Beyond "Europe's Backyard"

Analyzing Dutch News Discourses on Religion, Race, Ethnicity and National Identity in the Western Balkans, from 1991 to 2023

Lydia Shala

Student number: 2683331

Date: 29-2-2024

Master Theology and Religious Studies: Peace, Trauma and Religion

First supervisor: Dr. Andrés Pacheco Lozano

Second supervisor: Dr. Johan Roeland

Words: 26.395

"If Europe has produced not only racism, but also antiracism, not only misogyny but also feminism, not only anti-Semitism, but also its repudiation, then what can be termed Balkanism has not been coupled with its complementing and ennobling antiparticle."

Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*

Abstract

In 2024, the Western Balkan countries find themselves on the border of being considered European and being considered *not*-European. Despite the fact that in the Netherlands, accurate knowledge about the Western Balkans leaves much to be desired, the Dutch public has strong opinions about the EU enlargement process the Western Balkan countries are implicated in. As research has shown that the production, reproduction and distribution of negative narratives can shape public opinion, this thesis argues that for a fair public debate about the Western Balkan countries, it is necessary to scrutinize the terms that are used in descriptions of the Western Balkan countries and their inhabitants.

In this thesis, the focal point is the way discourses on religion, race, ethnicity and national identity function in the framing of the Western Balkans by Dutch newspapers between 1991 and 2023. The aim of examining the terms that are used to describe and interpret the Western Balkans is carried out through a Critical Discourse Analysis, in which 73 news articles from five major Dutch newspapers, *Algemeen Dagblad*, *De Telegraaf, de Volkskrant, NRC* and *Trouw* are analyzed. The Critical Discourse Analysis of this thesis finds that in the five Dutch newspapers, there exists a discourse of distrust towards the Western Balkan countries and their inhabitants, in which religion and national identity are instrumentalized. It also finds that ethnicity is understood as a static attribute rather than as a dynamic element of our socially constructed public sphere. Ultimately, this thesis argues that these findings, in addition to the emphasis of a "we versus they" dichotomy and the "clash of civilizations" narrative that can be found in the analyzed articles, are all part of a balkanist pursuit: to "make sense" of the Balkans.

STATEMENT 1

I hereby declare that this thesis is an original work. It is the result of my own research, and was written entirely by me, except where otherwise stated. Any information and ideas from other sources are explicitly and fully acknowledged in the text or the notes. A bibliography is appended.

Amsterdam, 29-2-2024

-----------------------------------   --

(place and date)   (signature)

STATEMENT 2

I hereby give consent for my thesis, if acceptable, to be made publicly available by the University Library of Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam for photocopying and for (inter-library) loans.

Amsterdam, 29-2-2024

-----------------------------------   --

(place and date)   (signature)

Contents

Abbreviations

BCS: Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian language

BiEPAG: Balkans in Europe Policy Advisory Group

BiH: *Bosna i Hercegovina* (BCS), Bosnia and Herzegovina

CBS: *Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek* (NL), Central Agency for Statistics

CDA: Critical Discourse Analysis

DA: Discourse Analysis

FRY: Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (1992-2003)

FYROM: Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

KFOR: Kosovo Force

KLA: Kosovo Liberation Army, also UÇK: Ushtria Çlirimtare e Kosovës (AL)

NDH: *Nezavisna Država Hrvatska* (BCS), Independent State of Croatia (1941-1945)

NLA: National Liberation Army, also UÇK: Ushtria Çlirimtare Kombëtare (AL)

OSCE: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

SAA: Stabilization and Association Agreement(s)

SAP: Stabilization and Association Process

SFRY: Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (1963-1992)

TROO: *Tijdelijke Regeling Opvang Ontheemden* (NL), Temporary Arrangement for the Reception of Displaced Persons

Introduction

On May 10, 2023, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz addressed the European Union (EU) parliament, stating that "geopolitical Europe must keep its promises. Promises must be kept towards the Balkan countries, to which we have been promising membership for 20 years, we have told the countries of the Western Balkans, as well as Ukraine, Moldova and perhaps Georgia, that they have a place in Europe."[1] While Georgia might be the outlier in this, being a transcontinental country, most cartographers would already consider the Western Balkans, Ukraine and Moldova a part of Europe. Geographically, it would make little sense to consider Romania and Bulgaria to be European while questioning whether the Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia) meet the requirements. Of course, in this quote, Scholz says "Europe" where he most likely meant the "European Union," rather than the entire continent. Yet, while the European Commission does not seem to have a problem with the Western Balkan countries being "un-European"–in order to apply for membership of the EU, besides "respecting the common values of the Member States and undertake to promote them," countries simply need to be "European states"–Scholz is not the first (and likely not the last) to use the terms "Europe" and "EU" interchangeably.[2] This semantic confusion makes that not only do the countries of the Western Balkans need to prove their all-round suitability for EU accession, but also need to outweigh the designation of "not being European enough."

Furthermore, in 2022, the Dutch newspaper *NRC* published an article with the preface saying that "2022 was the year that Europe, confronted with an old-fashioned war on its continent, was snatched roughly from its 'geopolitical holiday.'"[3] This sentiment was shared by the European People's Party Group (EPP Group), a political party represented in the European Parliament, however exchanging "Europe" with "EU": "The EU's geopolitical holiday is over."[4] Many comments can be made about whether or not Europe or the EU has been enjoying such a "geopolitical holiday," but the statement makes explicit an implication worth exploring, namely that only now, the EU is being challenged. It seems Europe (and the EU) have a multiplicity of geopolitical challenges on the continent itself that it could tend to, including climate disaster in the form of both drought and floods, such as the 2021 floods in Central Europe; the Russian invasion of Ukraine since 2014; international relations with

---

[1] Alice Taylor, "Scholz asks EU to keep promises to Western Balkans," *Euractiv,* May 10, 2023, https://www.euractiv.com/section/politics/news/scholz-asks-eu-to-keep-promises-to-western-balkans/.

[2] "Accession to the EU," European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, European Commission, accessed May 23, 2023, https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/enlargement-policy/glossary/accession-eu_en#:~:text=Accession%20of%20new%20member%20states,and%20undertake%20to%20promote%20them.

[3] "2022 was het jaar dat Europa, geconfronteerd met een ouderwetse landoorlog op zijn continent, ruw werd weggerukt uit zijn 'geopolitieke vakantie'"; Merijn de Waal et al., "De wereld buiten Europa heeft andere vergezichten," *NRC*, December 30, 2023, https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2022/12/30/de-wereld-buiten-europa-heeft-andere-vergezichten-a4152988.

[4] "The EU's geopolitical holiday is over," *EPP Group*, February 22, 2022, https://www.eppgroup.eu/newsroom/news/the-eu-s-geopolitical-holiday-is-over.

China and deficient democracies in Poland and Hungary.[5] Adding to that and returning to Scholz' statement, the EU has been busying itself with the Western Balkan countries' desire for EU accession, among other countries' applications. Has it been fitting for "Europe" to relax and enjoy a holiday with all these pressing matters at hand, or has "Europe" just been conveniently ignoring them?

Assuming both the *NRC* and the EPP Group meant to say that Europe has seen a period without active conflict within the continent's borders (which remains incorrect if we consider Crimea to be European), when they said "geopolitical holiday" the question arises when this holiday would have commenced. When Russian troops invaded Ukraine in February 2022, people lamented that the unthinkable had happened: war in our "civilized Europe."[6] At the 2022 International Peace Meeting of the Catholic Sant'Egidio association, Belgian chair Hilde Kieboom even suggested that it was the first time in eighty years that war took place on the European continent, stressing the unrest experienced throughout Europe.[7]

But are we not forgetting something? The Dutch Clingendael Institute of International Relations offered a more nuanced view in a document published in February 2023: "The Russian invasion in Ukraine has caused a war on the European continent, along the direct borders of the European Union, for the first time in thirty years."[8] In the 1990s, the collapse of communism also took place in Southeastern Europe, where attempts at independence and full-fledged nationalism set the stage for financial collapse, war and even genocide. The suggestion that the Balkans have declined in relevance in the "European" imagination of what Europe is (or even have to compete for "Europeanness") must be a comfortable position for some–there are nicer things to think about and discuss–but might feel unjust to those somehow victimized by past unrest in the region. Alternatively, this thesis argues that war has never been far away from Europe–rather, it has been on the forefront of its history, particularly in the eye of the researcher of this thesis, as they have a family background in Kosovo.

---

[5] In a 2022 journal article, political scientist Edit Zgut-Przybylska argues that "Hungary and Poland have seen the most widespread erosion of democracy in the European Union since Fidesz and Law and Justice [PiS] started their authoritarian remaking in 2010 and 2015, respectively"; Edit Zgut, "Informal Exercise of Power: Undermining Democracy Under the EU's Radar in Hungary and Poland," *Hague Journal on the Rule of Law* 14, no. 2-3 (2022): 287.

[6] Moustafa Bayoumi, "They are 'civilised' and 'look like us': the racist coverage of Ukraine," *The Guardian*, March 2, 2022, https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/mar/02/civilised-european-look-like-us-racist-coverage-ukraine.

[7] "Hilde Kieboom bei #TheCryForPeace," Sant'Egidio, accessed May 23, 2023, https://preghieraperlapace.santegidio.org/pageID/31533/langID/nl/text/3769/Hilde-Kieboom-bei-thecryforpeace.html.

[8] Analistennetwerk Nationale Veiligheid, *De gevolgen van de Russische oorlog in Oekraïne voor de nationale veiligheid van het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden* (Clingendael, 2023), 1, https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/rapporten/2023/04/03/tk-bijlage-2-de-gevolgen-van-de-russische-oorlog-in-oekraine-voor-de-nationale-veiligheid.

Societal and Scientific Relevance

Ever since the collapse of communism in the Western Balkans, instability has been presented as the status quo.[9] Newspapers in Western Europe, or the Netherlands as the focal context in this thesis, seem to have made a habit of either omitting or mischaracterizing (and stereotyping) past events and current situations in the Western Balkans, similar to how the aforementioned *NRC* article has omitted them. A 2022 survey by the Balkans in Europe Policy Advisory Group (BiEPAG), named *Strict, Fair and More Open Towards EU Enlargement!*, reports that in the Netherlands, "regarding specific factual knowledge about Western Balkan countries, the average rate of correct responses was so low, even on something as basic as their geographic locations."[10] Thus, while top politicians such as Scholz put into question whether the Western Balkans are even European, actual knowledge about the region is scarce in European countries such as the Netherlands and France, where such studies have been conducted.[11]

Dutch policy makers, whose conversations have also been taken into consideration in the 2022 survey, "attributed a large role to the media in the production of negative narratives and sentiments that would decisively shape public opinion on Western Balkan EU enlargement."[12] Furthermore, "some of them argued, precisely because factual knowledge is considered as generally low, stereotypical media representations and simplified narratives … could dominate public opinion about the Western Balkans. Some of the decision-makers also noted that lurid headlines and narratives may also be further fuelled and used by certain politicians for the purposes of opinion-making and election campaigning."[13] If we take the survey outcomes seriously, we should be urged to critically examine media output on the matter.

The Balkans are a part of Europe that often does not "fit" into typical divisions, or, as we have seen, it is even left out as a whole. It is not Western Europe, but despite its communist histories and due to its Ottoman history also does not fit stereotypical ideas about Eastern Europe. However, its communist histories also make it demonstrably different from the denominator "Mediterranean."[14] This ambiguous position has undergone thorough examination, among others by the Bulgarian historian Maria Todorova in her major 1997 work *Imagining the Balkans*. Todorova argues that a phenomenon similar (but not identical) to Palestinian-American scholar Edward Said's 1978 work *Orientalism* can

---

[9] Peter Michielsen, "Joegoslavië vecht tot de boedel is verdeeld," *NRC*, September 26, 1991.

[10] The Balkans in Europe Policy Advisory Group, *Strict, Fair and More Open Towards EU Enlargement!* (BiEPAG, 2022), 17, https://biepag.eu/publication/strict-fair-and-more-open-towards-eu-enlargement/.

[11] While the BiEPAG report focuses on the Netherlands, it cites a similar survey that was carried out in France.

[12] BiEPAG, *Strict, Fair and More Open Towards EU Enlargement!*, 31-32.

[13] Ibid.

[14] The use of "communist histories" in plural is intentional as the Balkans has not only encompassed the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia but also the socialist People's Republic of Bulgaria, the Socialist Republic of Romania and the People's Socialist Republic of Albania. Despite their topographical proximity, the countries' communist histories are distinct from each other.

be applied to the Balkans, denominating this phenomenon "balkanism," and furthermore laid foundations for studies on external or Western perspectives on the Balkans.

Todorova has received praise for her work, but has just as well received critique, for one about her "unexamined whiteness," perceived as such by the sociologist Dušan Bjelić.[15] Making use of Todorova's work, Albanian-Macedonian peace and conflict scholar Liridona Veliu published her dissertation in which she analyzed tweets using the term "Balkanization," exposing how a stereotypical view of the Balkans has transformed into a term applicable to a great diversity of things: political fragmentation in the US, ethnoreligious fragmentation in the UK, fragmentation of cyberspace, to name a few.[16] In this sense, while Todorova has laid the (historical) foundations for studies on external or Western perspectives on the Balkans, it has been Veliu who has shown how these processes of Othering (framing "the Other") through the use of particular narratives and associations can still be identified in the present.

While comparative studies in which a corpus of articles are analyzed have not been conducted on this thesis' exact subject, there have been some academic publications that are worth mentioning. The first and perhaps the most known within Dutch audiences is the 2002 NIOD report on Srebrenica, "Srebrenica, a 'safe' area."[17] In 1996, the Dutch cabinet ordered the Dutch NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies to investigate the course of events in Srebrenica. Due to delays in the investigation, the report was published in 2002, and as the report made some critical claims about the functioning of the Dutch government, the cabinet of Prime Minister Kok fell in the spring of 2002.[18] As a part of the NIOD report, communication scholar Jan Wieten researched the views and practices of Dutch journalists reporting on the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina between 1991 and 1995. In his report, Wieten concludes that "media and politics seem to have reinforced each other in creating a rather stereotyped, oversimplified picture of the conflict and of the contribution that the international community and the Netherlands in particular were supposed to make to resolve it."[19] Wieten argues that "many journalists" are aware of their shortcomings regarding their reporting: "too much morality, too few facts, too many points of view, too little analysis, too much emotion."[20] Furthermore, Wieten

---

[15] Catherine Baker, *Race and the Yugoslav Region: Postsocialist, Post-Conflict, Postcolonialist?* (Manchester University Press, 2018), 19.

[16] Liridona Veliu, *#Balkanization: A Critical Study of Otherness through Twitter* (Springer, 2018), 72-78.

[17] "Srebrenica, een 'veilig' gebied," NIOD Instituut voor Oorlogs-, Holocaust- en Genocidestudies, accessed December 20, 2023, https://www.niod.nl/nl/publicaties/srebrenica-een-veilig-gebied.

[18] "Kabinetscrisis 2002: Srebrenica," Parlement.com, accessed December 20, 2023, https://www.parlement.com/id/vh8lnhrp8wsg/kabinetscrisis_2002_srebrenica.

[19] "Media en politiek lijken elkaar te hebben versterkt in het creëren van een tamelijk stereotiep, versimpeld beeld van het conflict en van de bijdrage die de internationale gemeenschap en Nederland in het bijzonder aan de oplossing ervan behoorden te leveren." Jan Wieten, *Srebrenica: een 'veilig' gebied: Srebrenica en de journalistiek* (Amsterdam: Nederlands Instituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie, 2002), 99.

[20] Wieten, *Srebrenica: een 'veilig' gebied*, 100; "te veel moraal, te weinig feiten, te veel standpunten, te weinig analyse, te veel emotie."

emphasizes that critical reflection is often missing, and blames long-term developments in media for this, arguing that "the vast majority of news production is routine."[21]

Media researcher Nel Ruigrok has conducted a study using the same data set as Wieten, exploring the "journalism of attachment" in news articles regarding Bosnia and Herzegovina between 1992 and 1995.[22] One of Ruigrok's conclusions is that the news articles clearly portray "'good guys' and 'bad guys.'"[23] Moreover, Ruigrok highlights that the articles have shown that "journalists can influence this public debate."[24] Ruigrok's conclusions are repeated in a 2012 paper by historian Michel van Duijnen on nationalism in the Dutch press coverage of Kosovo and Macedonia between 1991 and 1995. Van Duijnen argues that the theme of "good guys versus bad guys" mirrors that of the distinction between "nationalists" and "non-nationalists."[25] The main distinctive element between the research of Wieten, Ruigrok and Van Duijnen and this thesis is, of course, the localization and time frame: their studies concern news articles from the early 1990s, while this thesis takes into consideration a much larger frame and the Western Balkans as a whole. Moreover, this thesis pays attention to religion and race as additional categories.

While the NIOD report and the research of Ruigrok and Van Duijnen are exceptions to this, both the framing of the Western Balkans in the Netherlands and Dutch framing of ethnoreligious diversity in the Western Balkans are underresearched. And while the fixed *existence* of ethnoreligious diversity in the region is a theme reported upon by Dutch media, the *terms* used to describe and frame the Other, in this case the Western Balkan Other, are rarely scrutinized and are instead taken for granted. If policy makers are concerned with media outlets' reporting on the region and have established that the general public possesses too little factual knowledge, how can a fair public debate about EU accession of the Western Balkan countries take place? With this thesis, the aim is to contribute to this process of needed critical exploration.

