We, of tomorrow
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Introduction: “Mlada Bosna”

Historiographical and methodological considerations

The meaning of Mlada

In June 2014 the Bosnian capital city of Sarajevo commemorated the hundredth anniversary of the outbreak of World War I. A memorial event took place in the renovated library that was shelled during the civil wars of the 1990s. Several heads of states were present, including those of Austria, Croatia, Montenegro and Macedonia. History-inspired tourists travelled to Bosnia. There were various programs and projects, such as European youth exchanges and musical performances. Bosnian Serbs and Bosniaks unveiled different monuments in different parts of the country. And on the famous street corner where Gavrilo Princip had assassinated the Austrian Archduke a hundred years earlier, a banner was shown bearing the somewhat strange message: “The street corner that changed history”.

Meanwhile, in local academic centers numerous historical conferences were taking place. During one of these conferences, organized by the Historical Institute of Sarajevo in collaboration with a number of Central European universities, the question was raised whether there was still something left to research in “Mlada Bosna” -

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2 The overarching theme was “Sarajevo: Heart of Europe”. See: http://www.sarajevosrceeurope.org.
5 Conference: The Long Shots of Sarajevo (June 23-29, 2014), organized by Sarajevo: Heart of Europe; Conference: The Great War: Regional Approaches and Global Contexts (June 18-21, 2014), organized by Institute for History and other European Academic Institutions; Conference: First World War: Reflections from behind the front lines (June 26-29, 2014), organized by the Archive of Bosnia and Herzegovina; Conference: First World War, Ottoman Empire and the Balkans, (September 17, 2014), organized by the International University of Sarajevo (IUS).
the “association” behind the attack of 1914. The organizers had reprinted findings of a round-table debate about the same issues that was held in the 1970s, in the socialist Yugoslav federation. Apparently, almost everything had been discussed in detail during that event, long time ago. What else could be said? A possible answer could be that Mlada Bosna may have been sufficiently analyzed for the second part of the name: Bosna (Bosnia). After the Dayton agreements of 1995 the identity, existence, and ethnic diversity of this part of the Balkans were discussed in all possible academic and non-academic circles. Bosnia still is one of the most common places to do research into nationhood, ethnic war, nationalism, post-conflict societies and the break-up of a multi-ethnic state. Then, it seems logical to put Mlada Bosna in this context: What was the identity of the “members” of Mlada Bosna? What kind of future country did they have in mind? Were they Serbs? Yugoslavs? Bosniaks? Croats?

These questions are all very important, and will also be discussed in this dissertation, but they are not among the crucial focal points. Considering myself a member of a new generation of historians that recently turned away from the predominantly ‘national’ approach to South-East European history, I will focus instead on the first part of the name: not Bosna, but Mlada (young). This means that this dissertation can be perceived as a study into Balkan history, as well as a book about a specific historical and geographical context of youth culture.

Let us therefore take a closer look at the word “young”. The adjective “young” in this context must be understood as something more than just an indication of the age of the individuals involved. Being “young” was, in fact, one of the main cultural frames of the late 19th and early 20th century. Throughout the 19th century, the cultural notion of being young changed dramatically. New conceptions of

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6 Arif Tanović (ed.), Okrugli sto o Mladoj Bosni, edition of Pregled (1974/7-8). Even one of the participants of that particular round-table was present to once more share his ideas: Đorđe Juvančić. He wrote for the 1974 book the article: “Neki problem obrade Mlade Bosne”, 771-777.

generations were articulated by philosophers, historians and writers. This, in turn, was linked to the notion of a new future for Europe and the whole of humanity. This led to a new understanding of time, and a new, modern type of “historical consciousness”. Historical consciousness was therefore similar to generational thinking: a new generation was living in a new present. “Fathers and Sons” was a recurring theme in literature, and not only in the Great Russian novels of Ivan Turgenev, Fyodor Dostoevsky or Andrey Bely. This new idea of time, and youth, was also materialized in movements. Most of them took inspiration of the first outspoken “young movement”: Giuseppe Mazzini’s Young Italy. Young Italy was indeed an early 19th century political movement, but it was also known as a discourse practice of scheming and plotting, secret societies meeting in dark attics, using nick-names, signs and passwords, initiation rituals, and other cloak-and-dagger practices. Mazzini’s political “youthfulness” was a concept, yes indeed a discourse, and it had successfully crossed borders. After the short-lived collaboration of the Young Germans, Italians and Poles in Young Europe (1834), and after the failed revolutions of 1848/49, again some ‘young’ movements appeared in the late 19th century. In Belgium a group of poets published the periodical Young Belgium to disseminate their realistic and modernist poems. In the Polish lands under Austrian rule a group of artists presented themselves as Young Poland, echoing the ‘other’ Young Poland of the early 19th century. In Germany, the magazine Jugend (‘Youth’) became popular among urban intellectual elites and its style and design became known as Jugendstil.

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8 A modern “historical consciousness” (in German: Geschichtsbewußtsein) is, in the explanation of Jörn Rüsen, not only about how to memorize or commemorate the past, but also about the wish to connect this very past with the present, and expectations of the future. Rüsen wrote: “Geschichtsbewusstsein ist Vollzug und Resultat dieser Synthese: Sie prägt sich in der Vorstellung eines Zeitverlaufs aus, der an Vorgangen der Vergangenheit Zusammenhänge von Vergangenheit, Gegenwart und Zukunft sinnenfällig macht.” Jörn Rüsen, Historische Orientierung: Über die Arbeit des Geschichtsbewusstseins, sich in der Zeit zurechtzufinden (Cologne: Böhlau, 1994), 8.


What mattered around 1900 was not to become adult as soon as possible but rather to stay young as long as possible. In this dissertation I will take this phenomenon of a generational consciousness as a point of interest. There are three reasons for that. First, by shifting away from the very local Bosnian context, I will be able to make transnational comparisons, putting Mlada Bosnja in its international context. Doing this, I can analyze the real international connections in the young Bosnian network and at the same time focus on the “imagined connections”, meaning the cultural transfer and general inspiration of the young Bosnians. “Young Bosnia” was a relative latecomer on the European scene, so its representatives could take inspiration from predecessors in Italy, Belgium, Germany, and so on.

Second, the “young” aspect can shine some light on social developments. Questions can be asked about the position of the younger generation in social strata. The role of students, the networks of students, and the participation of the young generations are hence important issues to address. In this context, the “youth”-perspective is used to analyze processes of social and political participation.

