politico-economic situation, or even to interethnic hostilities and armed conflict, as confirmed by various studies (Tajfel, 1982). It is also important to point out that it is hard to identify national characteristics with regard to stereotypes and prejudices, making comparisons between nations even more difficult. As argued by the doyens of Slovenian psychology, Anton Trstenjak (1995) and Janek Musek (1994: 7), this kind of research is delicate. There are several types of stereotyping, i.e. attributing characteristics based on affiliation with a particular social group in advance. It is possible to categorise it by the severity of the consequences from those that only have economic or business consequences⁴ (Gupta and Turban, 2012) through to those that form the basis for serious prejudice and, as such, may represent the first step towards large-scale armed conflicts (see e.g. Harward, 2011; Sides and Gross, 2013; Hirsch, 2014), or are at least the basis for unifying the nation doing stereotyping in political and ideological terms.⁵

Burdiak (2010: 150) argues that stereotypes directly relate to historical facts, even though there is an important question of the interpretation of historical facts. Nietzsche (in Todorova, 2001: 48), for example, knew how powerful stereotypes are: “The reputation, the name and appearance, the usual measure and weight of things each being originally almost always an error and arbitrary /.../ have gradually, by the belief therein and the continuous growth from generation to generation, grown as it were on-and-into things and become their very body. What was appearance at the very

⁴ See e.g. Gupta and Turban (2012) who examine how gender stereotypes influence the evaluation of business ideas, or Katz’s (1995) paper in which he identifies how stereotypes affect international business.

⁵ Buchanan and Cantril (1953) analysed the stereotypes held by the Americans about the Russians. During the fruitful cooperation between the two nations during World War II, when they fought together against the Axis powers (1942), 61% of Americans believed that Russians are hard-working, while 48% reported seeing them as brave. After the end of World War II and with the rising hostilities between the two ideological blocs, a similar survey was conducted (1948). The results showed that six years later the dominant trait (stereotype) the Americans attributed to the Russians was cruelty (50% of Americans thought that way). A similar trend is seen in a longitudinal study of Sinha and Upadhaya (in Šiber, 1997: 6) that examined stereotypes held by Indians about the Chinese.

beginning becomes almost always the essence in the end and operates as the essence".⁶

Bar-Tal and Teichman (in Iskakov, 2010: 12) propose a three-stage model for analysing the formation of stereotypes and prejudices:

First stage:

- a) the history of relations between groups (war, violence, cooperation, friendship);
- b) socio-political factors (status of a group in society, the norms of tolerance, ethnocentric ideology etc.);
- c) economic factors (inability to provide basic needs); and
- d) behaviour of other groups (intervention of a third party, mediation, attempts to alter the negative stereotyping).

Second stage:

- a) information channels (mass media, cultural products, books, leaders discourse);
- b) direct contact with members of other groups; and
- c) micro-social environment (family, friends).

Third stage:

- a) identity and personality variables (ways in which knowledge of other groups is absorbed, assessed and saved).

Stereotypes on the Balkan Peninsula through the lens of historical development

Stereotypes in former Yugoslavia, alternatively in the whole of Europe are not phenomena of the modern era. Some of the great empires that expanded their reign to the Balkans, for example the Roman and the Byzantine Empires, were known for having perceived their own empire as superior and orthodox and thus labelled all others uncivilised barbarians, pagans etc.⁷ In the political history of the Balkans, characterised by the

⁶ *The Slovenian psychologist Musek (1994: 36–38) shares this view when speaking about stereotypes as self-fulfilling prophecies.*

⁷ *In 1974, the British traveller John Morritt went on a journey through the Levant and on the road from Bucharest to Istanbul. At the Shipka Pass in Bulgaria, he crossed the Balkan Mountains and in a letter to his sister he wrote: "We slept at the foot of a mountain (the Shipka Pass), which we crossed the next day, which separates Bulgaria from Romania (the ancient Thrace), and which, though now debased by the name of Bal.Kan, is no less a personage than the ancient Haemus" (Todorova, 2001: 52). This was one of the first times in traveling literature written in English that this mountain chain was named the Balkans. Almost all British who went past this mountain chain solely used the name Haemus, the old term for the Balkans (Aemus used by the ancient Greeks and the Haemus used by the ancient Romans). Todorova (2001: 57) adds that the oldest record of the Balkans dates back to 1490 when the Italian humanist, writer*

periods of cooperation, as well as bloody armed conflicts, the image of *the Other* (nation) as a homogeneous body has developed. *The Other* has specific characteristics that are often based on the antithesis of the image of one's own ethnic group. Therefore, it is not surprising that scientific analysis of stereotypes and personality traits of nations in the Balkans is practically a century old. A famous researcher Jovan Cvijić (1922) argued almost a century ago in his work "The Balkan Peninsula and the South Slavic Land (*Balkansko poluostrstvo i južnoslovanske zemlje*)" that the geographical position impacts the psychological and cognitive characteristics of the population living there.⁸