Research Question

The research question central to this thesis is as follows: How do discourses on religion, race, ethnicity and national identity function in the framing of the Western Balkans by Dutch newspapers between 1991 and 2023? The newspapers of which articles will be analyzed are *Algemeen Dagblad*, *De Telegraaf, de Volkskrant, NRC* and *Trouw*, which are the biggest newspapers in the Netherlands in

---

[21] Ibid., 102; "Het overgrote deel van de nieuwsproductie is routinematig."

[22] "Journalism of attachment" refers to the practice of journalists "taking sides with what they consider the main victims of the war"; Nel Ruigrok, "Journalism of attachment and objectivity: Dutch journalists and the Bosnian War," *Media, War & Conflict* 1, no. 3 (2008): 298.

[23] Ruigrok, "Journalism of attachment," 310.

[24] Ruigrok, "Journalism of attachment," 312.

[25] Michel van Duijnen, "'The Stepchildren of the Balkans': How nationalism affected the Dutch press coverage of Kosovo and Macedonia during the break-up of Yugoslavia," *Jonge Historici Schrijven Geschiedenis* 35, no.1 (2012): 109

terms of circulation.[26] The time frame has been selected with the disintegration of the SFRY and socialist Albania in mind: as both regimes disintegrated in 1991, their reconstruction became more relevant for Dutch media to report upon. While in the 1990s and early 2000s, the news articles focused mostly on the conflicts that had emerged, the later articles started focusing on the possibility of EU accession of the countries.

The framing of the Western Balkans in the five Dutch newspapers is analyzed through the four categories, later referred to as "identity markers," of religion, race, ethnicity and national identity. These four categories are selected for the frequent occurrence of particularly religion, ethnicity and national identity in the public debate about the Western Balkan countries: the news articles will show that the conflicts are often identified as "ethnic conflicts," the religious identities of the groups are emphasized and that national identities are understood as static attributes of ethnic groups. Race is missing from most of these analyses in news articles, but as British historian Catherine Baker has argued that "ethnic-majority narratives of national identity blur ethnicity and race,"[27] this thesis argues that race *should* be taken into consideration and be made explicit.

In order to answer the main research question, four subsidiary questions are formulated:

1. What are key aspects of the (historical) context of religion, race, ethnicity and national identity in the Western Balkans?
2. What are key aspects of the relationship between the Western Balkans and the Netherlands?
3. How can Critical Discourse Analysis be used to study Dutch discourses on religion, race, ethnicity and national identity in the Western Balkans?
4. What representations of religion, race, ethnicity and national identity in the Western Balkans are prominent in Dutch discourses?

It is important to note that there are a few elements that this thesis explicitly does *not* attempt to do. As this thesis concerns qualitative research, it does not study whether, or how often certain events are written about in Dutch newspapers. The way the news is perceived by the audiences is also not studied. What *is* researched, is how events are constructed and represented by certain actors, in this case the writers of newspaper articles (journalists, editors, and others).

To address these questions, this thesis will employ a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), informed by the work of linguists Norman Fairclough and Teun van Dijk. CDA "provides a powerful method for analyzing what is taken as 'common knowledge' and 'appropriate' in society and how these discursive constructions perpetuate particular ways of thinking and practice by suppressing alternative

---

[26] One newspaper with a bigger circulation than *Trouw* is *Het Financieele Dagblad* (*FD*), but as *FD* focuses specifically on business and economics rather than on news in general, *Trouw* is the fifth newspaper used in this thesis' discourse analysis.

[27] Baker, *Race and the Yugoslav Region*, 11.

discourses."[28] In the case of the present research, CDA can help reveal what "discursive constructions" about religion, race, ethnicity and national identity in the Western Balkans exist in Dutch media, especially in the five aforementioned newspapers.[29]

As the opening quote of this thesis states that "Balkanism has not been coupled with its complementing and ennobling antiparticle,"[30] this thesis will explore where balkanizing discourses exist, hopefully adding to a scholarly discipline such as critical theory in which such an antiparticle *will* be developed. As the British media scholar John E. Richardson wrote: "Another world is possible. It is the point of CDA to show how discourse conceals this from us, normalising inequalities and closing down the possibility of change."[31]

Thesis Structure

Chapter 1 of this thesis will offer an overview of what is meant by the denomination of "the Western Balkans" and what Western perspectives of the (Western) Balkans are prominent. For this, Todorova's work will be key. Adding to this, the chapter will explore the relations between the Western Balkan countries and the Netherlands. Chapter 2 will combine key aspects of the historical backgrounds of the Western Balkan countries with explorations of the categories of religion, race, ethnicity and national identity. The next chapter, Chapter 3, will explain the methodology that is used in this research. It will elucidate how the Critical Discourse Analysis will be carried out and will dive deeper into the rationale and criteria that led to selecting articles of five Dutch newspapers (*Algemeen Dagblad*, *De Telegraaf, de Volkskrant, NRC* and *Trouw*) as focal points for the present study. The following two chapters will respectively be the results of the Critical Discourse Analysis and the corresponding discussions. As Critical Discourse Analysis emphasizes the importance of taking discursive and sociocultural practices in consideration, these will be made explicit in the discussions chapter, Chapter 5. The thesis will end with the conclusions, in which I come back to the main research question, offer a summary of the research and the research outcomes, and consider the limitations and opportunities for possible further research.

---

[28] Titus Hjelm, "Discourse analysis," in *The Routledge Handbook of Research Methods in the Study of Religion*, eds. Michael Strausberg and Steven Engler (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011), 142.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (Oxford University Press, 2009), 189.
[31] John E. Richardson, *Analysing Newspapers: An Approach from Critical Discourse Analysis* (Macmillan International, 2007), 45.

1. The Western Balkans

1.1 Defining the (Western) Balkans

To better understand the context and aims of this study, a clear definition of what is meant by the "Western Balkans" is needed. Definitions of the Balkans, however, are highly intertwined with outside perspectives on the region, which will be discussed later on in this chapter. According to Todorova, the earliest mention of the name "Balkans" was in the 15th century, in communication of the Italian writer Filippo Buonaccorsi Callimaco to Pope Innocent VIII, in which the name is used to refer to the mountain range on the peninsula.[32] In the following eras, the name was used only sparsely, retaining its connection to the mountain range (nowadays called the "Balkan mountains").

For the geographical contents of these "Balkans," however, there are various accounts. The Balkans cannot be described in objective terms, as the *idea* of the Balkans is a construction–often a counterpart against which Western Europe, or else, "not-the-Balkans," can define itself. Thus, descriptions of what the Balkans entails can be made, but whether these are "true" depends on who you are asking: "the Balkans" truly is in the eye of the beholder. As showcased by Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek, what the Balkans *is* often takes the form of a running gag: "You ask a Serb, he will tell you, down here, either Sarajevo or Kosovo, they will tell you, this is the true Balkan. Now, the irony is that if you go too much down, then all of a sudden, Balkan is up there. In Greece they will tell you, we Greeks, we are the origin of Europe, up there, the dark Balkan mountains. If you ask an Austrian, he will tell you, in Slovenia, Balkan begins. Slavic, primitives, and so on [sic]."[33]

In the broadest sense, the Balkans as a geographical entity refers to the countries on the Balkan peninsula. This could include Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia and the European part of Turkey. In this vein, Todorova writes that "the Balkans can be addressed as a scholarly category of analysis–a concrete geographic region–and in this capacity it is currently most often used as a synonym of Southeastern Europe."[34] One common way of delineating the Balkans on the basis of geography holds as a northern "border" the Danube and Sava rivers.[35]

Defining the Balkans as something else than a mere geographical unit, which is necessary according to British historian Mark Mazower, can lead to vastly different definitions of the region.[36] Academic writing as well as travel literature have delineated the region on different bases: on bases of shared religion, culture or language; on bases of political systems; on bases of economic flourishing;

---

[32] Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*,22.
[33] "'Where is Balkan?' by Slavoj Žižek," Youtube, February 21, 2022, video, 0:35-1:08, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3rpEQmtkstM.
[34] Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, 194.
[35] Ibid., 30.
[36] Mark Mazower, *The Balkans: From the End of Byzantium to the Present Day* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2001), 4.

on bases of democratization; on bases of geopolitical alliances, among others. For instance, when economic flourishing is understood as the biggest factor, Slovenia and Croatia are grouped with Central Europe rather than Southeastern Europe (despite their history of being a part of the former Yugoslavia). When delineation is based on religion and religious currents, the two can set themselves apart for the biggest religious current in both countries being Roman Catholicism.[37] When political systems are given the most relevance, Greece and Turkey can be excluded from the region on the basis of not sharing a history of communism. It comes as no surprise that these delineations have received their fair share of critique over the years: some delineations would be too political, some would be elitist and some would be exoticizing or orientalist–or "balkanist," as Todorova argued.

In this thesis, it is not the Balkans, but the Western Balkans that are the main interest. The Western Balkans as a denomination is a geopolitical term rather than a geographical one (although one might argue that none of the so-called "geographical" definitions of the Balkans are purely geographical). The term refers to seven countries on the Balkan peninsula: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia. The term came into use as a political grouping of countries that are not yet members of the European Union, but which have expressed the desire to be or are in negotiations to become members in the future.[38] In this definition, Slovenia is excluded as it became an EU member in 2004. In most recent accounts, Croatia is left out for the same reason–Croatia became an EU member in 2013–but in this thesis, Croatia will be included for its ethnoreligious positioning in the region (the case of ethnic Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina, for instance).[39] Similarities shared by the seven countries are that they all have histories of communism: the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) and the People's Socialist Republic of Albania. Both of these systems disintegrated in the 1990s, starting in 1990 in Albania and in 1991 in the SFRY.

1.2 Western Perspectives of the Balkans

As exemplified in the introduction of this thesis, the "Europeanness" of the Balkans is sometimes questioned. The case of German Chancellor Scholz is one example, but such questioning can also be found elsewhere. The Dutch ambassador in Croatia, Henk Voskamp, for instance, refers to Croatia as being "on the border of Europe and the Balkan," thus implying that Europe borders on the Balkan peninsula.[40] This different treatment of Balkan within (or outside of) Europe is also exemplified by the way East European or Southeast European Studies are organized within universities, Todorova argues:

---

[37] Baker, *Race and the Yugoslav Region*, 21.

[38] André de Munter, "The Western Balkans," External relations, European Parliament, last modified April 2023, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/168/the-western-balkans.

[39] The constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina recognizes three main ethnic groups: Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats. The country has a three-member presidency, one representing each ethnic group.

[40] "Kroatië, op de grens van Europa en de Balkan," Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, Rijksoverheid, January 13, 2023, https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/ministeries/ministerie-van-buitenlandse-zaken/het-werk-van-bz-in-de-praktijk/weblogs/2023/nederlandse-ambassadeur-in-kroatie.

At American universities, there are numerous departments of European studies. There is also, and usually not as an integral part of European studies, the field of East European studies. … "Eastern European," then is a marked category as a subfield of European history. "Central European," or rather "East Central European," and "Southeast European" history and literature occasionally emerge as marked subcategories within this marked subfield. The rest of Europe, however, is not represented by commensurate categories and the appropriate specialist on "Northeastern Europe," "West Central Europe," nor even "Western Europe."[41]

It is important to note that here Todorova writes about universities in the USA. Nevertheless, a quick look at the website of the University of Amsterdam informs us that both within the Bachelor's program and the Master's program of "European Studies," a specialization in "East European Studies" is offered, while there are no other "subcategory studies" under the umbrella of European Studies–but it is at least an integral part of European Studies.[42] This distinction between "regular" European Studies and East European Studies reveals a dissimilarity between "Europe" and "East Europe," again calling into question the "Europeanness" of the Balkans: it is a part of Europe, so it is a part of European Studies, but it is nonetheless a distinctly separate part of Europe. Todorova argues that although the Balkans are "geographically inextricable from Europe," it is "culturally constructed as 'the other' within."[43]

Central to Todorova's *Imagining the Balkans* is the notion that all discussions about the Balkans depend on a discourse, made up of stereotypes and other assumptions, attempting to "make sense" of the Balkans, of this "Other within." This tendency can then be described as "balkanism." Balkanism as a concept can barely be disconnected from scholarly debates on orientalism, the term popularized by Said, who describes orientalism as a "style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between 'the Orient' and (most of the time) 'the Occident.'"[44] Veliu argues, based on the work of Milica Bakić-Hayden, that whereas Todorova denies that balkanism is a "subspecies of orientalism," it can in fact be seen as "[sharing] a logic and rhetoric with orientalism."[45] In this thesis, particularly this last line of reasoning will be given preference over Todorova's argument.

Todorova's main problem with incorporating balkanism within orientalism lies in her perceived lack of colonial history in the Balkans. Where others do argue in favor of adopting a postcolonial perspective regarding the Balkans–Baker, in her 2018 work on race in Yugoslavia, argues that "if

---

[41] Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, 197.

[42] "Education," European Studies, University of Amsterdam, accessed September 15, 2023, https://www.uva.nl/en/discipline/european-studies/education/article.html.

[43] Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, 188.

[44] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 10.

[45] Veliu, *#Balkanization*, 44-45.

todays' Yugoslav region is both post-conflict and postsocialist, … it is also postcolonial."[46] Todorova opposes this, as she does not consider the Ottoman Empire as a late colonial empire.[47] Besides this, another argument for Todorova's differentiation between balkanism and orientalism is the difference in their concreteness: "the main difference between the two concepts is the geographic and historical concreteness of the Balkans and the metaphorical and symbolic nature of the Orient."[48] Moreover, Todorova, similarly to historian Katherine Elizabeth Fleming, highlights that while Western European academia has traditionally been very interested in the so-called Orient (in fact, this interest has been fundamental in the creation and perpetuation of it), it has not necessarily been that interested in the Balkans.[49]

Todorova does, however, recognize that examining balkanism from a postcolonial perspective could be fitting if it specifically examines the use of "the Balkans" as a metaphor. In this use, "the Balkans" is utilized as a blueprint of events, often a synonym for (violent) disintegration. The aforementioned scholar Veliu has examined this extensively in her work, *#Balkanization.* Thus, the Balkans as a metaphor closely relates to framings of the Balkans as a place of perpetual conflict. In this sense, "the Balkans" is used as a pejorative term.

Mazower and Todorova oppose this perspective, respectively writing that "life in the Balkans was no more violent than elsewhere" and that "it would be much better if the Yugoslav, not Balkan, crisis ceased to be explained in terms of Balkan ghosts, ancient Balkan enmities, primordial Balkan cultural patterns and proverbial Balkan turmoil, and instead was approached with the same rational criteria that the West reserves for itself."[50]

Often, such frames can be traced back to travel literature, which has been a fitting vessel for orientalist and balkanist discourses. Todorova mentions "Balkan ghosts," which is not coincidentally also the title of American journalist Robert D. Kaplan's book about his 1980s travels through the Balkans. Kaplan does not shy away from blaming the Balkans for a great deal of 20th century terror in Europe. In the introduction of his book, Kaplan states that "the Balkans produced the century's first terrorists," that "twentieth-century history came from the Balkans. Here men have been isolated by ethnic rivalry, dooming them to hate. Here politics has been reduced to a level of near anarchy that from time to time in history has flowed up the Danube into Central Europe," and that "Nazism, for instance, can claim Balkan origins. Among the flophouses of Vienna, a breeding ground of ethnic resentments close to the southern Slavic world, Hitler learned how to hate so infectiously."[51]

Mazower further lists other descriptions of the Balkans, including an 1873 account by an Austrian foreign minister, stating that "Austria's Near Eastern neighbors were 'wild Indians who could

---

[46] Baker, *Race and the Yugoslav Region*, 9.
[47] Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, 195.
[48] Ibid., 194.
[49] Veliu, *#Balkanization*, 45.
[50] Mazower, *The Balkans,* 143; Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, 186.
[51] Robert D. Kaplan, *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey through History* (New York: St. Martin Press, 2005), li.

only be treated like unbroken horses, to whom corn should be offered with one hand while they are threatened with a whip in the other'" and the Austrian-Hungarian Empire's own Archduke Franz Ferdinand describing in particular "Serbia as a land of 'thieves and murderers and bandits and a few plum trees.'"[52] Todorova adds to this the denominator of "tribalism"–a category that, according to Todorova, is usually applied to Africa–with the intention of reducing the Balkans to a "lower civilizational category."[53]

In travel literature and contemplative academic literature about travel literature, another frame, besides the Balkans being a place of "perpetual conflict and ethnic resentments," stands out. Marija Krivokapić and Armela Panajoti, in their 2018 article *On Postcolonial Influence in Balkan Travel Writing*, argue that after the Yugoslav wars in the 1990s,

> as 'the lines of demarcation between Europe and the other [became] disturbingly blurred', many travellers grew anxious that there might no longer be an alternative anywhere to save travel writing. Suddenly, the 'wild beauty' of the Balkans became convenient again. … One often hears travellers inviting readers to 'go visit Montenegro while it's still relatively undiscovered', … or expressing disappointment at the improvements on the roads and the existence of warm water in the shower.[54]

In this depiction, the way of living of the Balkans is described as something different, something "exotic" to be visited and explored. Similarly, this way of framing can focus on the perceived "primitivity" of the region. Mazower cites British students traveling to Macedonia in 1921, stating that "in most ways the native seems to have changed little since Biblical days, so that it may almost be said that in observing the modern Macedonian one is studying the type amongst whom St Paul preached and travelled."[55] This romanticized view of Balkans, which can be found in both travel literature and scholarly output by the travelers' contemporaries, gives rise to the idea, in the words of Mazower, that "it is as though the emergence of the idea of modernity in nineteenth-century Europe, with its sharp sense of time moving ahead fast, encouraged a view of the Balkans as a place where 'time has stood still.'"[56]

However, in the 2009 updated version of *Imagining the Balkans*, Todorova states that journalists *are* in fact becoming more conscientious of how they report on and represent the Balkans.[57]

---

[52] Mazower, *The Balkans,* 102.