Third, around 1900 the theme of “youth” was also associated with issues such as modernization, a new age, the future of (European) culture. The paradigm of youth can open up insights into the way how Bosnian student movements accounted for the main cultural themes of their time. Through the prism of “youth” it becomes clear how these young students positioned themselves in society, and - ultimately - in history.

It must be stressed that *Jugend* was a rather elitist youth periodical, read by artists and writers. At the same time there was this middle-class phenomenon of the young Germans, the *Wandervogel*, who strongly felt the desire to get out of town and wander through the countryside. This movement was very different from the artistic circles around Jugend. See: Walter Laqueur, *Young Germany: A History of the German Youth Movement* (New York: Basic Books, 1962).

Before elaborating on the status question I have to make something clear: Mlada Bosna, as such, did not exist in reality. There was no organization with this name, there were no members, and there were no union structures. Even the term “Mlada Bosna” first came into use after the First World War.\textsuperscript{13} This is no new discovery in historiography. Luigi Albertini already made this clear during the Second World War.\textsuperscript{14} Other historians would emphasize this later on. So I have no illusion of presenting something new here. However, I believe that, once and for all, the nature of the student networks that came to be known as Mlada Bosna must be described more definitively, so that a general consensus can be reached which will seep into the historical consciousness of – also – the popular historians and their readers. In order to unravel Mlada Bosna as a loose and continuously evolving network I have decided to focus on the generation of early schooled youngsters, and more in particular, the Bosnian students studying abroad in Vienna, Zagreb and Prague. In this dissertation I will analyze the quantity and the quality of these networks. Quantity means: how were ideas and ideologies transferred through the student network? How did the students and ideas “wander” through the university infrastructures of Southeast and Central Europe? Which networks can be distinguished and how did they evolve over time? Quality means: What did these networks and connections mean to the persons involved and how was the social network put into a narrative?

This introduction has three parts: First I discuss past research on Mlada Bosna, then I give an overview of the methods and perspectives in the present research. Eventually I present my questions and give the outline of the study.


1.1 Past research

The subject is highly politicized. There are many conflicting historical representations of the Young Bosnian student networks, and the debate is still ongoing. Over the last 100 years this subject has been buried under layers of Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav hagiography, World War trauma’s and ideological imagery of the 20th century. In order to clear up some confusion, I will pierce first through these layers by outlining the most dominant debates on the subject. These debates revolve around two main international historical and political dilemmas; the war-guilt of 1914 and the break-up of Yugoslavia.

World War Guilt

Because “Mlada Bosna” was associated with the outbreak of the First World War, references to the organization can be found in all books that were published throughout the last 100 years on the subject.\(^{15}\) Therefore, the historical, cultural and psychological background of the movement has been overshadowed by the question whether the assassination of Franz Ferdinand and Sophie was just a pretext, a spark or a basic cause for the outbreak of the war.

Around the time of the 2014 Great War centennial new books were published about the Sarajevo outrage.\(^{16}\) Without doubt it was Australian historian Christopher Clark who reached the largest audience with his *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe went to war in 1914*.\(^{17}\) The conclusion of this book was that all greater and smaller powers of Europe could be held responsible for the outbreak of the First


\(^{16}\) A surprisingly exhaustive list of publications in the Dutch-speaking world is discussed in: Sven Peeters and Jelica Novaković, *Wat kwam er uit een schot?* (Antwerpen: Vrijdag, 2015); also published in Serbian: *Posledice jednog pucnja* (Belgrade: Clio, 2015).

World War and ‘sleepwalked’ into the catastrophe. *The Sleepwalkers* was a major success in both academic and mainstream public opinion.

An interesting aspect of Clark’s bestseller was his reintroduction of the responsibility for the outbreak of the World War I. This is a historic discussion that goes all the way back to the days of 1914. It all began with Gavrilo Princip’s gunshots. Immediately after the war broke out the Great Powers started to publish diplomatic sources as evidence of their innocence.\(^{18}\) After peace was signed, the question of war guilt led to vehement debates, not just in historical but also – if not mainly - in political circles. In 1921 in Berlin a journal was founded aiming to investigate the *Kriegsschuldfrage* (‘the question of war guilt’) of 1914.\(^{19}\) The chief-editor, Alfred von Wegener, tried to untie the knots of the Balkan conspiracy in order to prove Serbia’s guilt - and Germany’s innocence.\(^{20}\) *Kriegsschuldfrage* predominantly focused on the connection between the Young Bosnians and the Serbian state. Their conclusion was that there was obviously a connection, and the secret services of Belgrade had instructed the assassins of Franz Ferdinand.\(^{21}\) Von Wegerer’s revisionist interpretation received acclaim

\(^{18}\) In August 1914 the German government published a *Whitebook* of official documents, in which they made clear that the country was waging a defensive war against the Russian aggressor. Then the British government published a *Bluebook*, the Russians an *Orangebook*, the Belgians a *Greybook* and the Serbs a *Bluebook*. In 1915, the French went one step further in their *Yellowbook*, in which they presented evidence that the German Empire had long before 1914 begun planning a Great War in Europe. In the same year the Austrians published a *Redbook*, as a reaction to the Serbian statements. Both countries accused each other pointing at the responsibility for the Sarajevo outrage in relation to the outbreak of the war.

\(^{19}\) The journal *Die Kriegsschuldfrage* came out regularly between 1923 and 1929, published then under the name of *Berliner Monatshefte für internationale Aufklärung: Die Kriegsschuldfrage*, which was changed in 1932 into *Berliner Monatshefte: Zeitschrift für Vorgeschichte und Geschichte des Weltkrieges*. In 1944 the journal stopped being published.

\(^{20}\) He wrote two books: *Die Widerlegung der Versailler Kriegsschuldthese* (Berlin: Hobbing, 1928); Idem, *Der Ausbruch des Weltkrieges* (Hamburg; (n.p.), 1939).

\(^{21}\) Archive of Yugoslavia (Belgrade) - Zbirka Vojislav Jovanović Marambo 1942/28. During World War the discussion about the *Hintermänner* of Gavrilo Princip and his accomplices made the Nazis decide to destroy or steal archival material the Sarajevo Archives. This “archive-war” between Yugoslavia and Austria continued during the Cold War. Documents in the archives of Yugoslavia show that many documents after World War II did not return to Sarajevo or Belgrade. Nazi archivists were instructed to “rearrange” the sources about German minorities in Southeast Europe (*Volksdeutsche*) and, accordingly, to get the documents to prove the ‘Mitschuld der
not only in Germany and Austria, but also in the United States. The 1925 publication *Genesis of the World War* by Harry Elmer Barnes generally followed Von Wegener’s argument. Barnes concluded that Serbia and Russia were to blame for the outbreak of the First World War at least as much as Germany and, additionally, he deemed Austria-Hungary’s reaction to the Sarajevo assault wholly justified. Interestingly, in his critique of the Versailles treaty, Barnes also expressed his disgust for the people who had caused the war, and, especially, for the doomed and dark corner of the Balkans. Barnes’ book is an expression of American bewilderment about a distant barbaric continent being disposed to self-destruction. Similar ideas were expressed in Britain, as is shown in the famous quote of Arnold Toynbee, in 1915: “The curse of the Balkans has descended upon the whole of Europe, and laid bare unsuspected depths of chaotic hatred.”  