The demise of the Ottoman and the Austro-Hungarian empires in the late 19th and early 20th centuries brought favourable conditions for the development of stereotypes in the Balkans. Indeed, in the historical genesis of Balkan nations all of them have sought ways of political emancipation in relation to the superpower which then occupied them, i.e. the Ottoman and the Austro-Hungarian empires. Thus, ethnicity in the Balkans has always developed through a negative and violent relationship toward *the Other*, which started to obtain the image of the occupier through the rise of the national idea and the related need for one's own state (Burdiak, 2010: 150–151). This is similar to the famous concept of *Orientalism* where Orient was perceived by Westerners as the non-European *Other*, and thus weak, irrational and entirely different from the Western world. Orientalism therefore shows the exaggerated European (Western) prejudice against the Orient and its culture (Said, 1977). And such circumstances, which consolidate the nation of origin, were favourable for the creation of stereotypes.

Ethnic stereotypes in the territory of former Yugoslavia are therefore anchored in distant and recent history. Moreover, Burdiak (2010) notes that ethnic stereotyping in this part of the world began even before the 19th century, when different national ideas flourished. One of the main *Others* in this context was 'a Turk' who was very different, 'non-European' and caused fear since his culture was significantly different. Turks believed in a different God (Islam) and were organised in a different way, politically and socially. When national ideas started to evolve and Balkan nations began seeking liberation from 'foreign occupiers', it became clear that the principle *'for*

and diplomat Filippo Buonaccorsi Callimaco wrote in the monuments to Pope Innocent VIII that people call this mountain the Balkans ("quem incolae Bolchanum vocant"). But none of the travellers noted use of the name the Balkans for the entire peninsula. The term Balkan Peninsula (Balkanhalbeiland) was introduced to geography by the German geographer August Zoene in his work Goena (1808). Nevertheless, it is believed that the word Balkan was expanded by the Ottoman Turks because the word Balkans in Turkish is explained as a mountain range (Todorova, 2001: 58).

⁸ As Musek (1994) claims, the descriptions of Cvijić about Balkan nations are subjective and heavily influenced by stereotypes.

each nation its own country' would be difficult to achieve, especially due to the ethnic image of the Balkans, which has always been fragmented. It was obvious that a previously oppressed nation would begin to act from a hegemonic position and would necessarily become an oppressor relative to smaller ethnic communities.

Todorova (2001: 25) claims that writings about the Balkans, which were "a guide made by the 'civilized' world", have emphasised that its people did not want to adjust to the behavioural norms. Like any other generalisation, this one was also based on the devaluation of others. Derogatory terms have developed, such as the term Balkanisation, which was already in use following the Ottoman Empire's demise at the turn of the 20th century, when Serbia, Montenegro, Greece, Romania and Bulgaria achieved statehood. As Todorova (2001: 66) notes, at that time there was still no trace of the underestimation of such fragmentation of the previous geographical and political units into smaller nation states.⁹ Burdiakova (2010: 151) mentions the lack of objective information about the other, inner exclusivity,¹⁰ and the isolation of nations (the lack of contact between different nations) as the main factors that have contributed to the development of stereotypes in the Balkans.

For example, because the Balkans is in the West seen as an uncivilised, lagging behind and helpless part of the world, it was said that it is the best to leave it as quickly as possible. Durham (in Todorova, 2001: 43) wrote:

A Balkan legation is to an Englishman a spot which he hopes soon to quit for a more congenial atmosphere in another part of Europe. As for a Consul, he often found it wiser not to learn the local language, lest a knowledge of it should cause him to be kept for a lengthy period in some intolerable hole /.../ To a Russian, on the other hand, a Balkan post was one of high importance; the atmosphere of semi Oriental intrigue, distasteful to an Englishman, was the breath of his nostrils; nor did any Slavonic dialect present any difficulty to him.