[53] Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, 184.

[54] Marija Krivokapić and Armela Panajoti, "On Postcolonial Influence in Balkan Travel Writing," *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 20, no. 2 (2018): 188.

[55] Mazower, *The Balkans,* 29.

[56] Ibid., 30.

[57] Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, 192.

In the newly added afterword, Todorova refers to the new designation of "the Western Balkans" as "politically correct."[58] Todorova refers almost cynically to this new designation when she writes that "now, with the changed political conjuncture, one speaks only about the Western Balkans as a problematic zone, and the rest of the Balkans are exempt from the designation."[59] On the one hand, journalists are, according to Todorova, becoming more conscious of balkanist tendencies in their reporting. On the other hand, the sole focus on the Western Balkans reveals a continuation of stigmatization of a very specific area of Europe, which can again be understood as balkanism.

Similar to the predicament for journalists, Krivokapić and Panajoti argue that travel writers too cannot escape "the prevailing political balkanist discourse."[60] However, placing the Balkans outside Europe is not only an external affair, as exemplified by German Chancellor Scholz's statement; it is also "the Balkan inhabitants' habit to refer to their own travel to the west as 'going to Europe.'"[61] Krivokapić and Panajoti write that Balkan scholars "particularly suffer from the hegemonic paradigm," not in the least "because [of] orientalism, or self-othering."[62]

Important to mention in discussions about the Balkans within Europe is the "clash of civilizations" theory of the American political scientist Samuel Huntington. According to Huntington, the world can be divided into eight major civilizations: African, Confucian, Hindu, Islamic, Japanese, Latin American, Slavic-Orthodox and Western.[63] Huntington's theory argues that in the "future" (he coined his theory in 1993), it is not economic or ideological divides that will cause conflicts, but cultural differences. Todorova highlights that Huntington incorporated Eastern Europe and Russia within the "Western civilization" during their communist (and, most importantly, atheist) periods, but that after the fall of communism, these countries returned to be considered as part of the "Slavic-Orthodox" civilization. Huntington's theory has attracted many criticisms, such as that his imagined division of the world is too mechanistic. Yet, it still holds value by (political) scientists and journalists.[64]

1.3 The EU and the Western Balkans

The *Strict, Fair and More Open Towards EU Enlargement!* study by the BiEPAG has shown that while the Dutch public has strong opinions about the EU enlargement process, factual knowledge about the process and the Western Balkan candidates is scarce.[65] In 1999, the EU introduced Stabilization and Association Process (SAP) in order to prepare the Western Balkan countries for future EU accession. The SAP consists of different Stabilization and Association Agreements (SAA), which constitute a

---

[58] Ibid., 192.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Krivokapić and Panajoti, "On Postcolonial Influence in Balkan Travel Writing," 186.
[61] Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, 28.
[62] Krivokapić and Panajoti, "On Postcolonial Influence in Balkan Travel Writing," 187.
[63] Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, 131.
[64] Ibid.
[65] BiEPAG, *Strict, Fair and More Open Towards EU Enlargement!*, 2.

strategic frame stimulating political dialogue, trade associations and regional cooperation and offer financial support.[66] Central to these agreements are the guarding of and advocating for democracy, human rights and rule of law.

In order to be considered for EU candidacy, the political criteria of the "Copenhagen conditions" should be met. These conditions, which were set as the EU's formal requirements for membership, were agreed upon at the Copenhagen European Council in 1993. The Copenhagen conditions require nation states to commit to the body of treaties, laws and regulations of the EU (the *acquis communautaire)*, to be democratic and to have a functioning free market.[67] Adding to this, the (potential) member states must have effective administrative structures in motion.[68]

It is important to consider, however briefly, the present status of the different Western Balkan countries in relation to the European Union. Currently, Croatia is the only Western Balkan country that is a member of the EU. Croatia applied for EU-membership in 2003 and was granted membership ten years later, in 2013, becoming the EU's 28th member.[69] Moreover, in 2023, Croatia was admitted to the Eurozone as well, replacing the country's *kuna* with the euro as their currency. One year after Croatia's EU application, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), applied for membership as the second of the seven Western Balkan countries and became an official candidate member in 2005. However, due to the name dispute with Greece, negotiations could not start–Greece was against the republic using just "Macedonia" as its name, as Greece itself has a province called Macedonia.[70] In 2018, the Prespa Agreement was signed, in which the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia adopted the name of "Republic of North Macedonia."[71] However, before negotiations could start between the EU and North Macedonia, in 2019, president Emmanuel Macron of France vetoed the starting of negotiations–not just for North Macedonia, but for Albania as well. Macron called for "a reformed European Union and a reformed enlargement process," which in turn led to criticism by the president of the European Commission, Jean Claude Juncker and others, arguing that pushing the Western Balkans away could create a fertile breeding ground for instability by other actors showing interest in the region, such as Russia and China.[72] In 2020, Bulgaria objected to the negotiation framework between North Macedonia and the EU over a history and language dispute, delaying the start of negotiations even more, but in 2022, North Macedonia could formally start negotiating.[73]

---

[66] De Munter, "The Western Balkans."

[67] John McCormick, *European Union Politics* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 100.

[68] McCormick, *European Union Politics*, 147.

[69] Ibid., 112.

[70] McCormick, *European Union Politics*, 150.

[71] De Munter, "The Western Balkans."

[72] Robin Emmott, Francesco Guarascio and Marine Pennetier, "France under fire for "historic error" of blocking Balkan EU hopefuls," *Reuters*, October 18, 2019, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-eu-summit-balkans-idUSKBN1WX1CT.

[73] Daniel Boffey, "Mind our language: Bulgaria blocks North Macedonia's EU path," *The Guardian*, November 17, 2020, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/nov/17/mind-our-language-bulgaria-blocks-north-macedonias-eu-path.

Albania applied for membership in 2009, was granted candidacy in 2014 and could start negotiating in 2022 too. It is important to note that the accession negotiations of North Macedonia and Albania are dealt with jointly.[74]

Montenegro, gaining independence from the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro in 2006, applied for EU membership in 2008 and was granted candidacy in 2010.[75] In 2012, the country could start negotiations, but while the first aim was to gain membership in 2022, in August 2023, President of the European Council, Charles Michel, stated that the year that the EU should be ready to enlarge in general would be 2030.[76]

For Serbia, which applied for EU membership in 2009 and was granted candidacy in 2012, the most pressing subject in negotiations remains the relations with Kosovo. In 2015, the chapter on the normalization of relations with Kosovo was opened.[77] The EU facilitates high-level dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo, but due to disturbances in the border region of the two countries, the region of northern Kosovo, dialogue often falters, delaying integration of Serbia into the EU. In addition to this, the Clingendael Institute reported in August 2023, socio-cultural and political influence by Russia in Serbia is substantial, particularly on the issue of Kosovo.[78] As the EU and NATO are seeking to counter Russian influence in the region, the country's substantial influence in Serbia is considered particularly undesirable.

For Kosovo, its contested legal status is an obstacle in its prospective candidacy, as five member countries of the EU (Cyprus, Greece, Romania, Slovakia and Spain) and two neighboring countries (Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina) have not recognized Kosovo as an independent nation state.[79] Since 2016, a SAA has become operative between the European Union and potential candidate country Kosovo, and in December 2022, Kosovo has officially applied for membership candidacy.[80] Furthermore, in 2023, the decision for visa liberation for Kosovar citizens was made. The law entered into force in 2024.[81]

---

[74] De Munter, "The Western Balkans."

[75] De Munter, "The Western Balkans."

[76] Ivana Secularac, "Head of European Council says EU must be ready for new members by 2030," *Reuters*, August 28, 2023, https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/head-european-council-says-eu-must-be-ready-new-members-by-2030-2023-08-28/.

[77] De Munter, "The Western Balkans."

[78] Wouter Zweers, Niels Drost and Baptiste Henry, "Russian influence in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro," Research, Clingendael Institute, August 17, 2023, https://www.clingendael.org/publication/russian-influence-serbia-bosnia-and-herzegovina-and-montenegro.

[79] De Munter, "The Western Balkans."

[80] Jason Hovet, Robert Muller and Fatos Bytyci, "Kosovo formally applies to join EU," *Reuters*, December 15, 2022, ttps://www.reuters.com/world/europe/kosovo-submits-eu-membership-application-2022-12-15/.

[81] "Kosovo visa liberalisation signed for entry in early 2024," Migration and Home Affairs, European Commission, April 21, 2023, https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/news/kosovo-visa-liberalisation-signed-entry-early-2024-2023-04-21_en.

In 2007, an SAA was implemented between the European Union and Bosnia and Herzegovina.[82] However, due to negligence to implement a decision of the European Court of Human Rights, the SAA was only entered into force in 2015.[83] Key elements of a prospective EU membership relate to the necessity of reforms in terms of rule of law and public administration.[84] After the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the decision by the EU to grant Moldova and Ukraine membership candidacy in 2022, that year Bosnia and Herzegovina was granted candidacy as well.[85]

As stated before, President Michel of the European Council has set 2030 as the year in which the EU should be ready to accept new members in the EU. So far, four of the six remaining Western Balkan countries that are not yet EU members are in negotiations with the EU, while Bosnia and Herzegovina has been granted candidate status and Kosovo retains its potential candidate status. Balkan leaders and scholars of Southeastern Europe have since criticized the lengthiness and caution with which the EU has treated the Western Balkan countries. While President Michel argued that "the war in Ukraine has shown that peace and democracy cannot be taken for granted," Bosnian-Canadian political scientist Jasmin Mujanović asks "why Brussels is dangling the membership carrot in front of the so-called 'Western Balkan Six,'" arguing that none of the six countries are effectively ready for EU accession.[86]

1.4 The Netherlands and the Western Balkans

1.4.1 Dutch Tourism

In 2022, the 22nd season of the popular Dutch TV show *Wie is de mol?* took place in Albania.[87] Although exact figures are absent, it is commonly thought that being a host country of *Wie is de mol?* can potentially lead to an influx of Dutch tourism. After the Albanian season of the show, according to the mayor of the Albanian capital city Tirana, Erion Veliaj, Dutch tourism increased.[88] While Albania might be a newcomer destination for Dutch tourists, Croatia has been popular for years, annually hosting around half a million Dutch tourists.[89]

Furthermore, in 2022, the European Commission ruled that Croatia could join both the Schengen Area and the Economic and Monetary Union of the European Union, facilitating tourism

---

[82] McCormick, *European Union Politics*, 148.

[83] De Munter, "The Western Balkans."

[84] "Bosnia and Herzegovina," EU enlargement policy, European Council, last reviewed July 20, 2023, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/enlargement/bosnia-herzegovina/.

[85] De Munter, "The Western Balkans."

[86] Dušan Stojanović, "EU official proposes 2030 as enlargement deadline for states that have long been waiting in line," *AP News*, August 28, 2023, https://apnews.com/article/balkans-european-union-enlargement-russia-ukraine-michel-51be2bc9c53092c16d4011bc8542c156; Jasmin Mujanović, "The EU and the Crisis of Democracy in the Balkans," *Political Insight* 9, no. 1 (April 2018): 11.

[87] Literally translated as "Who is the mole?", *Wie is de mol?* is a game show in which Dutch public figures play games in order to uncover the one person in the group playing a double role as 'the mole'.

[88] Tijn Sadée, "De Albanezen doen het wel zonder Brussel," *De Groene Amsterdammer,* July 13, 2022, https://www.groene.nl/artikel/de-albanezen-doen-het-wel-zonder-brussel.

[89] Rijksoverheid, "Kroatië, op de grens van Europa en de Balkan."

even more.[90] The former Yugoslavia, during its pre-1990s existence, had been a popular destination for Dutch tourists, and besides Albania and Croatia, other Western Balkan countries are also making their entry on the lists of *vakantielanden* ("holiday countries") for the Dutch, praised for their beauty but mostly for their affordability.[91]

Corendon, a Dutch-Turkish business for holiday flights, advertises "Macedonia" (instead of North Macedonia) as the "hidden pearl of the Balkans" and as an "amazingly cheap holiday country."[92] While knowledge of the countries of the Western Balkans remains scarce, exemplified by the incorrect use of "Macedonia" as the country's name, personal experiences such as tourism to the Western Balkans positively influence the way the countries are perceived, the aforementioned survey by BiEPAG reports.[93] In this study, for which a representative public opinion survey, in-depth focus groups and interviews were conducted, words like "poor," "corruption," "insecurity" and "war" were associated with the Western Balkans the most. However, participants also chose to connect the words "natural beauty," "holiday" and "friendly" to the region.[94]

1.4.2 Srebrenica

Perhaps the most striking connection between the Western Balkan countries and the Netherlands is the Srebrenica genocide and Dutchbat III, the Dutch battalion installed in Bosnia and Herzegovina as a part of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR).[95] In 1995, during the Yugoslav conflict, Dutchbat failed to safekeep the Muslims of the Bosnian city of Srebrenica, after which the Serbian forces murdered about 8000 Muslim men and boys. An estimated thousand of the remains of victims are still missing.[96] Relatives of victims of the Srebrenica genocide have since then voiced their perspectives on the acts of Dutchbat. They expressed their dissatisfaction in 2006, when Dutchbat veterans received insignias as recognition for them being insufficiently armed during the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina and for the negative framing of the veterans in the aftermath of Srebrenica.

---

[90] "Vijf vragen over de invoering van de euro in Kroatië," Algemeen nieuws, De Nederlandsche Bank, January 13, 2023, https://www.dnb.nl/algemeen-nieuws/nieuwsberichten-2023/vijf-vragen-over-de-invoering-van-de-euro-in-kroatie/.

[91] Marlou Schrover, "De opkomst van de asielzoeker," in *De vluchtelingenrepubliek: een migratiegeschiedenis van Nederland,* eds. David de Boer and Geert Janssen (Amsterdam: Prometheus, 2023), 222.

[92] Ivo de Zorzi, "10 goedkope vakantielanden voor een betaalbare droomvakantie," Corendon, March 27, 2023, https://www.corendon.nl/inspiratie/top-5-goedkope-vakantiebestemmingen/.

[93] BiEPAG, *Strict, Fair and More Open Towards EU Enlargement!*, 16.

[94] Ibid., 19.

[95] Bérénice Boutin, "Responsibility of the Netherlands for the Acts of Dutchbat in *Nuhanović* and *Mustafić*: The Continuous Quest for a Tangible Meaning for 'Effective Control' in the Context of Peacekeeping," *Leiden Journal of International Law* 25, no. 1 (2012): 522.

[96] "Srebrenica 21 years on: another 127 victims buried," News, International Commission on Missing Persons, accessed September 14, 2023, https://www.icmp.int/news/srebrenica-21-years-on-another-127-victims-buried/.

The relatives reacted similarly when in 2022, the Dutch government apologized for the "powerlessness" the veterans of Dutchbat III must have experienced.[97]

The Bosnian-Dutch education scholar Alma Mustafić, who in 2001 filed a lawsuit against the Dutch state on the charge of being responsible for the death of her father, Rizo Mustafić–case concluded in 2011 that the Netherlands had in fact been responsible for his death–reacted to the Dutch government's apologies: "Apologies for Dutchbat are good, but the relatives of the more than eight thousand men and boys who were killed are still waiting for a public apology."[98] This wish was fulfilled on July 11, 2022, when the Dutch Minister of Defence Kajsa Ollongren apologized on behalf of the Dutch government for the failure of safekeeping the people of Srebrenica.[99]

While the general sentiment leans toward accepting the apologies made, feelings that more should be done remain: some relatives demand more investigations into how the international community came to fail in Srebrenica.[100] One organization in particular is the Mothers of Srebrenica, a group of Bosnian women who lost their sons and/or husbands in the Srebrenica genocide. In 2007, the organization started filing claims against the Dutch government, and in 2019, the Supreme Court of the Netherlands ruled that the Dutch state is responsible for the death of ten percent of a group of 350 men represented by the Mothers of Srebrenica. Disagreeing with the verdict, in 2020 the Mothers announced to take their claim to the European Court of Human Rights.[101]

1.4.3 Former Yugoslav and Albanian Persons in the Netherlands

Criticism on the Dutch government's course of action in the aftermath of the Srebrenica genocide largely comes from the Bosnian diaspora in the Netherlands. However, the presence of groups of people from the Western Balkans did not originate during the 1990s wars. In the 1960s and 1970s, the Netherlands actively recruited laborers from the SFRY. The first Yugoslav migrants to the Netherlands were mainly guest laborers with Serbian and Croatian backgrounds.[102] As a result of this migration, in

---

[97] "Excuses van premier Rutte voor Dutchbat III, 27 jaar na val van Srebrenica," Nieuws, Rijksoverheid, June 6, 2022, https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/actueel/nieuws/2022/06/18/excuses-van-premier-rutte-voor-dutchbat-iii-27-jaar-na-val-van-srebrenica.

[98] Boutin, "Responsibility of the Netherlands for the Acts of Dutchbat in *Nuhanović* and *Mustafić*," 533; Irene van der Linde, "Als Alma Mustafić omkijkt," *De Groene Amsterdammer*, July 6, 2022, https://www.groene.nl/artikel/als-alma-mustafic-omkijkt; "'Excuses voor Dutchbat is goed, … Maar de nabestaanden van de meer dan achtduizend mannen en jongens die zijn vermoord wachten nog steeds op publieke excuses" (author's translation).