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These pejorative depictions were left out in another classic study that was published in 1925: *The Origins of the World War*, written by the American historian Sidney Fay. Fay wrote some chapters about the background of the assassins, and deducted a plausible story from the available sources. He distinguished in his argument between underlying and immediate causes and concluded that – retrospectively - all warring parties could be taken somewhat responsible for the outbreak, but, “of all the major conflicts of interest which have been alleged as making it ‘inevitable’, the Balkan problems were those most nearly incapable of a peaceful solution.”

The idea that Serbia could be held culpable for the outbreak of the First World War because of conspirational activities in the region, as it was explained by Von Wegerer, Fay, and Barnes, was rejected by several historians in the interwar period, including the American author Bernadotte Schmitt. In these decades the ideas of Schmitt were juxtaposed against the revisionists Fay and Barnes. After the Second World War new publications would redefine this contrast. Alan J. P. Taylor focused in his popular *The Struggle for Mastery* on the imperialistic policy of the German Empire and did not mention Young Bosnia at all, nor the name of the ‘Bosnian-Serb’, who assassinated Franz Ferdinand.

Then, of major importance were the three volumes of Luigi Albertini’s *Le Origini della Guerra del 1914*, which were published during the Second World War in Milan, and translated in the late 1940s. Albertini, unlike Taylor, did indeed concentrate again on the developments in South-Eastern Europe on the eve of the outbreak of the

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27 Ibidem, 546.
war and paid much attention to the background, context and culture of
the young Bosnians. According to Albertini, the spark of the war was
ignited not so much by governmental leaders of Serbia or Austria, but
by shady generals in Belgrade, grouped in the secret society of the
Black Hand. Albertini’s work was very influential and during the 1950s
and 1960s his books offered the most accurate account of the historical
complexities around the Sarajevo assault of 1914.

In the 1970s, however, the discussion about the outbreak of the
First World War took a completely different direction. The German
historian Fritz Fisscher started a debate about the responsibility of the
First World War and went further back in the past to find causalities.
He claimed that there was a relation, not only between the First and the
Second War, but also between the German imperialistic policy of the
late 19th century and the horrors of the 20th century. These Fisscher-
Debatte had a lasting influence on all formulation about guilt and
suffering in the 20th century in general, and the two world wars in
particular.31

Interestingly, in the debates on war-guilt, especially since the
Fischer-debates in the 1970s, the young Bosnians were almost
completely left out. The outbreak of the First World War had instead
become an issue of European (and German) trauma.32 In the 1980s and
1990s, some historians stressed that the Greater History of the Great
War was only for a small part rooted in local Bosnian circumstances,
while for the larger part it could be understood as an apocalyptic
challenge to Europe’s modernity. We must understand these statements
in the light of the ‘cultural turn’ in the humanities, which took place in
those decades. Publications such as Eksteins’ 1990 Rites of Spring: The
Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age contemplated on the First

31 Fritz Fischer, Griff nach der Weltmacht: Die Kriegszielpolitik des kaiserlichen
Deutschland 1914/1918 (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1961); Idem, Krieg der Illusionen: Die
deutsche Politik von 1911-1914 (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1969). Annika Mombauer
discussed the Fisscher-Kontroverse in: The origins of the First World War:
Controversies and Consensus (London; Pearson, 2002).
32 See, for instance: Jay Winter (ed.), The Legacy of the Great War Ninety Years On
(Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2009); Idem, Remembering War. The Great
War between Memory and History in the 20th Century (New Haven: Yale University
Press, 2006); Idem, Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning. The Great War in European
World War in the context of cultural, artistic and psychological undercurrents of society.\(^{33}\)

This is, in short, an outline of the debate. In *The Sleepwalkers* Clark mostly reformulated the old conclusions about the Sarajevo outrage which had been developed by Fay and others during the interwar period. Still, what was relatively new in *The Sleepwalkers* was that Clark shifted attention from the Western powers to the Russians and the Balkans. This was something relatively new, of course primarily for Western readers. Much had already been discussed in Yugoslav and Post-Yugoslav historiography but due to language difficulties these debates never reached an international audience. Clark paid much attention to the conspiracies, assassinations and shady relations of the Serbian political elite, especially in chapters with ominous titles such as “Serbian Ghosts” and “Balkan helter-skelter”. Not surprisingly, *The Sleepwalkers* provoked strong reactions among readers in Eastern Europe. In Serbia, for example, some of Clark’s sweeping statements were understood as anti-Serbian revisionism, possibly inspired by contemporary cultural frames. Bojan Aleksov summed up the most important (academic) objections: “Christopher Clark and others openly question whether Young Bosnians’ alleged Yugoslavism was nothing but aggressive Serb nationalism in disguise by drawing parallels and connections to how Serb nationalism was a driving force behind much of interwar Yugoslavia, some horrific crimes committed during the WW 2 and last but not least – its key role in the destruction of the second Yugoslavia as well as in wars and crimes committed in 1990s.”\(^{34}\)

When I published my own book about Gavrilo Princip (in Dutch) in 2014 I was criticized for not including enough paragraphs about the Sarajevo assassination in relation to the war-guilt of the Great


At lectures, some persons in the audience asked me about it. They possibly had heard of the Black Hand, and learned at school that Princip started the Great War in 1914. Now, retrospectively, I believe this criticism was very much inspired by the success of Christopher Clark’s Black Hand stories in *The Sleepwalkers*. As in my particular study about Gavrilo Princip, this dissertation too avoids dealing with the issue of national responsibilities. I think the question is not a historical matter and its debate has significantly blurred the consideration of the historical facts. Questions such as who supported Princip in his plot, who provided him with guns or bombs and to what an extent did the governments of Austria-Hungary and Serbia know about the conspiracy have been researched so extensively that I do not think I can add something new.