Nevertheless, there are also more positive stereotypical images of the Balkans in history, but with what Edward Said would call an Orientalist pedigree.¹¹ This can be traced to the time of romantic nationalism in the words

⁹ Hobsbawm (in Dewitner and Türsan, 2003: 32) calls balkanisation "Kleinstaaterei" (the formation of a system of small countries).

¹⁰ Defined by who and why belongs to 'our' group and who remains outside (Burdiakova, 2010: 151)

¹¹ "The Balkans has been characterized as the 'inner otherness' of Europe where it belongs geographically but is defined by the lack of European values and tradition" (Milanović, 2008: 18–19). ".../ Balkan scholars would insist /.../ that Balkanism is not a subspecies of Orientalism, but has its own unique properties, responding to rules that marginalized minority speech" (Bjelić, 2002: 3).

and deeds of Philhellenes and Slavophiles, even though those efforts were usually short-lived and often encouraged by a tendency for freedom, without a hint of exotic mystery. In 1907, the American Arthur Douglas Howden Smith joined a Macedonian military group that had gathered in Bulgaria. He left behind a lively tale, which began with thinking about the prosaic nature of modern civilisation, which has robbed its people of ancient times. Smith decided to follow the call of adventure in “secluded corners of the world, where man and women still live a romantic life”, therefore he decided to travel to the Balkans, which had attracted him for a long time (Howden Smith in Todorova, 2001: 40–41):

To those who have not visited them, the Balkans are a shadow-land of mystery; to those who know them, they become even more mysterious... You become, in a sense, a part of the spell, and of the mystery and glamour of the whole. You contract the habit of crouching over your morning coffee in the café and, when you meet a man of your acquaintance, at least half of what you say is whispered, portentously. Intrigue, plotting, mystery, high courage, and daring deeds – the things that are the soul of true romance are to-day the soul of the Balkans.

Howden Smith (ibid.) adds that the initial feelings about the Balkans overwhelm the visitor when one visits Belgrade for the first time. There you can find a distinctly male appeal: the appeal of medieval knighthood, of arms and plots: “*Intrigue is in the air one breathes. The crowds in the Belgrade cafés have the manner of conspirators*”. However, Smith’s writings are, as Todorova (2001: 52) points out, one of the few cases where the masculinity of the Balkans earned a positive assessment. Almost in all other writings, a typical Balkan man is coarse, primitive, ruthless, brutal and, without exception, very unkempt. Todorova (2001: 25) argues that the Balkans upset the ‘civilised world’¹² during the Balkan wars (1912–13). The news about the brutality that had occurred in this part of the world boosted different peace movements which had gained power in Europe and had already started to institutionalise. The Carnegie Fund for Peace between nations, founded in 1910, formed an international commission that was supposed to investigate the causes and course of the Balkan wars.¹³

The term *balkanisation* became part of the political vocabulary in the years following the First World War and it first appeared in the New York Times when a conversation with Walther Rathenau, Head of the

¹² This term is not used ironically, but as a term they describe themselves with.

¹³ For more on the results of the report on the work of commission, which was made up of representatives of Great Britain, France, the USA, Russia, Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire, see Todorova (2001: 26).

German factory of electrical appliances *Allgemeine Elektrizitäts-Gesellschaft* (Todorova, 2001: 68), was published.¹⁴ In 1920, *Nineteenth Century* reported that France had accused Great Britain of “policy management with the objective of balkanization of Baltic regions”. Moreover, in the same year *Public Opinion* wrote that “in this unfortunate *balkanized* world /.../ every country is in a dispute with its neighbours”. In 1921, Graham in his book *Europe – Whither Bound?* wrote that Hungary in 1921 had regretted that a large part of its territory had been *balkanised*. In 1922, the renowned historian Arnold Toynbee in *The Western Question in Greece and Turkey* gave his own definition of the term *balkanisation*, which according to Toynbee was created by German socialists to describe what was being inflicted on to the western edge of the Russian Empire with the peace in Brest-Litovsk (Todorova, 2001: 69).¹⁵

The inhabitants of the Balkan Peninsula were also during the course of history described as very prone to violence. In 1969, the journalist C. Sulzberger wrote the (infamous) words that carried the name of the Balkans into the world. According to him, in the Balkans lived “sprightly people who ate peppered foods, drank strong liquors, wore flamboyant clothes, loved and murdered easily and had a splendid talent for starting wars /.../ less imaginative westerners looked down on them with secret envy, sniffing at their royalty, scoffing at their pretensions, and fearing their savage terrorists” (Craig, 2005: 4).