[99] "Nederland biedt nabestaanden Srebrenica excuses aan," Nieuws, Rijksoverheid, July 11, 2022, https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/actueel/nieuws/2022/07/11/nederland-biedt-nabestaanden-srebrenica-excuses-aan.

[100] "Nabestaanden Srebrenica over excuses: 'Eindelijk is het zover'," NOS Nieuws, July 11, 2022, https://nos.nl/artikel/2436299-nabestaanden-srebrenica-over-excuses-eindelijk-is-het-zover.

[101] "Nabestaanden genocide Srebrenica naar Europees Hof," NOS Nieuws, January 20, 2020, https://nos.nl/collectie/13844/artikel/2319460-nabestaanden-genocide-srebrenica-stappen-naar-europees-hof.

[102] Jasmijn van Gorp and Kevin Smets, "Diaspora organizations, imagined communities and the versatility of diaspora: The case of Former Yugoslav organizations in the Netherlands," *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 25, no. 1 (2015): 78.

1990, over 20,000 persons with a background in the SFRY lived in the Netherlands already.[103] The Dutch Central Agency for Statistics (CBS) reported that during the period of 1991 to 1999, around 70,000 people from the former SFRY found refuge in the Netherlands, making them the largest number of refugees in the country.[104]

It is important to note, however, that not everyone with a background in the SFRY taken into consideration in these statistics actually stayed in the Netherlands. The same applies for the earlier Yugoslav guest workers, approximately half of whom returned to their country of birth.[105] Different from refugees who had found asylum in the Netherlands before, such as those from communist regimes during the Cold War, refugees from the SFRY received a "displaced person status" rather than a "refugee status."[106] This change, organized in the novel regulation "Temporary Arrangement For the Reception of Displaced Persons" (TROO), was a result of a longer strategy of trying to prevent refugees from integrating. Dutch policy makers feared that the integration of refugees ultimately would lead to sympathy of Dutch civilians and make the refugees themselves think that a permanent residence in the Netherlands was probable.[107] Besides this, the immigration structures in the Netherlands were already overloaded by that time and policy makers expected many of the Yugoslav refugees to be able to return to the region soon.

However, after a few months, criticism increased about the way asylum for Yugoslav refugees was regulated in the TROO. The fact that persons with a TROO status were not allowed to work or find housing–they were accommodated in empty military barracks and isolated asylum centers–was increasingly considered inhumane.[108] In 1992, when it became clear that the Yugoslav conflicts would not be resolved soon, it was decided that the refugees should get another type of status. According to the CBS, in 2022, 95,493 people with a background in the Western Balkans live in the Netherlands, making up around 0,5% of the total population.[109] In these numbers, the CBS explains, "these persons are included in the migrant background corresponding to the country where their birthplace lies according to current borders."[110] Moreover, these numbers include those who are born to at least one parent born in one of the countries of the Western Balkans. It is important to note that thus, these numbers not only show the number of persons migrating (or fleeing) from the countries before, during or right after the 1990 conflicts, but also shows migration afterwards (up until 2022).

---

[103] Schrover, "De opkomst van de asielzoeker," 222-23.

[104] Schrover, "De opkomst van de asielzoeker," 227.

[105] Thomas Hessels, *Voormalig Joegoslaven in Nederland* (CBS, 2005), 99, https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/achtergrond/2005/11/bevolkingstrends-1e-kwartaal-2005.

[106] Schrover, "De opkomst van de asielzoeker," 223.

[107] Ibid., 230.

[108] Ibid., 230-31.

[109] "Bevolking; geslacht; leeftijd; generatie en migratieachtergrond," Statline, CBS, last modified May 31, 2022, https://opendata.cbs.nl/statline/#/CBS/nl/dataset/37325/table?ts=1693909678700.

[110] "In de definitieve cijfers worden deze personen gerekend tot de migratieachtergrond die correspondeert met het land waar hun geboorteplaats volgens de huidige landsgrenzen ligt."; Ibid.

Concerning the former SFRY, up until 2021, the CBS included all migrants from the former SFRY under one denominator ("Former Yugoslavia"). Of all the seven Western Balkan countries, the number of persons with a background in Albania increases most. While in 2018, there were 2,852 persons with a background in Albania in the Netherlands (including those belonging to the 2nd generation), by 2022, this number increased to 4,395.[111] While this calculation represents people who came to the Netherlands and obtained a valid residence permit, it is relevant to note that in 2016, the highest number of first applications for asylum in the Netherlands concerned Albanians from Albania (see footnote).[112] One single explanation for the growing numbers is missing, but economic hardship and dissatisfaction with the political situation and suspicions of corruption in Albania might contribute to the impulse to leave.[113] As Albania is considered a safe country by the Dutch government, Albanians from Albania stand little to no chance to be granted asylum.

1.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, definitions of the (Western) Balkans are discussed. Whereas "the Balkans" often refers to more than just a geographical entity, for instance in the use of the Balkans as a metaphor, the Western Balkans, being a relatively novel term, most often refers to seven countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia. This thesis particularly focuses on the Western Balkan countries, but as the analyzed articles often refer to "the Balkans" when they mean "the Western Balkan countries," frames of the Balkans will also be discussed.

Western perspectives on the Balkans often rely on what Todorova defines as "balkanism," a discourse attempting to make sense of the Balkans which often defines the Balkans as the "Other within" Europe. This discourse permeates political narratives, scholarship but also travel literature. This thesis follows the arguments of Veliu and Bakić-Hayden arguing that balkanism shares "a logic and rhetoric with orientalism."[114] Moreover, the fabrication of the Balkans as the "Other within Europe" fits the changing positioning of the region in Huntington's imagined "clash of civilizations."

While Croatia has already become an EU member state in 2013, the remaining six countries are either in the negotiating stage (Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia), are candidate member states (Bosnia and Herzegovina) or have only just officially applied for candidacy (Kosovo). The BiEPAG report *Strict, Fair and More Open Towards EU Enlargement!* argues that while the Dutch

---

[111] These numbers exclusively refer to Albanians from Albania–Albanians from Kosovo or elsewhere are not included in these numbers.

[112] In 2016, Albanians comprised the biggest group when it came to *first* applications for asylum. Syrians, following the 2011 and ongoing Syrian civil war, comprised the biggest group when double applications and family reunification are included in the numbers; Ben Meindertsma, "Albanezen grootste groep die nu asiel aanvraagt," NOS Nieuws, March 28, 2016, https://nos.nl/artikel/2095645-albanezen-grootste-groep-die-nu-asiel-aanvraagt.

[113] Irene van der Linde, "'Wij zijn als mensen in de woestijn,' *De Groene Amsterdammer,* April 6, 2016, https://www.groene.nl/artikel/wij-zijn-als-mensen-in-de-woestijn.

[114] Veliu, #Balkanization, 44-45.

public has strong opinions about the EU enlargement process, factual knowledge about the process and the Western Balkan candidates is scarce. This is despite the connections between the Netherlands and the Western Balkan countries, for instance the involvement of Dutchbat in the Srebrenica genocide, Dutch tourism to the Western Balkan countries and guest laborers and refugees finding asylum in the Netherlands in the 1990s. These can be understood as key elements of the relationship between the Western Balkans and the Netherlands.

2. Religion, Race, Ethnicity and National Identity in the Western Balkans

2.1 Religion, Race, Ethnicity and National Identity as Identity Markers

Examining Dutch representations of the identity markers of religion, race, ethnicity and national identity in the Western Balkans demands an equivalent examination of what these identity markers refer to. In order to do justice to the particular socio-cultural backgrounds and applications of the identity markers, they are treated separately in this chapter. However, it is important to stress that these identity markers are interdependent, dynamic, overlapping and related to (dominant) discourses.

American sociologists Rogers Brubaker, Mara Loveman and Peter Stamatov, for instance, argue that such identity markers (race, ethnicity and nationalism in their study) cannot be dissected in neatly demarcated subdomains, despite the historical habit of attempting to do so.[115] Furthermore, in his 2004 work *Ethnicity without Groups*, Brubaker argues against "groupism"–"the tendency to take bounded groups as fundamental units of analysis (and basic constituents of the social world)"–and the understanding of "categories" as "groups" within social constructivism.[116] Although this chapter *will* adhere to a (realist) social constructivist approach in line with this thesis' methodology, in the sense that identity markers are understood to both be socially constructed and "real" seeing that they have factual and tangible impacts within the social sphere, some of Brubaker's concerns and criticisms will also be taken into account.[117]

The identity markers in this chapter can barely be detached from topics of identity and identification. British-Jamaican sociologist Stuart Hall argues that identification is a process rather than something fixed: identification is understood as "taking up positions of identity."[118] Moreover, as historian Kobena Mercer introduces Hall's work, identity "does not come first … but is itself dependent on coordinates of space and time that create a sense of having a secure place in the world."[119] This view on identity and identification is not agreed upon by all. For instance, Brubaker and historian Frederick Cooper question why "that which is routinely characterized as 'multiple, fragmented, and fluid' should be conceptualized as 'identity' at all."[120] Moreover, "identification" has to be split into self-identification on the one hand and the identification by others, on the other hand.[121] Identification by others should then not only be understood as an interpersonal occurrence, but can just as well be brought about by abstract actors such as public narratives and existing dominant discourses.

---

[115] Rogers Brubaker, Mara Loveman and Peter Stamatov, "Ethnicity as Cognition," in *Ethnicity without Groups*, ed. Rogers Brubaker (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 81.

[116] Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups*, 2.

[117] Gloria Wekker, *Witte onschuld: paradoxen van kolonialisme en ras* (Amsterdam University Press, 2016), 23.

[118] Stuart Hall, *The Fateful Triangle: Race, Ethnicity, Nation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017), 127.

[119] Kobena Mercer, introduction to *The Fateful Triangle: Race, Ethnicity, Nation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017), 26.

[120] Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper, "Beyond "Identity"," in *Ethnicity without Groups*, ed. Rogers Brubaker (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 33.

[121] Brubaker and Cooper, "Beyond "Identity"," 42.

In the following paragraphs on the identity markers of religion, race, ethnicity and national identity in relation to the Western Balkans will be explored, considering both of these aspects of self-identification and of identification-by-others. As it will be further developed in the next chapters, in the Critical Discourse Analysis of this thesis, however, identification-by-others will be key, in the form of the existing public narratives and discourses and the media's construction of these. In line with Brubaker's reasoning, in the present research, race, ethnicity and national identity are understood as discursive categories, rather than as concrete entities or groups, which implies "thinking of ethnicization, racialization and nationalization as political, social, cultural and psychological processes."[122] Considering them as discursive categories rather than concrete entities, helps us see "the multifarious ways in which ethnicity, race and nationhood can exist."[123]

2.2 Religion

Religion is the first identity marker discussed in this chapter as it is not included in the usual triad of race, ethnicity and national identity. In this triad–listed as "race, ethnicity and nation" by both Hall and Brubaker, of whom the latter also refers to these identity markers in relation to the disintegration of the SFRY–religion appears to be subsumed under one, or even all of the three identity markers. Religion, in both literature on and from the Western Balkans, is often *combined* with ethnicity (references to "ethnoreligious violence," for instance), subsumed under race ("racism can take any biological, cultural, linguistic or religious signifier as a boundary-making symbol"), or understood as an inseparable part of national identity.[124] This chapter will show that the overlapping nature of the identity marker of religion also applies when discussing the Western Balkans.

Christianity is thought to have spread to the Balkans during the Roman Empire. For the territory of what now is Albania, Christianity was brought by both Byzantine and Latin missionaries around the fourth century.[125] Slavic tribes, originally hailing from Northern Europe, came to the Balkan peninsula from the fifth to the seventh century, which then belonged to the Byzantine Empire. For the Balkans, the division of the Roman Empire, which demarcated the eastern part as the Byzantine Empire, corresponds to the 1054 division of the Church. This split placed the Roman Catholic Church in the western part and the Eastern Orthodox Church in the eastern part of the Balkans. This division can still be seen nowadays, with Roman Catholicism being the biggest religion in the northern Balkan states of Slovenia and Croatia and Eastern Orthodoxy being the main religion in Bulgaria, Greece, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia.[126] In Albania, Roman Catholic Christians (mostly in the rural areas) and

---

[122] Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups*, 11.
[123] Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups*, 13.
[124] Baker, *Race and the Yugoslav Region*, 84.
[125] Ken Parry, "Albania," in *The Blackwell Dictionary of Eastern Christianity*, eds. Ken Parry, David J. Melling, Dimitri Brady et al. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), 14.
[126] Radmila Radić, "Serbian Christianity," in *The Blackwell Companion to Eastern Christianity,* ed. Ken Parry (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2007), 232.

Eastern Orthodox Christians (mostly in the south, close to Greece) are close to each other in percentage, both being religious minorities.[127]

While estimates of percentages differ greatly, Islam has the largest number of adherents in Albania and Kosovo and substantial minorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria and North Macedonia.[128] Islam is thought to have come to the Balkan peninsula by the expansion of the Ottoman Empire starting in the 15th century.[129] During Ottoman dominion, many aristocrats of the Balkan societies converted to Islam–in Ottoman society, converting was a way to advance your bureaucratic position and move into the Ottoman elite.[130] Mazower states that "a compelling argument for the conversion was the second-class status of non-Muslims in the Ottoman world. Christians (and Jews) were tolerated as 'people of the book,' but they faced discrimination and ill-treatment on the grounds of their religion."[131]

Contrary to popular belief, however, Mazower states that in the Ottoman territories in Europe, most of the population remained Christian. Muslim converts were mainly to be found in the cities, while many peasants in rural areas remained Christian. Mazower argues that one reason for this is that the Ottoman rulers did not aim at islamicizing the entirety of Ottoman Europe–after all, Mazower recollects, "Christians paid higher taxes and mass conversion would have impoverished the empire."[132] It is important to note that these differences in religion were not as clearly articulated in the daily lives of the Balkan inhabitants. Besides Jews who had been living in the Balkan since antic times, notably in what is now North Macedonia, in the 15th century, the Ottoman Sultan Bayezid II also welcomed the Sephardic Jews that had been expelled from the Iberian peninsula and Italy in an attempt to repopulate bigger cities.[133] In fact, the "blurring of the divide" between Christianity, Islam and Judaism in the Balkans made for a great cradle for an Albanian strain of the Bektashis, adherents of Islamic mysticism.[134]

During communism in both Albania and the SFR Yugoslavia, there were anti-religious policies in place.[135] In the SFRY, the three biggest religious organizations were targeted: the Roman Catholic Church, the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Islamic community. Religious printing presses, Islamic Sharia courts and private educational institutions, and many Church-owned properties were respectively

---

[127] "World Religion: National/Regional Profiles," The Association of Religion Data Archives, accessed December 19, 2023, https://www.thearda.com/world-religion/national-profiles?u=23r.; Important to note is that censuses in the Balkans, but notably in Albania and Kosovo, tend to be unreliable.

[128] Ira M. Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 810; See footnote 12.

[129] Ger Duijzings, "De Balkan," in *In het huis van de islam*, ed. Henk Driessen (Nijmegen: SUN, 1997), 61-62.

[130] Mark Mazower, *The Balkans: From the End of Byzantium to the Present Day* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2001), 32.

[131] Mazower, *The Balkans*, 57.

[132] Ibid., 58.

[133] Ibid., 38.

[134] Ibid., *The Balkans*, 72.

[135] Sabrina P. Ramet, *East Central Europe and Communism: Politics, Culture, and Society, 1943-1991* (New York: Routledge, 2023), 231.

shut down and confiscated.[136] Concerning Albania, as written by American political scientist Sabrina P. Ramet, "Enver Hoxha may well have been the cruelest communist dictator of East Central Europe."[137] All religious groups were treated harshly: land was confiscated from the Sunnis, Bektashis, Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholics, and many of their religious and educational institutions were shut down–but especially the clergy of the Catholic Church were disadvantaged.[138] While policies directed towards the religious in the SFRY were liberalized over the course of the years, this was not the case for Albanian policies, with which Hoxha took a more Stalinist-style route, going as far as declaring Albania as the "world's only officially atheist state" between 1967 and 1990.[139]

As a logical consequence, after communism in both Albania and the SFRY, religious landscapes have changed. While in Albania, Orthodox Christian, American-Evangelical and Roman Catholic Churches are growing, Islamic institutions suffer great losses.[140] Albanian-Czech historian Isa Blumi writes that during Hoxha's reign, "knowledge about the practice of Islam was all but lost as the country's religious leaders were murdered or imprisoned by the regime."[141] Moreover, as Islamophobia has become a global phenomenon, hostility towards Islamic institutions in Albania is increasing, as well as the sentiment that Islam in Albania is a mere product of foreign invasion.[142] In Kosovo, a larger number of persons identifies as Muslim (according to a 2020 report, over 90%, against a Christian minority of around 6%), but it is important to note that according to Ramet, "statistics on religious affiliation [in Albania and Kosovo] are seriously unreliable."[143]

In Croatia, after the disintegration of the SFRY, the Catholic Church became firmly connected to the political regime.[144] As a consequence, the Croatian state system privileges the Catholic Church while discriminating against some other religious communities.[145] Different from Croatia, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, it is easier to observe religious diversity: Roman Catholic churches, Serbian Orthodox churches and mosques alternate in the landscape. Political scientist Janine Natalya Clark argues that

---

[136] Ibid., 235-6.

[137] Ibid., 284.

[138] Ibid., 292.