In this matter, I agree with Misha Glenny, who recalled the words of the British foreign secretary in 1914: “There is not, and never was, any person who knew all there was to know”. Therefore, this dissertation is no contribution to the

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38 Misha Glenny, *The Balkans: Nationalism, War and the Great Powers* (New York: Viking, 2000), 304. Max Hastings writes how all scenarios are more or less evenly
historiographical tradition of Kriegsschuldfrage. Instead I will dust off the layers of (historical or historically inspired political) guilt, and will get to the original sources to find out what they can tell us. But there is another layer before I can reach there, and that is the layer of the contemporary outlook on the break-up of Yugoslavia.

Balkan History: Yugoslav and Post-Yugoslav perspectives

It is apparent that Clark, as many other foreign historians, has been criticized in former Yugoslavia for misreading the local complexities of the Balkans. This critique is based on the insider/outsider-debate in the humanities: Are outsiders capable to discuss the history of the insiders? The dichotomy between ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’ is clearly artificial. However, language shapes the contrast in reality. In former Yugoslavia, “naši” (ours) and “njihovi” (theirs) are frequently used words in conversations. There is a similar discourse in ‘Western’


40 The construction of the “we” is a very important subject that has been addressed by several linguists and post-structuralist, but not that much by scholars in Slavic languages. Participating in a conference of scholars in Slavic languages and culture in Lviv (Ukraine) in June 2016 I discussed this matter with a large number of distinguished scholars, among them linguists and historians, and they concluded that no serious scholarly work has been written on the use of “mi” (we) in Slavic languages. An exception in this respect is: Andreas Ventsel, “The construction of the ‘we’-category: Political rhetoric in Soviet Estonia from June 1940 to July 1941” Sign Systems Studies 35 issue 1/2 (2007), 249-266. Ventsel paraphrases the French linguist Émile Benveniste: “we is a very special kind of union that is based on the non-equivalence of the members: the we does not consist in a mechanical aggregation of different I-s but in the we there is always a dominant I (the subject of the utterance) and this I due to its transcendence subjects to itself a not-I which means that only through stepping out of itself it creates that we and thus determines the not-I”. See:
expressions such as the ‘people down there’ or ‘over there’, marking the distance between two cultural realities. The idea of insiders and outsiders is topical in the Yugoslav successor states, so I consider it necessary to pay attention to some aspects of it. Therefore, in addition to the first broad perspective of a world war in world history, I discuss in the next pages the developments in local historiography and commemorative praxis.

The discourse of ‘ours’ and ‘theirs’, and the continuous switching of the definitions of heroes and villains, perpetrators and victims, dominates the history of Yugoslav and Post-Yugoslav commemorations of “Young Bosnia”. This is reflected in the historical example of the monuments erected on the historical site. Directly after the assassination, the Austrians erected a very catholic monument commemorating the royal couple. This monument was destroyed by the Serbian army at the end of the First World War during the liberation – others would say ‘occupation’ – of Sarajevo. In the interwar period, a simple plaque was mounted in 1930, commemorating not the murdered royal couple, but Gavrilo Princip, who died a lonely death in a Bohemian prison in 1918. During the Second World War, the plaque commemorating Princip was removed by the Nazis and their allies and sent to Hitler in Berlin, apparently as a birthday present.

After 1945, in the federal socialist republic of Yugoslavia, the Young Bosnians were praised as heroes of socialist and Yugoslav unification. For Young Bosnia and opened a museum, displaying artefacts of the ‘martyrs’, thereby indoctrinating the Yugoslavs.


footmarks were laid into the concrete, as a symbolic reference. During the civil wars of the 1990s the historical judgment on the Young Bosnian movement changed, and Gavrilo Princip was no longer seen as a hero. For most non-Serbian Bosnians he became a distant predecessor of the soldiers in the hills surrounding Sarajevo, firing at innocent civilians trying to cross the ‘sniper alley’. The monument was demolished, and later removed. Today, a new plaque rememorizes the fatal moment. The text on the plaque is neutral, because the political and ethnic situation in post-conflict Bosnia is still precarious. In the post-Dayton era, Young Bosnians are seen by some Serbs as heroes and by some Croats and Bosniaks as villains. However, many Serbs are not sure whether Princip was a Serbian or a Yugoslav hero – even though a combination of those was, in the historical context, quite common.

Pendulum

Clearly the historical image of Young Bosnia is swinging between black and white, victims and perpetrators, heroes and villains. A “grey” in-between zone in the interpretation is rare. The possible cause of this has to do with the communist tradition of history-writing (and propaganda), in which the past was put in the light of Marxist dialectics and class struggle. In Titoist Yugoslav variations on Marxism, the eternal fight between anti-fascists (‘us’) and fascists (‘them’) was a daily life mantra. The academic world was not entirely neutral to the pressure of communist propaganda. After the death of Tito and the break-up of Yugoslavia some historians kept on living in the ‘culture of lies’. To a certain extent the tone of the communist propaganda did not fade away and the eternal contra-revolutionary enemy was replaced by a national enemy. The way these enemies were depicted in new historical studies had a lot in common with communist political reality. So, the trio War/Revolution/Party was replaced by a dominant focus on the Nation. Revisionists chose to rewrite the communist triumphant

45 Dubravka Ugrešić coined the Yugoslav ‘culture of lies’ in: Kultura laži (Zagreb: Arkzin, 1996).
history narratives into fragmented stories in which former villains became heroes and vice versa. In the 1990s, evildoers from the Second World War were again the subject of discussions and sometimes even rehabilitated. This happened with the Četniki (nationalist monarchists) and Nedževi (Nazi collaborators) in Serbia, the fascist Ustaša in Croatia and some other groups (Handžar-SS in Bosnia, Slovenian collaborators) who had played a role in the Second World War. At the same time nationalist historians redefined the role of Tito’s communist partisans. This was at first an academic affair, but when politicians joined the gamble on the role of perpetrators and victims, the situation became dangerous. Presidents Slobodan Milošević and Franjo Tuđman’s ‘return to history’ and their violent revisionism of the Yugoslav wars have been widely discussed and have become topical issues for research throughout the last two decades. Some of the post-Yugoslav states have developed their own versions of Vergangenheitsbewältigung, with the familiar stress on guilt, suffering, victimhood, and national trauma.

Enter Young Bosnia. The movement has been one of the issues in the memory debates during the time of transition. I would even claim that Young Bosnia, and more particularly Gavrilo Princip as central figure, became one of the most sensitive topics in the 20th century post-Yugoslav Vergangenheitsbewältigung. Before, the group of confused activists that came to be known as Young Bosnia, was seen through the ideological prism as a proto-socialist movement, as so-called frontrunners of the revolution. This changed. Now the ideological prism was replaced by a national prism: Was Gavrilo Princip a Serb, a Yugoslav, a Bosnian? Questions like this were often raised. Historical and cultural figures of the Yugoslav 20th century, such as the writers Ivo Andrić, Meša Selimović and Miroslav Krleža, the rock-bands Azra

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Historiography in Southeast Europe after Socialism (Münster: Lit, 2004), 276-316: 294.