Despite the negative connotation of the term *balkanisation* in history, it is interesting that in some Balkan languages terms related to the Balkans are not necessarily negative. The Bulgarian term “*balkandžija*” (“*balkandžijka*” for female) means someone who is characterised by independence, pride, courage and honesty. Moreover, also in the Turkish language the term Balkans does not have an offensive connotation (Todorova, 2001: 66).

Stereotypes in the Balkans in the modern era

Today we can distinguish several types of stereotypes in the Balkans, from purely political to those referring to cultural aspects (see e.g. Dumnić, 2012), literature (Goldsvorti, 2005), filmography¹⁶ (Iordanova, 2001) and

¹⁴ Walther Rathenau opposed stringent penalising of Germany due to the fear of a new armed conflict in Europe. He said: “Germany will still be destroyed for a few generations in the future. This is the worst catastrophe that has occurred in some country in the last two thousand years... Black destruction waits for us together with a severe increase in emigration, probably to South America and Far East, but certainly also to Russia. The situation will be terrible and will result in a balkanization of Europe” (Rathenau in Todorova, 2001: 68).

¹⁵ Further details about the term *balkanisation* and its use in history can be found in Todorova (2001: 69–73).

¹⁶ Several films (*Underground*, *Time of the Gypsies*) directed by Emir Kusturica use music written

music¹⁷ (Marković, 2008). It is not new that stereotyping of other ethnic groups was an important driver of the nationalism and wars that ravaged the area of former Yugoslavia in the 1990s. Opačić and Vujadinović (2005: 5) claim that the media war in former Yugoslavia, which was based on the stereotyping of another nation, was indeed “artillery preparation” (introduction) for the real war. The media used stereotypes with which they promoted conflicts: a black-and-white representation of their own heroic past and victimisation (historical injustices against their own people) on one hand, and the portrayal of another nation as crude, violent or in other words the one that is to blame for the misery of their own people.

And who are supposed to be ‘those blood-thirsty’ in the Balkans? Todorova (2001: 64) recognises the Albanians, the Bulgarians, the Greeks, the Romanians and the greater part of former Yugoslavia as the Balkans. While the Slovenians are usually not considered a Balkan nation, the Croats are because parts of the territory populated by the Croats were for a long time under Ottoman domination. Partly also the Turks (those who live in the European part of Turkey) should belong to the Balkans.

A decade and a half has passed since the last outbreak of major armed conflict in the territory of Yugoslavia (the armed conflict in Macedonia between Albanian guerrillas and Macedonian armed forces in 2001). Nevertheless, the stereotyping of *the Other* has not changed from that seen in the past. Structural, economic and political factors do not contribute to a group acquiring a more realistic image of the other group or even get rid of stereotypes. Even though most of the stereotypes are negative, it should be noted that also positive stereotypes are not less harmful. For the peoples of the Balkans it is also typical that it is possible to categorise factors which contribute to the emergence of stereotypes in the following groups: 1) the

by Goran Bregović to create an image of protagonists and represent the backbone of the national life in former Yugoslavia (Lassen, 2008: 30–31). The music in the movie *Underground* is, for example, the only positive characteristic of the Balkans and strongly influences the perception of the viewer (Petrović, 2014: 20).

¹⁷ Using the example of Goran Bregović’s song “This is the Balkans” (*Ovo je Balkan*), Dumnić (2012) explains that the song represents everything the West thinks about the Balkans: the trumpet with the sounds of drums, simple and banal lyrics that support the stereotype of the Balkans’ “macho”, who is supposed to be an excellent lover. The songwriter Goran Bregović described this song as a distinctly “Balkan song”, which is not unusual given that in the West Bregović personifies the Balkan spirit. He has created a myth in the world about himself being an ambassador of Balkan music, which gives him the right to construct and represent what Balkan and, narrower, Yugoslav is and what it is not. In his songs, Bregović presents the area of the Balkan Peninsula and former Yugoslavia as a place of entertainment, a place where everything is permitted, as an area of passionate, irrational, even wild actions (Dumnić, 2012: 350–351). Kiossev (in Dumnić, 2012: 348) believes that Balkan music reflects everything that is not allowed in ‘civilized Europe’. An interesting example is the Serbian traditional festival “trube” of Guča in Šumadija in the heart of central Serbia, a place which in itself implies the core of Serbianism.

basic operating principles of a cognitive apparatus;¹⁸ 2) personal sociodemographic characteristics;¹⁹ and 3) factors related to an individual's personal motivation or personality traits.