[139] Isa Blumi, "Religion and Politics among Albanians of Southeastern Europe," in *Religion and Politics in Post-Socialist Central and Southeastern Europe: Challenges since 1989*, ed. Sabrina P. Ramet (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 305.

[140] Ibid., 304.

[141] Ibid., 305.

[142] Ibid.

[143] Sabrina P. Ramet, "Religious Organizations in Post-Communist Central and Southeastern Europe," in *Religion and Politics in Post-Socialist Central and Southeastern Europe: Challenges since 1989*, ed. Sabrina P. Ramet (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 2.

[144] Siniša Zrinščak et al., "Church and State in Croatia: Legal Framework, Religious Instruction, and Social Expectations, in *Religion and Politics in Post-Socialist Central and Southeastern Europe: Challenges since 1989*, ed. Sabrina P. Ramet (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 150.

[145] Zrinščak et al., "Church and State in Croatia," 151.

"religion, in other words, is a fundamental and integral part of the Bosnian landscape."[146] In Serbia, also a multiethnic and multireligious society, "with minorities adding up to one-third of the population," seven historical religious communities are acknowledged: the Serbian Orthodox Church, the Roman Catholic Church, the Slovak Evangelical Church, the Reformed Christian Church, the Evangelical Christian Church, the Islamic community and the Jewish community.[147] While according to the constitution, Serbia is officially a secular state, it is particularly the Serbian Orthodox Church that in practice has close ties to the state: "state officials make efforts to express their respects toward the Church by their presence at religious events and meetings … where they exchange opinions on different issues, including those which do not lie within the Church's domain (at least not in a secular state)."[148]

In a 2012 polling, what nowadays is North Macedonia is reported as being "among the most religious countries in the world, with 90% of the population declaring themselves 'religious persons' with only 1% stating that they were 'atheists.'"[149] In this context, approximately two-thirds of the population identifies as Orthodox Christian with approximately one-third identifying as Muslim.[150] In Montenegro, around 79% identifies as Christian (overwhelmingly Orthodox Christian), with a Muslim minority of approximately 17%.[151]

2.3 Race

First, speaking of race in this context does not indicate the absolute existence of "race" in a biological sense, but frames race as a socially constructed notion. Race in this sense can be understood as a social practice, or as Brubaker lists them non-exhaustively, "racial idioms, ideologies, narratives, categories, and systems of classification, and racialized ways of seeing, thinking, talking, and framing claims."[152] Hall, similarly, refers to race as a "cultural and historical, not biological, fact" and more specifically calls it "a discursive construct."[153] Such a discursive construct can have a massive power and, as Brubaker's criticism goes, can create the idea that the world is truly made up of "different races," with each their own fundamentally fixed characteristics. The effect of such a discursive construct can then create real-life consequences, especially when they are embedded in institutions that are in power.[154]

---

[146] Janine Natalya Clark, "The Cross, the Crescent, and the War in Bosnia: The Legacy of Religious Involvement," in *Religion and Politics in Post-Socialist Central and Southeastern Europe: Challenges since 1989*, ed. Sabrina P. Ramet (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 171.

[147] Radmila Radić and Milan Vukomanović, "Religion and Democracy in Serbia since 1989: The Case of the Serbian Church," in *Religion and Politics in Post-Socialist Central and Southeastern Europe: Challenges since 1989*, ed. Sabrina P. Ramet (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 195.

[148] Radić and Vukomanović, "Religion and Democracy in Serbia since 1989," 192.

[149] Aleksander Zdravkovski and Kenneth Morrison, "The Orthodox Churches of Macedonia and Montenegro: The Quest for Autocephaly," in *Religion and Politics in Post-Socialist Central and Southeastern Europe: Challenges since 1989*, ed. Sabrina P. Ramet (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 241.

[150] The Association of Religion Data Archives, "World Religion."

[151] Ibid.

[152] Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups*, 11.

[153] Hall, *The Fateful Triangle*, 32.

[154] Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups*, 11.

Brubaker adds that despite race's "overwhelming coercive power in some settings," the reality of race is not dependent on the actual "existence of 'races.'"[155]

The fact that ethnicity is more common in research on Eastern, Southeastern and post-Soviet Europe suggests that in these regions, the study of ethnicity has engulfed race, meaning that identities are defined by ethnicity rather than by race.[156] To take it further, it is argued that race is something that belongs entirely to discourses of imperialism, and as Eastern Europe is historically conceptualized as "second world," it can be excluded from it: a process of "dividing the world into zones where racism and colonial violence are 'an issue' and zones where they are not."[157] This racial exceptionalism entails that according to (some's) self-perception, the region is exempted from issues of coloniality and racism. Moreover, exceptionalism allows racist discourses to remain under the radar: the Balkan's exceptional position and "whiteness" is not necessarily explicit, but it does silently assert their "Europeanness," despite Western Europe's hesitation to recognize it so.[158] This, however, is not to say that race has never been discussed as such in the region. In 1939, the Yugoslav anthropologist Vladimir Dvorniković proposed that the region's different identities could be united by the idea of a "Dinaric race," unifying Bosniaks, Croats, Serbs and Montenegrins and excluding Albanians, Jews and Roma.[159] Race in this sense takes on biological, cultural, linguistic and religious signifiers as boundaries and thereby overcomes the flaws of the singular signifier of skin color, as Baker exemplifies by the racism experienced by Albanians in Great Britain after the racialization of "east European guest workers."[160]

Yet, scholarship on race in Southeastern Europe is not unambiguous. For instance, the scholar Dušan Bjelić criticized Todorova, author of *Imagining the Balkans,* for the "unexamined whiteness" in her work.[161] Todorova, similarly to Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek and Bulgarian-French philosopher Julia Kristeva, in her work codes "the Balkans" as being white. While Todorova recognizes and explicitly underwrites that this category is often ascribed to the Balkans to set it apart from what is considered the Orient (as explained in the aforementioned discussion on "balkanism"), Bjelić, as well as political scientist Konstantin Kilibarda, argue that this manner of speaking fails to recognize whiteness as a colonial legacy that works globally and from which the Balkans cannot be exempted.[162] The positioning of East Europeans as "white" similarly prevents some scholars from applying terms

---

[155] Ibid.

[156] Baker, *Race and the Yugoslav Region*, 10.

[157] Ibid., 10.

[158] Anikó Imre, "Whiteness in Post-Socialist Eastern Europe: The Time of the Gypsies, the End of Race," in *Postcolonial Whiteness: A Critical Reader on Race and Empire*, ed. Alfred J. López (State University of New York Press, 2005), 82.

[159] Baker, *Race and the Yugoslav Region*, 21.

[160] Ibid., 84.

[161] Ibid.,19.

[162] Ibid., 19.

such as "racialization" to them: for one, gender scholar Alyosxa Tudor argues that referring to discrimination of East Europeans as "racism" leads to an overgeneralization of the term.[163]

Besides racial exceptionalism and coding inhabitants of the Balkans as white–which go hand in hand–conflating race with ethnicity also makes for other problems. First, existing differences in skin color and physical appearance are overlooked. Roma, who besides being the largest ethnic minority in Europe (which is an estimate called into question by Slovenian political scientist Julija Sardelić) are also described as one of Europe's most visible minorities.[164] Sardelić introduces explicit examples of policy in which Roma are coded non-white and refers to cases in which Roma were even coded "black"– which in turn was reclaimed by some Balkan Roma hip hop artists.[165] In such cases, structural discrimination against Roma as both a visible minority and an (invisible) civil minority has made for an experience of marginalization that some Roma have connected to anti-blackness in the United States.[166]

Second, the habit of conflating race with ethnicity fails to take into consideration the process of racialization. In the early 20th century, stereotyping of Albanians by prominent Serb academics already started to shape into racialization. For instance, the Serb historian Vladan Đorđević in 1913 referred to Albanians as "European Indians" and "lazy savages," a narrative that was still present in 1937, when prominent Serb academician Vasa Čubrilović argued for the expulsion of Albanians altogether.[167] During the Second World War, the fascist Ustaše of the Independent State of Croatia (NDH) not only targeted Jews and Roma, but also terrorized Serbs, with the NDH's interior minister Andrija Artuković stating that the Ustaše "'had killed the black Gypsies [Roma], and all that was left was to kill the white Gypsies [Serbs],'" which can be understood as a process of racialization targeted at Serbs, not unaffected by theories of German scientific racism.[168]

Albanians and Roma were the most subjugated as internal migrants–in Yugoslav policy, but for Roma, in the case of Albania, too. Although Roma in Albania, unlike in other Eastern European countries during the Second World War, had not been persecuted or deported, Roma maintained their pre-war minority position post-war. Communist Albania's dictator Hoxha, inspired by Stalinist policy, attempted to homogenize Albania's population, yet did not treat the Roma in the same way as he did the majority.[169] Meanwhile, in Yugoslavia, racialization in the form of Islamophobia was ramped up. For one, the myth of the Battle of Kosovo in 1389, in which the Serbian Prince Lazar and the Ottoman

---

[163] Alyosxa Tudor, "Ascriptions of migration: Racism, migratism and Brexit," *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 26, no. 2 (2023): 231.

[164] Julija Sardelić, *The Fringes of Citizenship: Romani Minorities in Europe and Civic Marginalisation* (Manchester University Press, 2021), 23; 30.

[165] Baker, *Race and the Yugoslav Region,* 48.

[166] Baker, *Race and the Yugoslav Region,* 45.

[167] Ibid., 63; 64.

[168] Ibid., 69.

[169] Maria Koinova, *Minorities in Southeast Europe: Roma of Albania,* (Greece: Center for Documentation and Information on Minorities in Europe - Southeast Europe, 2000), 5-6.

Sultan Murad fought on the Kosovo field, had already been promoted to a key place in Serbian national mythology, emphasizing particularly the heroism of Prince Lazar and his knights and their claim to Kosovo. During the German occupation of Serbia in the Second World War, the Serb collaborationist army general Milan Nedić promoted the central figures of the story Prince Lazar and Miloš Obilić as "ideal representatives of the race"–them representing white, Christian Serbs, opposing the perceived Muslim Others.[170] The 1389 myth permeated Slobodan Milošević' violence in Kosovo at the end of the 1990s, and narratives of (white) Christians versus (Turk) Muslims similarly dominated Serb violence against Bosniaks after the Bosnian declaration of independence in 1992. In these narratives, race (whiteness), religion (Christian, Muslim) and ethnicity (Turk) amalgamate.

Surpassing the region's self-perception, race also comes into play in external accounts of (displaced) Balkan inhabitants. In Dutch (popular-) academic work, similar to Todorova's typification, inhabitants of the Balkan are coded as white. In *De Vluchtelingenrepubliek*, a 2022 book about the history of refugees in the Netherlands, support for Yugoslav refugees in the 1990s is expounded upon: "The war and the arrival of thousands of people from the former Yugoslavia came unexpectedly to many. The Yugoslavs, unlike the Tamils [Sri Lanka] who came before them, did receive support for the most part. They were white, they came as families, there were many of them and they walked a sad trail along (rail)roads across Europe."[171] Coding Yugoslav refugees as white, albeit ignorant or benevolent, can be related to the broader way race is viewed in Dutch society. Baker even argues that the tendency of racial exceptionalism shows similarities with racial exceptionalism traceable in Dutch self-perceptions.[172] Whilst the Netherlands *was* an imperial power, colonial history is often rebranded, minimized or even omitted, as anthropologist Gloria Wekker elucidates in her 2016 book *White Innocence*: "Judging by curricula at various educational levels, from grade school to university level, it is the best-kept secret that the Netherlands has been a formidable imperial nation."[173]

2.4 Ethnicity

Hall refers to ethnicity as "a distinctive area of difference" including "shared languages, traditions, religious beliefs, cultural ideas, customs, and rituals."[174] Again, here, religion is comprehended under the ethnicity umbrella. Different from race, ethnicity has been a popular subject of interest of Southeast European studies and is made explicit. Baker argues that for Yugoslavia, "studying Yugoslavia [is]

---

[170] Sabrina P. Ramet and Sladjana Lazić, "The Collaborationist Regime of Milan Nedić," in *Serbia and the Serbs in World War Two*, eds. Sabrina P. Ramet and Ola Listhaug (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 27.

[171] "De oorlog en de komst van duizenden mensen uit het voormalige Joegoslavië kwamen voor velen onverwacht. De Joegoslaven kregen, in tegenstelling tot de Tamils die voor hen kwamen, merendeels wel steun. Ze waren wit, ze kwamen als gezinnen, het waren er veel en ze liepen in een trieste slier langs (spoor)wegen door Europa."; Marlou Schrover, "De opkomst van de asielzoeker," in *De vluchtelingenrepubliek: een migratiegeschiedenis van Nederland*, eds. David de Boer and Geert Janssen (Amsterdam: Prometheus, 2023), 222.

[172] Baker, *Race and the Yugoslav Region,* 11.

[173] Wekker, *Witte onschuld*, 13.

[174] Hall, *The Fateful Triangle*, 83.

synonymous with studying ethnicity and nationalism even before the wars began."[175] However, as explained before in the conflation of race and ethnicity, the categories are often conceptualized as similar. Wekker, for instance, views the categories of race and ethnicity as two sides of the same coin, "subsuming and merging a more natural, biological understanding of race with a more cultural view."[176] Hall, however, emphasizes that particularly the historical specificities and the temporalities of race on the one hand and ethnicity on the other are very different from each other, and thus are deserving of being discussed not only in their relation to each other, but also separately.

After the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Prussian Kingdom and the Ottoman Empire, the great powers founded the League of Nations at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. With the so-called "Committee on New States and for the Protection of Minorities," the League set out to establish a standard of treatment for minorities and to fix the "post-1919 boundaries of Central and Eastern Europe."[177] The Committee soon found out that creating homogenous states was nearly impossible, so certain ethnic groups became minorities in bigger states rather than obtaining independent statehood. These minorities were, however, granted "civil and political equality and a minimal amount of cultural protection," anticipating that this would prevent people belonging to minorities from acting on "their own separate nationalist aspirations."[178] Furthermore, the Committee granted special rights to especially vulnerable minority groups, such as Muslims in Yugoslavia (what then was still named the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes) and Albania:

> The Yugoslav state had to ensure the protection of mosques, cemeteries, and other Muslim establishments and to give full recognition to Muslim pious foundations (*Wakfs*) … The Yugoslav state even agreed to ensure the nomination of a *Reis-Ul-Ulema* or chief of the learned men who ran the mosques and the Muslim legal system … Articles II and V of the Albanian declaration also made special provisions for Muslims in matters of family law and religious and educational institutions. In addition, … it is stipulated that the electoral system give due consideration to Muslim communities.[179]

Here, Muslims are grouped together as a distinctive religious minority. The other minority groups *were* inspired by ethnicity, however, for instance, the Ruthenians in Czechoslovakia, and the Vlachs in

---

[175] Baker, *Race and the Yugoslav Region,* 4.

[176] Wekker, *Witte onschuld*, 24.

[177] Jennifer Jackson Preece, "The League of Nations Systems of Minority Guarantees (1919-1939)," in *National Minorities and the European Nation-States System*, ed. Jennifer Jackson Preece (Oxford University Press, 1998), 67-68.

[178] Preece, "The League of Nations Systems of Minority Guarantees," 68.

[179] Ibid., 76; 78.

Greece.[180] Due to the aforementioned conversion of many South Slavs to Islam, "a new Muslim South Slav ethno-religious identity" was created, making the "Muslims" not only a religious minority, but imparting an ethnic component to it. This "Bosnian Muslim" identity then became comparable to the other ethno-religious-national identities within Yugoslavia, such as the Orthodox Serbs and the Catholic Croats. Furthermore, in 1971 under the SFRY'S leadership of Josip Broz Tito, Muslim ethnicity was institutionalized by "including it as a census 'nation' (nacija)."[181] Besides the constitutionally recognized ethnic groups of the Croats, Montenegrins, Macedonians, Serbs, Slovenes and Slav Muslims (Bosniaks), minority groups were Albanians, Hungarians, Roma and Turks. In Albania, main minority groups are Greeks, Macedonians and Roma.

When the SFRY started to disintegrate in the 1990s, starting with Slovenia, Croatia and Macedonia in 1991, Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1992, war broke out between the proclaimers of independence and the remaining Yugoslav state and forces. Around 1997, war also broke out in the then Yugoslav province of Kosovo, between the KLA aiming at independence and the regime of Milošević. The violence in the 1990s on the Balkan peninsula is often understood and remembered as "ethnic violence," which Brubaker problematizes: "The "ethnic" quality of "ethnic violence" is not intrinsic to the act itself; it emerges through after-the-fact interpretative claims. Such claims are often contested … This, in turn, can feed back into the conflict by providing a rationale for further violence."[182] Furthermore, Brubaker argues that "organizations cannot be equated with ethnic groups."[183] Combining these two of Brubaker's arguments, one can also problematize the notion of "ethnic conflict" altogether. The 1998-1999 Kosovo war is often described as an ethnic conflict, with "ethnic Albanians" on the one side and "ethnic Serbs" on the other, and all violence is thereby necessarily framed as *ethnic* violence.[184] According to Brubaker, then, this should be nuanced to it being a conflict between the KLA and Milošević' regime, with a special emphasis on the political characteristic of violence and the massive imbalance of power–that is, an insurgent army versus the SFRY state army.

2.5 National identity

In this present study, the proposal is to subscribe to Hall's definition of the identity marker. Hall argues that national identities "are not attributes we are born with, but are formed and transformed within discourses and other systems of representation."[185] National identity, then, has a discursive nature, similar to race and ethnicity. Similar to Brubaker, who argues against the use of "nation" as a substantial

---

[180] Ibid.