47 See, for example: Todor Kuljić, Prevlađanje Prošlosti: Uzroci i pravi promene slike istorije krajem XX veka (Beograd: Helsinki Odbor za Ljudske Prave, 2002).
and Bijelo Dugme and the partisans including Tito himself, were distributed among the - now - national histories.\footnote{Mitja Velikonja, “Titostalgia: On the post-Yugoslav cognitive map” in: Daniel Šuber and Slobodan Karamanić (eds.), Retracing Images: Visual Culture after Yugoslavia (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 283-312.}

In today’s post-Yugoslav historiographical landscape still a contrast exists between nationalist historians on one hand, who express nationalist ideas in patriotic books, and – on the other hand – the historians who claim to be open to new social, anthropological insights and methods.\footnote{More on Ex-Yugoslav historiography: Todor Kuljić et. al. (eds.), The Balkan Rachomon. Historiography and literature on dissolution of SFRY (Belgrado: Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, 2002); Predrag Marković en Nataša Miličević, “Serbian historiography in the times of transition: A struggle for legitimacy” Istorijska XX Veka 15 (2007/1), 145-167; Nebojša Popov (ed.), Srpska strana rata. Trauma i katarza u istorijskom pamćenju 2nd. ed. (Belgrade: Samizdat, 2002).} The dichotomy between these two groups of historians is perceived, albeit falsely, as one between Europe and the Balkans. In the eyes of the nationalist historians, those who do not defend the interests of the nation are ‘European’ or ‘internationalist’ and therefore suspect. It often works the other way round as well: historians who do not immediately criticize the country are marked as ‘nationalists’ and will not be taken seriously by the self-acclaimed ‘internationalists’. These quarrels between historians are present in all post-Yugoslav countries, but are especially visible in the academic circles of Bosnia, Serbia, and Croatia.

Unfortunately, the living standards in the states that derived after the fall of Yugoslavia are still disquieting, especially in Bosnia.\footnote{In February 2014, protesters against the Federal Government’s social policy set ablaze the state archive in the city center of Sarajevo. Many sources from both Ottoman and Habsburg times were lost in the fire. Another problem is the maintenance of the Zemaljski Muzej (National Museum), one of the most interesting academic institutes of Bosnia and the region. Due to financial problems the museum, including the very important library, was closed in 2012. In 2015 it newly reopened.} Hence, research is suffering from this, and funding often provokes controversies. The mutual mistrust between nationalists and internationalists is often based on the presumption that the other is writing ideas which are dictated either in Belgrade governmental circles, or in Western media. There is little hope for a fast improvement. Around the centennial of the outbreak of the First World War the
differences in the perception of history were seen in the fight over memory culture between Serbs, Croats, Bosniaks, and Austrians.\textsuperscript{51} In the Serbian part of Sarajevo a statue was built to honor Gavrilo Princip, while in the non-Serbian parts of Bosnia-Hercegovina people rather wished to remember the tragedy of Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sophie. The controversial film-director Emir Kusturica organized several re-enactment events and similar festivities to commemorate Young Bosnia as a good Bosnian-Serb organization in history.

All in all, it became once again clear the local and regional perspectives on the historic events of June 1914 and its prelude and aftermath are strongly biased by the traumas of Yugoslavia’s bitter 20\textsuperscript{th} century. One will have to dig deep in order to get to the authentic layer. To do so, I will shift now from (geo)political biases and cultural memories and traumas to plain history writing.

\textit{Gavrilo Princip history}

The local historiography of the Sarajevo assassination in the interwar period and after the Second World War consists of a long list of politically motivated works of mixed quality. Some of these publications are useful to this day, such as Veselin Masleša’s Marxist analysis of the Young Bosnian movement, published in 1945.\textsuperscript{52} Other books are the 1929 \textit{The Struggle of Bosnia and Hercegovina for Liberation and Unification, edited by the ‘insider’ Pero Slijepčević, and the readable yet obviously biased triptych by another ‘insider’ called Drago Ljubibratić. He wrote Gavrilo Princip (1959), Vladimir Gačinović (1961) and Young Bosnia and the Sarajevo Assault (1964).}\textsuperscript{53}


However, there is one book that stands out in historiography, which is the magnum opus of Vladimir Dedijer, Yugoslav journalist, ex-partisan fighter, hagiographer, historian and dissident writer. This book about the background of the Sarajevo outrage was more than just an inquiry into the responsibility of the assassination. The English version, which was published in the United States, had no less than 550 pages, while the Yugoslav second edition was twice as thick, as lots of primary sources were included in thousands of footnotes. Although at that time already much had been written on the subject, *The Road to Sarajevo* was to become the ultimate book on the subject. In reviews of the 1960s

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54 Vladimir Dedijer, *The Road to Sarajevo* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1966). Dedijer was born into an educated Herzegovinian family in Belgrade in 1914. Both his father and uncle were closely related to some of the “Young Bosnians”. As a student he wrote for newspapers such as the Belgrade-based daily Politika and writing activities brought him to Poland, France and Spain, where he witnessed the civil war. By that time, he was already working for the forbidden communist party and had become a close acquaintance of the future partisan leader Josip Broz. Dedijer turned one of the leading intellectual figures in the postwar socialist federation. His hagiographic book on Tito was translated into more than fifty languages. In the 1950s, however, Dedijer fell from grace. As a journalist, he defended the freedom of speech of the dissident writer Milovan Đilas, who had criticized Tito’s leadership. For some years he stayed as *persona non grata* in Belgrade, but after the tragic suicide of his son Branko, he left the country and started teaching at faculties in Scandinavia, England and in the United States. In the 1980s, after Tito’s death, he published three extensive books on the ‘human side’ of Tito, in which he added new, not necessarily positive aspects, to the hagiography about the Yugoslav leader he had published in the 1950s. The books were widely read, but also strongly criticized by the Party. On the eve of the civil war, in 1990, he died in the United States. According to his wish, the urn of his ashes was buried in his troubled homeland Yugoslavia, in today’s Slovenian capital Ljubljana.