In addition to the above-mentioned factors, cultural factors (stereotypes) play an important role and, according to several authors (Brown, Cote, Lyn-Jones and Miller, 1997), are crucially important. Cultural and ethnic stereotypes have had a significant impact on the development of interethnic conflicts in the Balkans, especially at the start of the so-called latent conflict phase. Namely, stereotypes simplify the opinion about others on the basis of individual cases or even half-truths and lies and justify actions. Because these kinds of actions are dangerous in terms of the re-eruption of armed conflicts, there has been enough financial support in recent years for researching stereotypes in the area of South-East Europe, especially in former Yugoslavia (Opačić and Vujadinović, 2005: 5).

Generalisations, which still continue today, are problematic for several reasons, one of them certainly being the Anglo-Saxon domination of the media, which has a global power of generating public opinion. Today's image of the Balkan wars is bloody. But, for example, one year after the First Gulf War, which lasted for 17 days, George Kennan described it as a short and flawless operation. On the other hand, Todorova (2001: 30) claims that US technology managed to kill at least half the total number of war victims killed on both sides in the two Balkan wars – and all this in only 17 days. Or, for example, the bloody events in Bosnia and Herzegovina about which American journalists found it relatively easy to write when the number of victims varied between 25,000 and 250,000, but forgot about the fact that more than 3 million Vietnamese were killed during the Vietnam war when they wrote about the 'brutality of the Balkan peoples' and the 'thousand-year-old hate'. Todorova (2001: 30) concludes that the question of whether the Balkans is a European or a non-European concept is a subject for academic and political debate, but nevertheless the Balkans does not have a monopoly over barbarity.

Conclusion

The analysis has shown that stereotypes in the Balkans have developed in relation to socio-political circumstances and were strongly influenced by

¹⁸ For example, unconscious generalisations, the creating of virtual links between the behaviour of an individual and loyalty to the group; the fact that the way of perceiving someone else is predetermined based on previous experience; the fact that one can more easily remember information that complies with our image of the 'Other' than information which contradicts this image (Opačić and Vujadinović, 2005).

¹⁹ For example, social status, social mobility, occupation, level of education, place of residence (Opačić and Vujadinović, 2005)

historical circumstances in which stereotypes have been very persistent and remembered for a much longer time. The development of stereotypes was heavily marked by the 'oppressor-oppressed' relationship and ethnicity in the Balkans was developed through a negative relationship with *the Other* – the Occupier, the Oppressor. *The Other* was the Ottoman and the Austro-Hungarian empire, which occupied the Balkan nations, oppressed them and created favourable conditions for the development of stereotypes. The stereotypes tend to overlook the positive aspects 'the centuries of evil occupation' have brought to these lands (e.g. educational reforms).

The stereotypes held by the West about the Balkans and its people were often based on the devaluation of the Balkan nations, which were seen as lagging behind, uncivilised and even barbaric. Even the word *balkanisation* became an important part of the West's political vocabulary and was used only negatively. Despite positive stereotypical images of the Balkans being present in history, the negative perception held by the West was stronger and has therefore led to derogatory terms and perceptions of the Balkans.

Nowadays, it is possible to differentiate several types of stereotypes in the Balkans which are grounded in politics, culture, literature, music etc. (cf. also Udovič and Podgornik, 2016). All types of stereotypes are still persistent and difficult to overcome. Those stereotypes have been kept for a longer time than the duration of the reason for their initial use. Musek (1994: 181) said that the international and intra-national stereotypes are indeed very persistent and many people really swear by them, but are unaware that their underlying beliefs transform into their own ideas because to them they represent their own inner hypothesis with an unconscious desire to confirm them. Thus, for example, such a person will quickly notice certain behaviour in people that corresponds to their national or regional origin and related stereotypes, but not the opposite behaviour, namely that which (supposedly) upsets the true image or opposes it.

To conclude, even though the historical component is still strongly present in 'the stereotyped Balkans', the reasons for stereotyping are no longer present and are very blurred or even forgotten. Political emancipation in relation to the occupier is no longer needed, but the relationship with *the Other* still exists in stereotypes. Those stereotypes remain based on the historical relationship with oppressors and the Western perception of the Balkans, even though the causes for the development of stereotypes are not known anymore.

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