[181] Baker, *Race and the Yugoslav Region,* 59.

[182] Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups,* 111.

[183] Ibid., 15.

[184] Necessary to mention is that "Serbs" as a group are less often described in terms of being "ethnic Serbs," while the addition of "ethnic" is seemingly necessary when writing about "Albanians." A possible explanation for this might be the imagined "nativity" of Serbs to Kosovo, while Albanians are spoken of in terms of "ethnic Albanians *coming* from Albania, to Kosovo."

[185] Hall, *The Fateful Triangle*, 137.

actor–"my argument is that we should focus on nation as a category of practice, nationhood as an institutionalized cultural and political form, and nationness as a contingent event or happening, and refrain from using the analytically dubious notion of "nations" as substantial, enduring collectivities"[186]–Hall argues that the "nation" in national identity is necessarily symbolic.[187] Here, Hall references American historian Benedict Anderson, who "has argued that a national identity is an 'imagined community.'"[188] National identity then is a part of the constructive process of collective identities, of the "narrative of [the] nation."[189]

Polish-American political scientist Janusz Bugajski writes that "ethno-national identity is prominent among majority and minority populations in the states that emerged from Yugoslavia and has not been superseded by a pan-European identity among the new European Union (EU) members."[190] According to Bugajski, "ethno-national" identity is central to, for instance, the divide of Bosnia and Herzegovina: "One of the primary goals of Dayton was to give the three nations a stake in remaining in a single country through a protective veto over decision-making."[191] Here, the three "nations" represent the largest "ethnic groups": Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs.[192] Bugajski argues that there is an "absence of a Bosnian political elite that transcends national divisions" and that "no common pan-Bosnian identity has emerged since the war," and as a consequence, the risk of new outbursts of political violence remains.[193] Here, Brubaker's critique of organizations attempting to act on the interest of ethnic groups comes into play: the main ethno-nationalist parties of Bosnia and Herzegovina are "treated as the sole representatives of ethnic collectivities by international actors," and thus, the ethnic groups that ethno-nationalist organizations attempt to represent are seen as the perpetrators of violence, instead of the organizations themselves.[194]

It is important to note that the idea of "nation" or a cohesive national identity does not necessarily accompany a "nation state." Rather, it is the "national aspiration of a people, *nationalism*, which fixes national identity to a physical place and a socially constructed space."[195] Brubaker argues that the notion of "nationness" predominates, and as such, has marginalized possible alternative, "non-nationalist" (political) languages.[196] As a consequence, "essentialist, demonizing characterizations of

---

[186] Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), 21.
[187] Hall, *The Fateful Triangle*, 137.
[188] Ibid., 137-8.
[189] Ibid., 138.
[190] Janusz Bugajski, "Ethnic Politics in Post-Socialist Southeastern Europe," in *Ethnic Minorities and Politics in Post-Socialist Southeastern Europe*, eds. Sabrina P. Ramet and Marko Valenta (Cambridge University Press, 2016), 24.
[191] Bugajski, "Ethnic Politics in Post-Socialist Southeastern Europe," 25.
[192] "Bosniaks" refers to the Bosnian Muslims.
[193] Bugajski, "Ethnic Politics in Post-Socialist Southeastern Europe," 26.
[194] Bugajski, "Ethnic Politics in Post-Socialist Southeastern Europe," 25; Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups*, 16.
[195] Fiorella Larissa Erni, *Tired of Being a Refugee: Social Identification among Young Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon* (Geneva: Graduate Institute Publications, 2013), chap. 4, e-Paper.
[196] Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*, 20.

the national 'other'" have followed, "characterizations that transform Serbs into Chetniks, Croats into Ustashas, Muslims into Fundamentalists."[197] If national identity is often seen "as a person's main, fixed attribute," this means that for people of the former Yugoslavia, their "main, fixed attribute" is strongly determined by "distorted perception and cynical misrepresentation."[198]

2.6 Conclusion

As this thesis refers to the identity markers of religion, race, ethnicity and national identity to see how these function in the framing of the Western Balkans, in this chapter it has been possible to see how these markers are understood. An important note from this chapter is that these markers are interdependent, dynamic, overlapping and related to (dominant) discourses. Moreover, these identity markers are understood to be socially constructed, yet the lived consequences and impacts of these markers are taken very seriously.

The first of the four, religion, is often combined with ethnicity, subsumed under race or an inseparable part of national identity. This is particularly true in the case of the post-Yugoslav Western Balkan countries. In contrast, race has been systematically overlooked in the case of the Western Balkan countries, sometimes in attempts to grant the countries "racial exceptionalism," arguing that the region is exempted from issues of race. Importantly, following Hall, "race" here refers to a "cultural and historical, not biological, fact."[199] Particularly in post-Yugoslav scholarship, race is often conflated with ethnicity, meaning that identities are defined by ethnicity rather than by race. Ethnicity in this context should be understood as a collective identity including "shared languages, traditions, religious beliefs, cultural ideas, customs, and rituals."[200] National identity often overlaps with this definition, yet, as argued by Hall, is necessarily symbolic—concurring with Anderson, who argued that national identity should be understood as an "imagined community."

What this chapter has shown is that the four identity markers often function as instruments to imagine certain divides, for instance, imagined "racial differences" between Albanian and Serbs and the creation of different ethnoreligious "nacije" ("nations") in the SFRY. These identity markers then notably function as categories with which "Others" can be defined.

---

[197] Ibid., 20-1.
[198] Erni, *Tired of Being a Refugee*, chap. 4; Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*, 69.
[199] Hall, *The Fateful Triangle*, 32.
[200] Hall, *The Fateful Triangle*, 83.

3. Methodology

3.1 Epistemological Approach

This thesis explores how popular Dutch newspapers, between 1991 and 2023, have framed the Western Balkans through the use of the identity markers of religion, race, ethnicity and national identity in the Western Balkans. As it attempts to investigate the relation between constructive processes of reality and reality itself, this thesis employs an explicitly social constructivist approach.[201] The social constructivist theoretical background is also decidedly a realist approach: it does not negate that there is a real world, yet does understand the *social* world (as differentiated from the *natural* world) to be socially constructed.[202] Our knowledge and the way our knowledge takes form is dependent on social conditions, and as such, the narratives brought to us by newspapers matter, as they add to the way we construct the world.[203] Ideologies, which come into play when taking a critical discourse analytical approach, can be defined as "meaning in the service of power" and as such can be harnessed in these social conditions.[204] Linguist Norman Fairclough, who has contributed greatly to the methodological development of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), argues that discourse necessarily functions ideologically–after all, it generates a one-sided perspective on how to do things and how to think about things.[205]

Discourse thus refers to a construction of things rather than a mere reflection or representation of things.[206] Discourse *Analysis* (DA) then attempts to investigate the ways language constructs and works with social realities–the effects of choice of words and ways of expressing certain things are the focal point.[207] Moreover, it is not only what is constructed that is of interest. What is not said or made explicit, what is taken for granted, is equally relevant for discourse analysts. In this thesis, a socio-political direction within discourse analysis is taken, namely Critical Discourse Analysis. In Fairclough's words, CDA mainly focuses on "the effect of power relations and inequalities in producing social wrongs, and in particular on discursive aspects of power relations and inequalities: on dialectical relations between discourse and power, and their effects on other relations within the social process and their elements.[208] Linguist Teun van Dijk, who together with linguists Ruth Wodak and Fairclough have contributed greatly to the development of CDA, argues that it is necessary for critical discourse analysts to "take an explicit sociopolitical stance."[209] Fairclough similarly states that "critique brings a normative

---

[201] Uwe Flick, *An Introduction to Qualitative Research: 6th Edition* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publishing, 2019), 36.

[202] Norman Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language* (Harlow: Routledge, 2010), 5.

[203] Jeppe Sinding Jensen, "Epistemology," in *The Routledge Handbook of Research Methods in the Study of Religion*, eds. Michael Strausberg and Steven Engler (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011), 42.

[204] Hjelm, "Discourse analysis," 141.

[205] Ibid., 141.

[206] Ibid., 135.

[207] Flick, *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*, 501.

[208] Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis*, 10.

[209] Teun van Dijk, "Principles of critical discourse analysis," *Discourse and Society* 4, no. 2 (1993): 252.

element into analysis": in order to delineate what is "wrong" (for instance, incorrectly represented) in society and how these "wrongs" might be rectified, a particular normative stance has to be taken.[210] Considerations on what is "wrong" and what is "right" are then grounded in "values, in particular views of the 'good society' and of human well-being and flourishing."[211] Fairclough does, however, acknowledge that nuance is necessary here, as "people have very different ideas of justice, freedom and need, and critical social research is necessarily involved in debates over the meaning of these and other value-related concepts."[212]

The most important point, according to Fairclough, is that critique "assesses what exists, what might exist and what should exist on the basis of a coherent set of values," which might be "a matter of highlighting gaps between what particular societies claim to be ('fair', 'democratic', 'caring' etc.) and what they are."[213] By doing so, it is argued that critical discourse analysts explicitly "reject a neutral, objective, stance in research."[214]

3.2 Methodology

Fairclough has developed a three-dimensional framework of CDA: texts, discourse practice and sociocultural practice. CDA aims to establish connections between properties of these three elements and proposes that each discursive event, that is, an instance in which language is used, includes all three.[215] Here, text refers to text in either spoken or written language; discourse practice refers to text production, text consumption, text interpretation and text distribution; sociocultural practice refers to the sociocultural function and use of language. Within CDA, social practice explicitly focuses on political elements, such as power relations, often propagated by organizations or institutions.[216] In order to make the inclusion of the sociocultural practice visible–after all, it is the main element that Richardson argues differentiates CDA from "regular" DA and makes it "critical"–Richardson cites education scholar Allan Luke, who in 2002 argued that "what texts 'do' in the world cannot be explained solely through text analysis or text analytic language."[217] This is to say that in order to find out "what texts do," one has to take into consideration sociocultural practices. Furthermore, the three dimensions interrelate, as Fairclough explains: "The connection between text and social practice is seen as being mediated by discourse practice: on the one hand, processes of text production and interpretation are

---

[210] Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis*, 7.
[211] Ibid.
[212] Ibid.
[213] Ibid.
[214] Dianna R. Mullet, "A General Discourse Analysis Framework for Educational Research," *Journal of Advanced Academics* 29, no. 2 (2018): 120.
[215] Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis*, 88-9; 94.
[216] Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis*, 94.
[217] Richardson, *Analysing Newspapers*, 43.

shaped by (and help shape) the nature of the social practice, and on the other hand the production process shapes (and leaves 'traces' in) the text, and the interpretative process operates upon 'cues' in the text."[218]

Key to analysis in CDA are "a discourse's vocabulary, grammar and textual structures."[219] Van Dijk suggests there are different discourse properties that in their totality make up discourse. What discourse properties are relevant to take into consideration depends on the type of analysis that is to be carried out. As this particular thesis analyzes *written* text, certain discourse categories that do not apply to written text, such as "sound" and "conversational interaction," are irrelevant. "Graphics," which according to Van Dijk may function ideologically–for instance, the choice of whether a news article is printed on a front page or somewhere at the end of the newspaper–are not taken into consideration in this thesis, as not all of the articles here are available in their original printed version.[220] Discourse levels that will be central in this thesis are those of meaning, argumentation and rhetoric, keeping in mind that these levels overlap.

By meaning, Van Dijk emphasizes that the level of "meaning" is highly ambivalent in the way it is understood: what "meaning" *means* is often complex and vague. One of the suggested framings of "meaning" of Van Dijk is that "meaning" refers to the "kind of things language users *assign* to such expressions in processes of interpretation or understanding."[221] Practical categories that belong to the discourse level of meanings are examples, implication, paraphrasing and synonymy.[222] When "meaning" is examined in an ideological discourse analysis, Van Dijk argues that lexical analysis proves the most fruitful, suggesting that "as a practical method, substitution of one word by others immediately shows the different semantics and often the ideological 'effects' of such a substitution."[223] Related to substitution is for instance the current debate on what kind of language is considered "politically correct," which Van Dijk argues "especially shows people's positions in the relationships between dominant and dominated groups."[224]

Argumentative structures then refer to the (logical) arguments that are made in text, which may be fallacious or may be dependent on generalizations.[225] Rhetorical structures then refer to a broader category, and, according to Van Dijk, can also be understood as "figures of style."[226] Examples that are relevant to this thesis are alliterations, hyperbole, idioms, irony and metaphors. Van Dijk argues that "unlike other discourse structures, these are optional, and serve especially in persuasive contexts, and more generally to attract or manage the attention of recipients," and thereby suggests that these usually

---

[218] Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis*, 94.

[219] Chelsea Reynolds, "Building Theory from Media Ideology: Coding for Power in Journalistic Discourse," *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 43, no. 1 (2019): 50.

[220] Teun van Dijk, *Ideology: A Multidisciplinary Approach* (London: SAGE Publications, 1998), 201.

[221] Van Dijk, *Ideology*, 204-5.

[222] Veliu, #Balkanization, 57.

[223] Van Dijk, *Ideology*, 205.

[224] Ibid.

[225] Veliu, #Balkanization, 57.

[226] Van Dijk, *Ideology*, 208.

are studied as a way to emphasize certain meanings.[227] It is important to note that due to constraints regarding time and word count, not all discourse levels that are applicable to text analysis are taken into consideration in this present study. Sentence syntax, for instance, is not analyzed in this thesis. Instead, it focuses particularly on figures of style and lexical selection.

3.3 (Mass) Media, Text Production and News Media in the Netherlands

The discourse analysis in this thesis relies on the journalistic endeavors of five major newspapers in the Netherlands: *De Telegraaf*, *Algemeen Nieuwsblad* (AD), *de Volkskrant*, *NRC* and *Trouw*. These five general newspapers are the biggest in terms of circulation.[228] All five are owned by two media corporations: Mediahuis owns *de Telegraaf* and *NRC*, while DPG Media owns *Algemeen Dagblad*, *de Volkskrant* and *Trouw*. Mediahuis and DPG Media, which are both Belgian-owned and, besides the Netherlands and Belgium, are active in Luxembourg, Germany and Ireland (Mediahuis) and Denmark (DPG Media). Thus, both Mediahuis and DPG Media can be described as being transnational corporations.

It is important to note that the five newspapers used in this thesis are not necessarily the main sources for news in the Netherlands.[229] The Pew Research Center, in a 2018 report, reveals that the Dutch mostly turn to NPO, NU.nl (a news website) and RTL (a commercial broadcaster) as their main news source–*De Telegraaf* and *AD* follow.[230] Political scientist Holli A. Semetko and media scholar Patti M. Valkenburg, in their 2000 article on framing analysis, write that the four biggest newspapers of the Netherlands, *AD*, *de Telegraaf*, *De Volkskrant* and *NRC* can be placed on a "continuum ranging from sensationalist" to "sober and serious," placing *the Telegraaf* near the sensationalist end, *AD* in the middle and both *De Volkskrant* and *NRC* at the sober and serious end.[231] Furthermore, Semetko and Valkenburg note that *de Telegraaf* is read by "businesspeople as well as by those with lower levels of education."[232] *AD*, according to Semetko and Valkenburg, is "aimed at a broad general audience and is

---

[227] Ibid.

[228] One newspaper with a bigger circulation than *Trouw* is *Het Financieele Dagblad* (*FD*), but as *FD* focuses specifically on business and economics rather than on news in general, *Trouw* is the fifth newspaper used in this thesis' discourse analysis.

[229] As this thesis pertains to a broad time period (1991 to 2023), the (decline in) importance of physical newspapers should be taken into consideration. While in 2018, online media are equally as important as (or even more important) than physical newspapers, this might very likely have been different in the 1990s.

[230] It is necessary to take into consideration that this report was published in 2018–since then, it is often speculated that distrust in news media has increased. However, according to a 2023 report by the Dutch Media Commissariat, the Netherlands places in the European top three regarding trust in news, with 57% of respondents "trusting the majority of news"; *Nederlandse Publieke Omroep* or Dutch Foundation for Public Broadcasting, the organization which accommodates the 'main' news broadcaster, NOS (*Nederlandse Omroep Stichting*, Dutch Broadcasting Foundation); "News Media and Political Attitudes in the Netherlands," Pew Research Center, accessed December 20, 2023, https://www.pewresearch.org/global/fact-sheet/news-media-and-political-attitudes-in-netherlands/.
"World Religion: National/Regional Profiles," The Association of Religion Data Archives, accessed December 19, 2023, https://www.thearda.com/world-religion/national-profiles?u=23r

[231] Holli A. Semetko and Patti M. Valkenburg, "Framing European Politics: A Content Analysis of Press and Television News," *Journal of Communication* 50, no. 2 (2000); 97.

[232] Ibid., 97.

much easier to read," compared to *The Volkskrant* (which they argue is akin to the United Kingdom's *The Guardian*) and *NRC* (which they label as a "very serious equivalent to *The New York Times*").[233] The aforementioned historian Van Duijnen makes a similar observation, characterizing *AD* as a "popular newspaper," and adds to this that the newspaper's audience "consists of a fairly accurate cross section of the population, both in education and social class."[234] Moreover, Van Duijnen suggests that *NRC* is "commonly described as a liberal newspaper" and, that "it's usually seen as a *kwaliteitskrant* (a newspaper part of the 'quality press'), which, bluntly put, holds that *NRC* is said to favour '(political) information' over 'amusement.'"[235] Similar to *NRC*, *de Volkskrant* and *Trouw* are usually considered "kwaliteitskranten" as well. Whereas Semetko and Valkenburg did not consider *Trouw* for their newspaper analysis, besides it being a "kwaliteitskrant," Van Duijnen further characterizes *Trouw* as having "a religious touch because of its orthodox protestant roots."[236] Up until today, the newspaper still secures a section for news pertaining to religion and philosophy.