Dedijer remained a controversial figure even after his death. Few would deny his writing skills and investigative talents, but most of his books had provoked affairs and he had many enemies during his life. In a personal conversation I had with the late Serbian literary scholar Predrag Palavestra, he said about his former colleague: “He knew exactly how to find the ingredients in the kitchen, but he did not really know how to cook.” Indeed, some of Dedijer’s books are hard to digest and suffer from an overload of information, confusing perspective and lack of organization of the source material. However, the book on the Sarajevo outrage, is, because of the narrative it discusses (a murder plot story), relatively compact and concise.


many stated that Dedijer did not bring many new facts about the history of the assassination, but, nevertheless, it was his thoroughness that made this book an instant classic.56 Looking at the historiography on Young Bosnia since 1966, Dedijer’s work had a durable impact. Some books, which were published later, were almost completely based on the findings of *The Road to Sarajevo*. Dedijer’s monopoly on the history of Young Bosnia is, however, problematic. In conversations with historians in former Yugoslavia it seems that everyone has an opinion on the Dedijer masterpiece, but few have written serious academic critiques to counter some of the statements he makes.57 One objection to Dedijer was articulated by the Dutch scholar Guido Snel.58 He concluded that Dedijer’s writing, deliberate or not, was following the Yugo-Marxist discourse. The story of Gavrilo Princip as a primitive rebel, standing up against the evil Austrian occupation, centers on two competing perspectives: the magnificent impact of the deeds of one individual actor on the course of history and the Hegelian understanding of “progress through struggle” – an idealist notion adopted by Karl Marx and turned into a materialist paradigm.59 Aspects of the Marxist perspective on the past are reflected in Dedijer’s statement that Young Bosnia was not only representing the Bosnian youth of the early 20th century, but also the South-Slavic peoples of the Balkans, who had suffered not for decades, but for centuries under foreign (Austrian/Turkish) occupation. Dedijer apparently prefers to depict the

59 Dedijer describes the Young Bosnians as ‘primitive rebels’ but does not refer to the famous study of Eric Hobsbawm with the same title (*Primitive Rebels. Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movement in the 19th and 20th Centuries*). Hobsbawm’s book came out in 1965, one year before the first edition of *The Road to Sarajevo* was published. In the Serbo-Croat translation of the original English version the primitive rebels are called ‘iskonski buntovnici’ which is a slightly different phrase, that can be translated as ‘pristine’, ‘primordial’ or ‘authentic’ rebels.
Young Bosnians as protosocialists instead of socialists, which makes them exponents of the linear historical development, leading eventually to the Titoist revolution and liberation of the South Slavic proletariat. Dedijer’s approach cannot be separated from his bombastic writing style. Not many historians have criticized Dedijer for his eloquently expressed antipathy for the victim and sympathy for the assassin, though Snel does remark on the novelist style in specific parts of the book, such as in the first chapter. It was the Austrian archivist Friedrich Würthle who criticizes Dedijer most explicitly on his writing style. He wrote, sarcastically:

“All in all, *The Road to Sarajevo* has created more confusion than clarity. The author has provided us with an enormous number of varicolored, exciting and interesting details but not with anything of fundamental importance. *The Road to Sarajevo* is stuff for a movie, perhaps even for a musical comedy. An entertaining movie could be made from it: The death at Sarajevo as a heroic Bosnian epic, a modern Gessler legend in pictures and music, or perhaps Sultan Murad in the guise of Francis Ferdinand and Princip in that of the knight of Obilić, or something similar – something with a gimmick that catches the public eye. Dedijer is the ideal man to write the script.”


It is disappointing Friedrich Würthle’s style is also sentimental and emotional. Especially the continuous use of rhetorical question makes his book barely readable. Würthle’s irritation, not to say fury, about the assassination of Franz Ferdinand weakens the reliability of his work. Besides, he disqualified himself in an interview for the *Rheinische Merkur* in which he stated that Princip was some kind of predecessor of Hitler because he was also against the monarchy, the church, and a strong supporter of nationalism. Additionally, Würthle claims that Princip was part of groups “where they hated Jews”, a statement for which no evidence can be found in the source material. In sum, Würthle is in the end no less subjective than Dedijer, which is the reason why his book *Die Spur führt nach Belgrad*, although it is admittedly in some parts a serious piece of research, could not and did not replace *The Road to Sarajevo*.

Würthle surely exaggerated, but there is no question about it that *The Road to Sarajevo* has served as a source for artistic and literary representations. Novels about Gavrilo Princip show Dedijer’s influence. In 1974 the American novelist Hans Koning wrote a novel about Gavrilo Princip, which was turned into a film by the Austrian director Peter Patzak. Koning portrays Princip as a tragic hero and explains his deeds in the light of the centuries of suffering of the South Slavic peoples. Austrian writer Milo Dor’s novel *Der letzte Sonntag* includes references to the book of Dedijer. Not only in TV-series and films, Princip is also the subject of songs, theatre plays and expressions of pop-culture. Considering the effect Dedijer has had on arts and culture, I think his book definitely stimulated the construction of a Princip-myth, not only in communist Yugoslavia but also in the rest of the world. In recent years some travelogues and reportages were published about Princip, among them Tim Butcher’s *The Trigger*, Tony Fabijančić’s *Bosnia: In the Footsteps of Gavrilo Princip* and Gregor Mayer’s *Verschwörung in Sarajevo*. In all these works, Dedijer’s influence is very visible and recognizable.

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For this dissertation I decided to not entirely rely on Dedijer’s book and instead to go back to the primary sources, partly or totally unknown to western readers. Dedijer, deliberate or not, has blurred some of the historical realities. Therefore, I also aim to avoid discussing the almost mythical figure of (Dedijer’s) Gavrilo Princip. In order to examine the social and cultural circumstances of the student networks it is necessary to switch the focus from the world-famous yet mythological assassin to other similar, likeminded, related persons. Therefore Princip, in this research, is perceived as a normal exception: he was an exceptional murderer, but an ordinary 19-year old schoolboy. In other words, the research will concentrate on his environments, not the world of international plotters, but first and foremost the student circles of early 20th century Austro-Hungarian Bosnia.

This shift from “Gavrilo Princip” to broader social and intellectual circles of young Bosnian students is not only to be found in this dissertation. I consider my research a contribution to a very recent development in research on “Mlada Bosna”. In 2015, the historian Edin Hajdarpas\'i\'c addressed the meaning of being young within the context of the Bosnian student movements in one chapter of his monograph Whose Bosnia?, about nationalism and political imagination in the 19th century. In Serbia, Milo\'s Vojinovi\'c published a study about the political ideas of the young Bosnian student activist not necessarily connected to Princip & Co. Still, both books merely focus on questions of national identity, whereas this dissertation elaborates especially on social and cultural interactions and connections in the educational realm.