Fairclough links the emergence of large transnational corporations, which Mediahuis and DPG Media are, to the global political economy by arguing that the role of news corporations functions in two ways. On the one hand, they provide infrastructure for news by printing credible newspapers. On the other hand, they produce and distribute news and knowledge through this infrastructure, thus fulfilling the role of being the main source of views, ideas and morals.[237] Furthermore, Fairclough states that by transforming into or being swallowed up by international media corporations, journalism's role as the "fourth power" is being undermined.[238] Fairclough argues that whereas journalism as the "fourth power" is expected to provide accurate information and expose and challenge (unfair) social practices, journalists also support the hegemony by having internalized ideas about who is considered an authority and which voices should be represented in their journalistic endeavors. Richardson adds to this that the links between newspapers and advertising revenue cannot be ignored–after all, "both broadcasters and newspapers 'are in the business of producing audiences. These audiences, or means of access to them, are sold to advertisers.'"[239]

The fact that the Netherlands' five biggest newspapers subject to this thesis' Critical Discourse Analysis are owned by two transnational news corporations, Mediahuis and DPG Media, supports the assumption that the newspapers in question could play a substantive role in creating and perpetuating

---

[233] Ibid., 97.

[234] Michel van Duijnen, "'The Stepchildren of the Balkans': How nationalism affected the Dutch press coverage of Kosovo and Macedonia during the break-up of Yugoslavia," *Jonge Historici Schrijven Geschiedenis* 35, no.1 (2012): 75.

[235] Ibid., 74-5.

[236] Ibid., 75.

[237] Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis*, 468-9.

[238] Ibid., 469; Journalism as the "fourth power" refers to an added branch to the separation of powers by governments, also referred to as the "'trias politica": a legislative branch, an executive branch and a judiciary branch. Journalism is often called the fourth branch for its capacity to frame political events in such a way that it can be understood as advocacy or lobbying.

[239] Richardson, *Analysing Newspapers*, 79.

certain narratives and discourses.[240] Certain discourses can then be fuelled further by commercial habits such as the production of clickbait to up reader interaction, which is not only the case for solely online media, but also for the online departments of newspapers. While this thesis departs from the assumption that unnuanced journalism is not necessarily inherently and purposefully malicious, it does take into consideration that it *may* contribute to possible harmful discourse creation and distribution, which then can contribute to the distribution of factually incorrect and/or stereotypical narratives. Hjelm argues that while it is not necessary for an actor to lie, they could be telling a truth that is (consciously or not) selective of what belongs in their representation of reality, according to what might serve their interests, as no representation can ever convey the whole truth.[241] Thus, news media *may* be useful in furthering understanding and support, but can just as well fuel ignorance and discrimination by distributing (incorrect or stereotypical) external identifications of persons. As referred to earlier, some perspectives or voices can be privileged through media outlets, while other perspectives and views can be left out.[242]

3.4 Operationalization

This thesis employs a Critical Discourse Analysis, epistemologically grounded in social constructivism. A total of 73 newspaper articles (both in digital and printed form) from *De Telegraaf*, *Algemeen Dagblad*, *de Volkskrant*, *NRC* and *Trouw* are examined in both a deductive and an inductive manner.[243] As CDA reasons from the understanding that all human beings have undergone socialization by existing discourses, departing from a deductive manner is often considered more compatible with CDA than taking a purely inductive route.[244] However, while the content-related theoretical framework sets the backdrop for an a priori coding (the deductive approach), an inductive approach is also taken in this study: in this approach, the texts themselves lend for added codes, allowing for "patterns to emerge organically from the data."[245] The content-related theoretical framework of this thesis is described in Chapters 1 and 2, in which currents of thinking about the Western Balkans (both internal and external) and the categories of religion, race, ethnicity and national identity are explored. These categories are then considered a priori coding. The first-level (descriptive) codes can be found in Appendix 2.

---

[240] See footnote 19 of this chapter.

[241] Hjelm, "Discourse analysis," 135.

[242] Darrin Hodgetts and Kerry Chamberlain, "Analysing News Media," in *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis*, ed. Uwe Flick (London: SAGE Publishing, 2014), 2.

[243] The criteria that were used for the selection of these 73 articles will be explained later in this subchapter.

[244] Claire Willey-Sthapit et al., "Discursive decisions: Signposts to guide the use of critical discourse analysis in social work," *Qualitative Social Work* 21, no. 1 (2022): 140.

[245] Albine Moser and Irene Korstjens, "Series: Practical guidance to qualitative research. Part 3: Sampling, data collection and analysis," *European Journal of General Practice* 24, no. 1 (2018): 17; Willey-Sthapit et al., "Discursive decisions," 140.

3.4.1 Articles' Genres

This research takes into consideration not only articles that are rightfully considered "news" by news outlets, but examines columns and editorials as well. Columns and editorials, differentiated by the single-authored nature of columns versus editorials (that is to say, the views expressed in editorials often represent the views of the newspaper as a whole), often do not qualify as "objective reporting."[246] Yet, as explained by Richardson, "objective" reporting should not be confused with "neutral" reporting.[247] This thesis does not consider any journalistic endeavor properly "neutral." In the words of Richardson, "value judgements are built into the process of news making at all stages of the production process, through newsgathering, news writing, story selection, editing and presentation – all, of course, decided against a social and economic backdrop which values richer audiences more than poor ones."[248] This being said, this thesis does consider objective reporting possible as an *aim* rather than an outcome. For objective reporting, it is necessary for the journalist to distance themselves from the truth claims of the report, the truth claims being what is considered "true" based on facts, *or* based on what is experienced by someone else than the journalist themselves. This does not mean that value judgements can be excluded completely, but it does require that the "fact and opinion" in the article are those of other people than of the journalist.[249] However, even news articles that *overall* can be read as objective, may still include some form of opinion, or argumentative and/or rhetorical devices that may indicate some attempt at persuasion (see subsection 3.3). This thesis attempts to problematize the hard divide between "news" and "opinion", and the overlap will be demonstrated in this thesis' CDA.

As articulated by Richardson before, it remains important to note that all journalistic endeavors are necessarily a collective process which involves not only journalists, but producers and editorial staff and technical staff as well. This makes most media discourses highly embedded and layered, as in every stage of the journalistic process, earlier versions are changed and recontextualized.[250] Plus, a lot of written news has already come from a prior source—for instance, by news agencies such as the American Associated Press (AP), the Agence France-Presse (AFP), Reuters in the United Kingdom and the Algemeen Nederlands Persbureau (ANP) in the Netherlands.[251]

This thesis argues that both columns and editorials *and* proper news articles are subjective in nature, objective reporting as an aim is still possible–however, in working towards this aim, the main focus should be to limit negative consequences of news production and redistribution. As this thesis considers newspapers as whole entities rather than just collections of gathered articles and argues that the editorial staff too holds a responsibility to limit negative impacts of their journalistic work, no genre of articles is excluded from this thesis' CDA. The genres of the articles that are analyzed in this thesis

---

[246] Richardson, *Analysing Newspapers*, 86.
[247] Ibid.
[248] Ibid.
[249] Ibid.
[250] Norman Fairclough, *Media Discourse* (London: Hodder Headline Group, 1995), 48.
[251] Press agency of the Netherlands.

are included and identified in Appendix 1, according to the placement of the articles within the newspaper's subsections (for instance, an article placed in the "Opinion" subsection of a newspaper will be coded as "opinion" in Appendix 1, whereas an article in the "Foreign news" subsection will be coded as "news").

3.4.2 Data Collection and Selection Criteria

This thesis employs a purposive sampling strategy. Purposive sampling refers to a selection of units (pieces of data) "based on the researcher's judgement" about what potential units will be most informative.[252] The aim of a purposive sampling strategy is thus not to make generalizations or be representative–this would have been the case if a non-probability sampling strategy, which often fits better for quantitative research, had been chosen. Instead, purposive sampling focuses on units that are of interest in order to answer the research question: How do discourses on religion, race, ethnicity and national identity function in the framing of the Western Balkans by Dutch newspapers between 1991 and 2023? Specifically, this study employs a "typical case sampling technique." According to this technique, the focus is on identifying units or cases that are considered "typical." "Typical" here is not equivalent to them being "representative," nor does it mean that it can be used as a generalization, but it might mean that the sampled cases *could* be illustrative of other similar samples.

The data collection of this thesis makes use of NexisUni, LexisNexis' database which contains all five Dutch newspapers under scrutiny in this thesis.[253] As all five newspapers have their own ideological background and parameters, and so to prevent overrepresentation of one particular ideological current, a total of fifteen articles per newspaper are chosen (see subsection 3.3 for the newspapers' backgrounds). There are, however, some remarks that need to be made regarding this. One of the newspapers, *de Telegraaf*, is only available on LexisNexis starting in 1999. In order to include articles of approximately every year, the search for articles was divided in three sections: a first time period (1999 to 1999), a second (2000 to 2013) and a third (2014 to July, 2023). By doing so, an overrepresentation of one particular year (and, perhaps one particular event in the Western Balkans) is prevented. Moreover, LexisNexis shows the most relevant search results first, meaning that articles that feature the words in the search chain the most are most likely to come up first. Thus, in this thesis, results that "fit" most with the search entries have been more likely to be chosen.

As a part of the purposive sampling strategy employed in this thesis, a set of criteria is used to determine which units are suitable for the study. The criteria, which are set out by the author of this thesis and are used in the collection of the articles via NexisUni, are as follows:

---

[252] Moser and Korstjens, "Part 3: Sampling, data collection and analysis," 10.
[253] LexisNexis is an online database that offers access to most major and many minor newspapers and magazines. Particularly newspaper articles that are older than a decade are often hard to find in the online databases of newspapers, which is why LexisNexis is a valuable resource.

1. The article fits in the time frame (1991-2023);
2. The article is published in one of the five newspapers under scrutiny (*De Telegraaf*, *AD*, *de Volkskrant*, *NRC* or *Trouw*);
3. The article mentions at least one of the following: Albanië, Bosnië, Kroatië, Kosovo, Montenegro, Macedonië, Servië or Westelijke Balkan[254];
4. The article mentions at least one of the following: religie/religieus/geloof/gelovig, ras/raciaal/racisme, etniciteit/etnisch or nationale identiteit[255];
5. The article has one of the countries listed in criterion 3 as the (one of the) main subject(s)–that is to say, it is not mentioned incidentally.

These criteria rule out some articles by definition, while there are some unclear cases as well. To give an example, on January 23 in 1999, *De Telegraaf* published an article called "The world today: barbarian violence demands measures."[256] The article undoubtedly meets criteria 1, 2 and 3 ("Kosovo" is mentioned, although only once). However, in the article, the words "believe" and "belief" are mentioned, except they are used to say "I believe" ("I believe the time has come") and "the belief in'"("Hence the belief in universal human rights").[257] The article technically meets criteria 1 to 4, but it does not meet criterion 5 in that the semantics of the article do not actually align with the semantics of the criteria. However, even when articles do fully honor the above criteria, it does not leave a neat fifteen articles per newspaper. Here, the aforementioned purposive sampling was employed. The final 73 newspaper articles are selected for the sake of manageability in terms of length and limitations of this thesis.

3.4.3 Coding

American communication scholar Chelsea Reynolds has argued that journalism researchers can combine different coding methods to apply in CDA research.[258] A "code" here refers to "most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data."[259] It is important to note that coding is "*one* way of analyzing qualitative data, not *the* way," and thus, for this thesis, coding will only be used to generate

---

[254] Albania, Bosnia, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Macedonia, Serbia or the Western Balkans; Here, "Macedonia" and "Bosnia" are used instead of their correct or full names as in this way, incorrect or partial uses will also be included.

[255] Religion/religious/belief/believe, race/racial/racism, ethnicity/ethnic or national identity.

[256] G. B. J. Hiltermann, "De wereld vandaag: barbaars geweld eist maatregelen," *De Telegraaf*, January 23, 1999.

[257] "Ik geloof dat het tijdstip gekomen is"; "Vandaar het geloof in universele rechten van de mens"; Hiltermann, "De wereld vandaag."

[258] Reynolds, "Building Theory from Media Ideology," 51.

[259] Johnny Saldaña. *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers* (London: Sage, 2016), 4.

an overall view of the data.[260] In line with Reynolds' recommendation of combining coding methods, this thesis will equip attribute coding, simultaneous coding and descriptive coding.

The first coding method, attribute coding can also be described as "precoding," as "descriptive attributes of the data are systematically noted in the codesheet."[261] For this thesis, attribute coding includes the publication title, the publication date, the headline of the article and the name and occupation of the author.[262] The attribute coding sheet can be found in Appendix 1, which simultaneously functions as a reference sheet for the articles referred to. The second coding method, simultaneous coding, refers to the occurrence of two or more codes applied to units of data. Simultaneous coding is necessary when content of data "suggests multiple meanings."[263] An example of simultaneous coding is when a textual unit can lead to a broad code ("The Balkans as a problem area") as well as a more specific code ("The Balkans are inherently self-destructive"). The third coding method, descriptive coding, can be found in Appendix 2 and refers to "identifying subjects of discourse," which can be "topics discussed, individuals referenced, sources cited, specific themes in news coverage and events described."[264]

The analyzed articles are all written in Dutch, and as this thesis is written in English, all quotes will be translated within the running text. The translations are first made by the computer program DeepL Translate and adjusted by the author of this thesis where needed–for instance, when a verbatim translation, rather than a well-written translation, is necessary. The original Dutch versions of quotes are always included in the footnote. Where there are no footnotes, the quotes' original language is English. Spelling, grammar or other mistakes in originally English quotes will be indicated by an added "[sic]" after the faulty sentence or the entire quote.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has focused on the methodology used for this thesis. First, it has established that this thesis is grounded in (realist) social constructivism, meaning that it does not negate that there is a real world with real-life processes, but it does argue that the social world is socially constructed in its entirety. In addition, it argues that our knowledge depends on social conditions, which is where newspaper narratives become relevant–after all, they can influence the way we construct the world and the way the world is constructed for us by those in power. This thesis' methodology employs a Critical Discourse Analysis, following theory by Fairclough and Van Dijk, through which the ideological functions of language are analyzed.

---

[260] Saldaña. *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*, 3.
[261] Reynolds, "Building Theory from Media Ideology," 59.
[262] Ibid.
[263] Saldaña. *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*, 297.
[264] Reynolds, "Building Theory from Media Ideology," 60.

As this thesis focuses on the five biggest newspapers of the Netherlands in terms of circulation, this chapter features the context of these five newspapers. The fact that the five newspapers are owned by two transnational corporations, Mediahuis and DPG Media, to Fairclough, is related to the diminished role of journalism as the "fourth power." This supports the idea that the newspapers have all the means to play substantive roles in the creation and the perpetuation of certain (harmful) narratives and discourses, which are the subject matter of this thesis. The 73 selected news articles are analyzed according to deductive as well as inductive approaches.

4. Critical Discourse Analysis: Results

This chapter reports on the results of the Critical Discourse Analysis that has been carried out. Subchapter 4.1 approaches framing of the Western Balkans as a whole. Important to mention is that most of the analyzed articles refer to "the Balkans" when the actual articles are about specifically *Western* Balkan countries: for instance, when the "violence of the Balkans" is discussed in the articles, it is barely ever about Bulgaria or Greece, despite them being indisputable parts of the geographical region that is the Balkans. In order to keep the subject matter clear, this chapter will refer to the Balkans when authors do, highlighting the metaphorical power that "the Balkans" holds, but will refer to the "Western Balkans" or the "Western Balkan countries" when specifically Western Balkan countries are the subject of interpretation. The second part of this chapter focuses on the different ways that the inhabitants of the Western Balkans are framed in the analyzed articles. Here, the four identity markers that were the subject of Chapter 2–religion, race, ethnicity and national identity–are discussed in regard to the results.

4.1 The "Other" Within Europe

4.1.1 The Western Balkans and Europe

As was alluded to in the introduction of this thesis, the localization of the Balkans differs, depending on who is asked. Sometimes the Balkans are localized within Europe, while other times they are excluded from it. Relations between the Balkans and Europe as proposed in the analyzed articles can roughly be divided in four categories, of which the first is the Balkans as a subcategory of Europe. The most frequent (and arguably, benign) version of this is the use of "the Balkans" as a direct synonym for Southeastern Europe, as has been explained in Chapter 1. However, the Critical Discourse Analysis offers more instances of the Balkans as a subcategory of Europe.

In a 2021 *NRC* review about a new photography book on the Balkans, *Blood and Honey*, journalist Michel Krielaars designates the Balkans as "an abandoned corner of Europe."[265] Throughout the article, it remains unclear why this "corner" would be "abandoned," but, according to this statement, the Balkans *does* occupy a corner of Europe. Thereby it is an undisputed part of Europe, albeit a subcategory rather than being "just European," like the "Europeanness" of France, Germany and the Netherlands are never disputed. In a 2018 *de Telegraaf* article, Frank van Vliet also recognizes the Balkans as a part of Europe, only by using an explicitly negative designation: "But China and Russia are gaining influence there [in the Balkans], and even radical Islam is making inroads into this 'black hole' of Europe."[266] Interestingly enough, Van Vliet has put "black hole" in quotation marks,

---

[265] *Bloed en Honing* in Dutch; Michel Krielaars, "Iedereen zou dit boek over een verlaten uithoek van Europa moeten lezen," *NRC*, June 10, 2021; "een verlaten uithoek van Europa."