67 Milo\'s Vojinovi\'c, Političke Ideje Mlada Bosne (Belgrade: Filip Višnji\'c, 2015).
1.2 Present research: Young Bosnian student networks

By shifting away from the predominant “national” approach to the Bosnian student movements I will in this dissertation refer to several theories and studies that have been influential in research into social movements and subcultures. Pioneer sociologists, such as Georg Simmel and Robert Park, tried to “capture moments” in order to understand the formation and interaction of groups - not necessarily young groups, but still groups in a predominantly urban environment. The present research revolves around these sociological concepts like “urban environment” and the “forming of groups”. Hence, I add the notion of “youth”. Therefore, in my research I make use of methodological frameworks of a) social networks and social movements, and b) youth and subculture studies. The first framework helps me to map the social networks of the Bosnian student movements (“quantity”), while the second framework can provide insight in the way how these networks are put into stories, in other words: how meaning is imbued in networks (“quality”).

Networks

Charles Tilly, whose writings have influenced at least two generations of scholars in the social sciences, has offered important insights into the research of acts of rebellion and protest. He has paid special attention to urbanization, demographic changes and how they create political

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opportunities. The opportunities created in the process of urbanization and political change were — according to Tilly — the cause of the eruption of resistance, which eventually created the circumstances in which the French Revolution could take place. This polity-centered approach became central in the political opportunity analysis in the social sciences.

In my research I take inspiration from the works of Charles Tilly and his research on social movements. Tilly distinguished a social movement, when there is a “sustained challenge to power holders in the name of a population living under the jurisdiction of those power holders by means of repeated public displays of that population’s worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitment”. It is, as I have argued earlier, a fallacy to perceive Young Bosnia as a coherent organization with a continuous and compact ideology. Instead, it can better be described as a loose network of small groups of youngsters who presented themselves in both peaceful and violent performances. So, to return to Tilly, Young Bosnia was no social movement. However, some of Tilly’s definitions ring true for the student networks to be discussed: there is a “challenge to power holders” and “repeated displays” albeit not entirely in the name of the total population under the jurisdiction of the Austro-Hungarian rule in Bosnia-Hercegovina. Tilly’s definition, as is the case for all definitions, can neither be entirely correct nor wrong, but it can be useful. In the present discussion Young Bosnia is not seen as a ‘social movement’, but I will use Tilly’s definition and concept as a tool in identifying the position of the students’ activities and rebellious atmosphere in the political context of Bosnia in the early 20th century society. Then, youth culture is seen here as a context of political learning.

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69 These ideas were articulated for the first time in his 1964 book The Vendée, which is an analysis of rural social movements in pre-revolutionary France: Charles Tilly, The Vendée (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard UP, 1964).
70 Marco Giugni, Doug McAdam and Charles Tilly (eds.), How Social Movements matter (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 257.
71 This sentence is inspired by the title of an article by Nicolle Pfaff who wrote about the contemporary socialization processes in youth culture in correlation with political activity: “Youth Culture as a Context of Political Learning” Young: Nordic Journal of Youth Research 17.2 (2009), 167-189.
The central interest in this research is the network. I have centered my research on the interplay, or the ‘dance’, between the different players (states, governments, individuals, informal groups, formal organizations, etc.) and their interests, values, intuitions and strategies. I follow players like those in powers, the participants in the social movement and the population on whose behalf the participants in the social movement acted (or claimed to act). But there can be many other players. One has to consider all ties between the propagandists for the South Slavic, respectively Serbian case in Bosnia, the politicians, the journalists who wrote about them, student associations and other movements who supported them, secretly or publicly.

Networks, also larger ones, are kept together by close ties. Tilly’s colleague and pupil Doug McAdam stressed the importance of personal ties in the recruitment and participation in social movements. In his famous article on the Mississippi Freedom Summer in 1964, he identified a correlation between intimate personal ties and high-risk activity in the social movement. Today, in social movement research, it is accepted that prior social settings of already existing interpersonal ties are the locus of a movement emergence.

Florence Passy explained that research into social networks supplies insight into the process of individual participation in movements. She formulated three important functions of the social network and how it influences the process of individual participation. These functions are: 1) the socialization function, 2) the structural connection function and 3) the decision shaping function.

I have decided to make use of the three functions of social networks, as formulated by Passy, in structuring my dissertation argument: Part I&II revolve around the subject of socialization, III&IV&V are about he coalition building and structural connections

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72 Giugni, How Social Movements Matter, 257.
and VI, eventually, is about the decision shaping function of networks in small groups and movements. In what follows I will explain the main sub-questions and points of interests per part.

So, once more, part I and II (“Schools” and “Reading Rooms”) are about the socialization function of the personal network of young pupils at the gymnasium of Sarajevo and Mostar. The main focus is on the Bosnian context. In this part of my dissertation I describe growing networks of Bosnia during the Habsburg period. The fragile intellectual milieu of the early 20th century gymnasiums of Sarajevo and Mostar was connected with the universities of Central Europe and Serbia through pioneering intellectuals. In describing these networks, I focus on some individual friends (close ties) at the gymnasium of Mostar. The group of friends include, among others, Bosnian writers and intellectuals such as Dimitrije Mitrović, Vladimir Gaćinović, and Petar Kočić. The school, in this case the gymnasium of Mostar, is the locus of a process where the network – temporarily – stabilizes: the regular gatherings of the protagonists in cultural institutes mean a stabilization of a network, a phase preceding something we can call the institutionalization. The different networks were formed at school. The Austrian authorities put the pupils in multi-ethnic classrooms, where they were categorized with one or the other religious group.

Part III (“Universities”) examines the structural connection function of the network and how the first pioneering group of gymnasium pupils did connect with different groups in others schools in Bosnia, Croatia and even in more distant regions such as Serbia, Switzerland and Bohemia. This part focuses rather on the European context. Around 1900 a lot of pupils started to establish literary and political associations. A good example was the Serbo-Croat literary association, led by the Bosnian gymnasium pupil Ivo Andrić and his friend Miloš Pjanić. In a dynamic interplay between authorities and

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subalterns, students and police, the rebellion developed from adolescent daydreaming into political reality. I address these issues by researching the networks of students’ groups. The question is to what extent these groups were really connected to each other and – if they were – in what way? One does not need much imagination to see the coalition-making process in the names of the different youth movements: Serbo-Croat Progressive Association, the Croatian progressives, the Serbian Youth, the Croatian youth, etc. 77

Part IV (“Bazarov in Bosnia”) and V (“The Educators”) also address connections, but from a more cultural-historical perspective. In the fourth part I analyze how connections and cultural infrastructures enhanced the cultural transfer of revolutionary ideas from Italy and – particularly – from tsarist Russia. In Part V I analyze ideas and ideologies as articulated in the youth periodicals that were published in Prague, Belgrade, Sarajevo, Zagreb, and Vienna. The title of the fifth part does (“The Educators”) refer to a turn in almost all movements: at a certain moment in time the followers become the new leaders, as soon as they feel the need to share and spread their learnings themselves.

In the last part, Part VI (“The Assassins”), I consider to what extent networks intensified the decision-making process and how they enabled the conversion of participation into actual action. This part focuses on the individual and interpersonal context of the movement. I will pay special attention to the aspect of risk. Some students radicalized on the eve of the First World War and some individual

77 This coalition-making process is best reflected in a letter Gavrilo Princip wrote to his friend in Prague. There he describes how different Serbian factions, as well as Croat youth-groups in Sarajevo collaborate, fight and finally merge into each other. The letter goes like: “As you know we have two movements, the National Serbs and the Progressives, […] This year we organized a first common meeting. I did not attend this meeting, but I learned what issues were discussed: What is the shared goal? They came up with two suggestions. One was made by the group around Miloš Pjanić, which aimed for a national progressive collaboration. The other suggestion was to found another, more literary and intellectual group. The Pjanić program states “All Slavs can become a member”. One group distanced itself from Pjanić and his pan-Slavic ideas and started a radical-nationalistic program […] After one month […] it was suggested to merge our organization with the Croats – just as you had suggested before. But because there were no Croat progressives and there was no organization fitting our ideas, so nothing came out of it.” Letter Gavrilo Princip to Marko Maglov, April 17 1912. In: Vojislav Bogićević (ed.), Mlada Bosna (Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1954), 130-132.
actors, such as Gavrilo Princip, decided to take up arms against the Austrian authorities. The terrorist wave of the years 1912-1914 will be examined as a case, showing how networks influenced the decision making process.

**Semiotic power of networks**

As a historian, I tend to analyze the networks in a *qualitative* manner too. This means, that the narrative of the network is as important as the network itself. Answering the question how historical actors interact in a social or public space does not necessarily give insight in the *meaning* of those networks. In the field of youth studies and subculture studies, it is common to see networks in daily practice as very much “imagined”, some even speak of a “myth”.78 This could be compared with the notion of a generation: children are born every day and everywhere so any particular generation can hardly be characterized in time and space. However, we still tend to speak of the “Generation of 1968” or the “Generation of 1914”. The subjective experience of events, such as the Paris revolts or the First World War, give some persons in an age cohort a feeling of belonging in time - and in a generation. Then, this generation still has to be constructed and imagined in discursive practice. Similarly, youth subcultures, with all its political and cultural meaning, are constructed and created in language. Shane Blackman concluded this as follows: “[...] youth subculture possesses immense semiotic power for communication. As an intellectual field, subculture promotes sameness of identity through consumption but also holds the potential to critically and politically impact on consciousness.”79

In the sociological sub-discipline of “Youth Studies” debates are on-going about the role of transitions (in a social-psychological context) on one side and the cultural meanings (in a social-political

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context) on the other side. All schools have found a common ground in acknowledging that “real youthfulness” is quite often “imagined youthfulness” that, in turn, creates and constructs realities. John Neubauer has convincingly argued that the imagining of adolescence did not only reflect its emergence as a middle-class phenomenon but also helped to shape its construction. In short: Life imitated art/text. Hence, the networks that I will describe in what follows, can be read as a text: the student’s subculture is a creative force that is enveloped in style (“lifestyle”), symbols, and rituals of political participation.

1.3 Focal points

In sum, the dominant perspectives in research into the young Bosnian networks have been, on a global scale, the First World War question of war guilt, and, in a local context, the break-up of Yugoslavia. It is important both for me as it is for the reader to understand the implications and importance of the past perspectives on the subject. For example, most books on Young Bosnia are written in the light of the road to the First World War and the Kriegsschuldfrage - two hindsight biases I have described in this introduction. Additionally, the more contemporary nationalist-internationalist controversies about the break-up of Yugoslavia must be taken into account when reading local historiography. To return to the question raised in the beginning of this introduction: what is there still to explain about Mlada Bosna? This question can be answered with the argument that the time has come to analyze the history of the young Bosnian networks in a context not necessarily related to the Kriegsschuldfrage or the Yugoslav identity. It must be explained as a history of young people, of a consequence of educational policy, in Europe’s turbulent and colonial periphery.

The aim of this dissertation project is therefore to give an accurate account of the social networks of young Bosnian students. The two main questions to address revolve around the network itself, and the meaning of it. They are: 1) What networks of Bosnian students did

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exist and how did they evolve into movements? 2) How do we account
the ideas and deeds of the young Bosnian student networks?

The answers to these question can shine some light on views of
the subaltern Bosnian students on the relatively positive developments
of the Bosnian society as a whole at the turn of the century. In fact, the
violent attacks of Bosnian-Serb students in Sarajevo took place in the
*Belle Époque* of Bosnia, when social and cultural ties were reinforced
between the Balkans and Central Europe, between cultural elites in the
European upper-classes as well as between social movements – such as
youth movements - everywhere. Apparently these young and educated,
meaning those who benefited from the rapid progress, felt a disturbing
and striking ambivalence towards the newly industrialized world and
its rulers. Up to now, most historians have unsuccessfully tried to define
the ideological orientation of the Young Bosnians, while others have
eagerly searched for evidence of a local Serbian conspiracy against the
Austrian empire. Instead I will concentrate on how Young Bosnians
accessed their literary and educational sources of inspiration and how
they formed their social networks.

Sometimes one detailed close-up can be of primary importance
in understanding the whole storyline of a film, even more than the long-
and high-angle shots. In this book I intend to offer a detailed close-up
of the short-lived student networks, in order to make the history of early
20th Century European peripheries somewhat comprehensible. The
present study will contribute to the research into youth cultures, and
political action in peripheries, where rapid developments in
urbanization, industrialization, emancipation and education have had a
tremendous impact on society. As we can see in our times in the Global
South, as for example in China, India and Africa, these developments
have startling, and often challenging consequences, which need to be
studied. Historical and geographical comparative studies can offer
some important insights in patterns which might be valuable for
analyzing similar patterns in our times. Additionally, I hope this study
will also contribute to the research of educational history, social
networks and, perhaps, early 20th century social movements.