[266] Frank van Vliet, "Lastig feest," *De Telegraaf*, February 17, 2018; "Maar China en Rusland winnen er aan invloed en zelfs de radicale islam is aan een opmars bezig in dit 'zwarte gat' van Europa."

insinuating a distance between himself and the words–yet, instead of using a more neutral designation, such as Krielaars' "corner," Van Vliet chooses to include this reported speech in his article anyway.

A second way of positioning the Balkans is that the Balkans are "not-entirely-Europe." In a 1996 opinion article in *AD*, consultancy firm director Cornel Colceru designates the Balkans "Europe's backyard."[267] As has been noted in this thesis' introduction, this designation necessarily indicates a hierarchical relation. After all, when one writes about a backyard, there has to be a *house*. The house is the "center," while the backyard is the center's "periphery": a house is still a house if it has no backyard, while a backyard is wholly dependent on having a house to belong to. Here, Europe is the center and the Balkans the periphery: the Balkans *belong* to Europe, as the backyard necessarily belongs to the house, yet it is not fully integrated in the understanding of Europe.

In a 1994 *AD* article, journalist Els de Groen uses early 20th century history to introduce her article.[268] De Groen writes that with the Treaty of London in 1913, "Europe" decided how to divide the region the Ottomans were expelled from. However: "The only thing Europe overlooked for a moment were the populations already living in the Balkans. Macedonians and Albanians in particular, who after five hundred years of Turkish rule were now suddenly joined by Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria."[269] Here, De Groen defines "Europe" by the signatories of the Treaty, which were Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, Germany, Greece, Italy, Montenegro, Russia and Serbia. De Groen, in the article, emphasizes the unfair position of Albanians and Macedonians: "Macedonians and Albanians have in common, that they have been tricked," yet she does not assign the same "Europeanness" to them she does to the advantaged Balkan nations at that moment (the Balkan League, consisting of Bulgaria, Greece, Montenegro and Serbia).[270] Thus, not the entirety of the Balkans is Europe, yet *some* of the Balkan countries are. What counts as the "Balkans" here seems to depend on an imbalance of power: politically dominant countries "belong," while those without do not.

Third, the revised articles show another positioning of the Balkans as simply *not* Europe. One difficulty surrounding this discourse strand is that in more than one article Europe and the EU are used interchangeably. In a 2013 *NRC* article, journalist Marloes de Koning writes that with Croatia's newfound EU membership, "young Croats see opportunities: on to Europe," referring to "Europe" where she likely means "EU."[271] However, by choosing to refer to "Europe," the subjacent assumption

---

[267] Cornel Colceru, "Bosnië vraagt om offensieve aanpak; Gevaren in achtertuin van Europa nog steeds volop aanwezig," *Algemeen Dagblad*, April 16, 1996.

[268] Els de Groen, "Macedoniërs en Albanezen: de stiefkinderen van de Balkan," *AD*, January 8, 1994.

[269] "Het enige wat Europa even over het hoofd zag, waren de bevolkingsgroepen die al op de Balkan woonden. Macedoniërs en Albanezen met name, die na vijfhonderd jaren Turkse overheersing nu ineens bij Griekenland, Servië en Bulgarije werden gevoegd"; De Groen, "Macedoniërs en Albanezen."

[270] "Macedoniërs en Albanezen hebben gemeen, dat er met hen is gesold"; De Groen, "Macedoniërs en Albanezen."

[271] Marloes de Koning, "Europa's nieuwe grens gaat pijn doen," *NRC*, June 29, 2003; "Maar jonge Kroaten zien kansen: op naar Europa."

is that Croatia is not really a part of this "Europe"–after all, one cannot travel *to* Europe if he is already *in* it, so he must be in what is "*not*-Europe."

Moreover, in a 1999 interview in *De Telegraaf*, diplomat Daan Everts answers Guido van de Kreeke's question about what he sees to be a solution for the future of Kosovo: "That might be a Balkans with open borders, with more ties to Europe capable of offering future prospects."[272] Again, it is implied that the Balkans are not Europe, as developing "more ties to Europe" suggests that they are two separate entities that are yet to connect. In a 2017 opinion article in *de Volkskrant*, Clingendael Institute research fellow Jan Marinus Wiersma argues that "the young democracies orient themselves to a future within the EU" and that "the countries seem to be adapting to European value patterns."[273] These "European value patterns," for which Wiersma cites gay pride parades in Belgrade (Serbia) and Prishtina (Kosovo) as examples, however, either place the Balkans outside of Europe ("Balkan value patterns" are, due to their sheer geographic location, also European value patterns) *or* just refer to European *Union* value patterns, again interchanging Europe and the EU.

Lastly, some articles allude to the Balkans being some sort of "alternative Europe." In a 1999 news article in *AD*, journalist Carl Stellweg refers to the Balkans twice in the first paragraph:

> History repeats itself. If there is an area for which this truism holds true, it is
> the Balkans, that part of Europe that, since the disintegration of the Ottoman
> empire, just won't settle down. A Europe where emotions as destructive as
> they are incomprehensible to outsiders can dangerously darken the thinking
> of workers to academics, farmers to bank managers.[274]

In this paragraph alone, the Balkans are both a "part of Europe" and an alternative Europe "where emotions can dangerously darken the thinking" of anyone–it is recognized as Europe, but it differs from Europe in its irrational emotionality. This particular discourse strand of the Balkans as an alternative Europe not only brings into question the Europeanness of the Balkans, but also leans into orientalist and, more specifically, balkanist discourses that will be discussed later in this chapter.

---

[272] Guido van de Kreeke, "Topdiplomaat Daan Everts: Na Bosnië probeert Nederlandse OSVE-leider [sic] Kosovo weer leefbaar te maken," *De Telegraaf*, November 13, 1999; "Dat is misschien een Balkan met open grenzen, met meer binding met Europa dat in staat is toekomstperspectief te bieden."

[273] Jan Marinus Wiersma, "EU moet West-Balkan integreren," *de Volkskrant*, October 27, 2017; "De jonge democratieën oriënteren zich op een toekomst binnen de EU"; "De landen lijken zich aan te passen aan Europese waardepatronen."

[274] Carl Stellweg, "Een kruispunt van volken; Positie van Macedonië uiterst kwetsbaar," *Algemeen Dagblad*, April 22, 1999; "De geschiedenis herhaalt zich. Als er een gebied is waarvoor deze gemeenplaats opgaat, is het de Balkan, dat deel van Europa dat sinds het uiteenvallen van het Osmaanse rijk maar niet tot rust wil komen. Een Europa waar even destructieve als voor buitenstaanders onbegrijpelijke emoties het denken van arbeider tot academicus, van boer tot bankdirecteur, gevaarlijk kan verduisteren."

4.1.2 A Separate Family Tree

A prevalent metaphor for the Balkans in the analyzed news articles is that of family relations. In a 1994 *AD* article, this metaphor is referred to in the title: Macedonians and Albanians being "stepchildren." In the article, journalist Els de Groen argues that Albanians and Macedonians have one particular thing in common, namely that "they have been tricked."[275] According to De Groen, "Europe" overlooked the "populations that were already living in the Balkans," when the 1913 Treaty of London, after the fall of the Ottoman Empire, was signed.[276] Following De Groen's line of arguing, Albanians and Macedonians would be the stepchildren of the Balkans as they were already there, only to be artificially made part of the family by the new inhabitants of the region, which then becomes the region's "core family."

Elsewhere, in a 1991 *NRC* opinion article, a similar metaphor is used in the title: "Yugoslavia fights until the inheritance is divided."[277] Yugoslavia here refers to all parties that may lay a claim to (a part of) the inheritance, which in turn refers to the land that is to be divided. The metaphor of a to-be-divided inheritance suggests a family affair, as usually, inheritance is divided under different family members, such as in the aftermath of a divorce–the Dutch "boedel" can also be translated to "marital property" rather than "inheritance"–or after the death of a (senior) family member. The 1991 article's author, Peter Michielsen, later in the article describes the situation in the former Yugoslavia as "ethnic bickering," suggesting a family affair: the involved parties are bickering over an inheritance, which not only underlines the metaphor, but simultaneously trivializes proper heavy conflict by reducing it to mere "bickering."

The metaphor of the Balkans as a family affair does not stop existing after the 1990s, in which De Groen and Michielsen's articles were published. In a 2001 *Trouw* opinion article, consultancy firm director Cornel Colceru designates Macedonia "the new problem child."[278] Similarly, in a 2012 *Trouw* news article, journalist Joost van Egmond designates Serbia as the problem child: "... even problem child Serbia may hope to get candidate status soon."[279] However, in a 2018 *de Telegraaf* article, Van Vliet implies that the supposed family ties of the Balkans reach outside of the Balkans, too, as he refers to the figurative brotherhood between Serbia and Russia: "The tiny state [Kosovo] is opposed by Serbia and its big brother Russia."[280] By presenting the (Western) Balkans (and other Eastern European countries) as a mere family affair, it implies that it has less to do with Europe, as it concerns a separate

---

[275] De Groen, "Macedoniërs en Albanezen"; "Macedoniërs en Albanezen hebben gemeen, dat er met hen is gesold".

[276] "Het enige wat Europa even over het hoofd zag waren de bevolkingsgroepen die al op de Balkan woonden. Macedoniërs en Albanezen met name"; De Groen, "Macedoniërs en Albanezen."

[277] Peter Michielsen, "Joegoslavië vecht tot de boedel is verdeeld," *NRC*, September 26, 1991.

[278] Cornel Colceru, "Welvaart is sleutel voor Balkanvrede; Macedonië," *Trouw*, April 4, 2001; "In Macedonië, het nieuwe zorgenkind op de Balkan."

[279] Joost van Egmond, "Bosnië durft te dromen van EU-lidmaatschap," *Trouw*, February 13, 2012; "... zelfs probleemkind Servië mag hopen binnenkort de status van kandidaatlid te krijgen."

[280] Van Vliet, "Lastig feest"; "Het piepkleine staatje wordt tegengewerkt door Servië en zijn grote broer Rusland."

family tree with its own internal struggles. Here, a distance is created between the (non-specified) "European states" and the Western Balkans.

4.2 People of the Western Balkans as "Others"

4.2.1 A Discourse of Distrust

In the analyzed news articles, a prevailing trope is that the Western Balkan states (and alternatively, their inhabitants) are untrustworthy. In a 1992 *NRC* article, author Raymond van den Boogaard opens with the following sentence: "At the negotiating table in Geneva, the warring parties in the former Yugoslavia may make fine agreements, but the practice of every day is that the fighting between the different population groups only intensifies."[281] Van den Boogaard communicates his distrust in the situation: agreements are made, but practice shows that these mean little. The author furthermore speaks of the "political tensions and idiocy of the war in the former Yugoslavia," indicating that he holds the situation in low regard.[282] By doing so, Van den Boogaard not only indicates his distrust in the political parties that are involved, but also deems the political tensions in the region "idiotic," stripping the situation of its serious, real-life consequences on civilians and reducing it to a mere irrationality.

One less straightforward way this trope occurs in text is by the use of scare quotes, or quotation marks that signal a distance between the author and the subject under scrutiny. By using scare quotes, an author can distance themselves from a certain way of speaking, but an author can just as well use them to convey sarcasm or irony or to convey a sense of distrust and/or doubt.[283] These ways of using quotation marks should be differentiated from the use of quotation marks to refer to literal quotes or reported speech (as this chapter routinely does). In a 2001 *de Volkskrant* article, journalist Olaf Tempelman writes: "In the current situation, irrational, radical forces in Macedonia and southern Serbia threaten to corner rational, moderate forces. The source of this radicalism is in Kosovo. They are Albanian boys who have developed a taste for the armed struggle 'for Albanian rights.'"[284] The orientalist tendency in this particular sentence will be revisited later in this chapter, but what becomes clear is that Tempelman questions the intent of the "Albanian boys"–according to Tempelman, they

---

[281] Raymond van den Boogaard, "Na elk Joegoslavisch akkoord meer strijd," *NRC*, October 22, 1992; "Aan de onderhandelingstafel in Genève mogen de strijdende partijen in het voormalige Joegoslavië mooie akkoorden sluiten, de praktijk van iedere dag is dat de gevechten tussen de verschillende bevolkingsgroepen alleen maar in hevigheid toenemen."

[282] "De politieke spanningen en idiotie van de oorlog in voormalig Joegoslavië"; Van den Boogaard, "Na elk Joegoslavisch akkoord meer strijd."

[283] Stefano Pedrelli, "Scare Quotes and Their Relation to Other Semantic Issues," *Linguistics and Philosophy* 26, no. 1 (2003): 3.

[284] Olaf Tempelman, "Rebellen leggen bom onder multi-etnisch Macedonië," *de Volkskrant*, June 7, 2001; "In de huidige situatie dreigen irrationele, radicale krachten in Macedonië en Zuid-Servië rationele, gematigde krachten in het nauw te drijven. De bron van dit radicalisme ligt in Kosovo. Het zijn Albanese jongens die de smaak van de gewapende strijd 'voor de Albanese rechten' goed te pakken hebben."

merely *pretend* to aim for Albanian rights, as he complements his statement later in the paragraph: "It is only obvious what they do not want: to live a normal, peaceful life in Kosovo."[285]

In a later, 2017 opinion article in *de Volkskrant*, Clingendael Institute research fellow Jan Marinus Wiersma argues that the situation is not what it seems: "Government leaders visit each other to reconcile with a past of ethnic violence. But appearances are deceiving. Under the surface, it is still brewing - within and between countries."[286] Regardless of whether the actual government leaders were *actually* reconciling or lying to keep up appearances, Wiersma here perpetuates the idea that the Western Balkan leaders (in this case, political leaders of Kosovo and Serbia) are not to be trusted.

One particular way of describing Balkan countries employed by some of the authors of the analyzed articles is by describing them as something childlike. In a 1991 *NRC* opinion article, editor Peter Michielsen introduces his article as follows:

> Sometimes Yugoslavia is quiet for a while, the guns fall silent and hope shines
> through and nervous politicians come up with nice plans for the next phase,
> plans for multilateral consultations or peace-making or peace-monitoring
> troops or round-table conferences where a range of representatives from all
> those Yugoslav nations sit down to take a whiff of international politics.[287]

In the fragment, multiple diminutives are used.[288] The "nice plans" the "nervous politicians" have come up with are described as "little plans" ("plannetjes"), just as the "plans for multilateral consultations." While using diminutives could theoretically imply that the plans are simply *small* in size, the following phrase, "or round-table conferences where a range of representatives from all those Yugoslav nations sit down to take a whiff of international politics" seems to portray the Yugoslav nations' representatives as mere newcomers, only "taking a whiff of international politics" rather than being seriously engaged in it. While the mentioned "guns" are hardly implicative of children's activities–not taking into account instances of child soldiers–the introduction's emphasis on the littleness and inexperience of the Yugoslav nations does create a narrative of child's play.

---

[285] "Het is slechts duidelijk wat zij niet willen: in Kosovo een normaal, vreedzaam leven leiden;" Tempelman, "Rebellen leggen bom."

[286] Wiersma, "EU moet West-Balkan integreren"; "Regeringsleiders bezoeken elkaar om zich te verzoenen met een verleden van etnisch geweld. Maar schijn bedriegt. Onder de oppervlakte broeit het nog steeds - binnen en tussen landen."

[287] Michielsen, "Joegoslavië vecht"; "Soms is het even rustig in Joegoslavië en zwijgen de wapens en gloort er hoop en worden er door nerveuze politici weer mooie plannetjes op tafel gelegd voor een volgende fase, plannetjes voor multilateraal overleg of vredebrengende dan wel vredebewakende troepen of rondetafelconferenties waar ritsen vertegenwoordigers van al die Joegoslavische naties aanschuiven om even aan de internationale politiek te ruiken."

[288] As the English language does not have diminutives, the choice was made to keep the nouns as is, adding that they were in fact diminutives in Dutch as the text goes.

Elsewhere, diminutives are used in a similar manner. The same author, in a 2001 *NRC* article, writes about the Yugoslav wars commencing in Slovenia in 1991, only to describe the war in Slovenia as a "Mickey Mouse-war"–likely referring to the briefness of the war, which took ten days, yet reinforcing the aforementioned child's play narrative.[289] Mickey Mouse, an animation figure aimed at children, has no business being related to war, even if it is a *short* war. Michielsen does not literally trivialize Yugoslav wars by stating that the wars amount to little, but by continuously referring to them as "little wars" ("oorlogjes") and using metaphors that are suggestive of children's interests, the implication seems to be that the Western Balkan nations in question are somehow not fully grown.

4.2.2 Religion: A Discourse of Distrust

Religion is mostly lumped together with ethnicity and national identity in the articles, for instance, in the case of an imagined ethnoreligious bond between Montenegrins and Serbs.[290] However, religion *is* instrumentalized when distrust towards the Western Balkan countries and its inhabitants is exhibited.

In the analyzed articles, multiple authors refer to Josip Broz Tito's decision to institutionalize Muslims as a distinctive "nation" for the 1971 census.[291] In a 1992 *Trouw* article, journalist Nicole Lucas writes:

> Muslims also count as a nationality in Yugoslavia, and that is yet another one of Tito's inventions. It was in the late 1960s when he decided that Islam is both a culture and a religion and elevated "Muslim" to nationality. ... This created the strange situation that a religion was elevated to a nationality, while most of the bearers of that "title" are hardly religious, if at all. After all, most Muslims in Bosnia are Muslim only because they are not Serbs or Croats. They feel or felt themselves Bosnian, only that was a nationality that did not exist.[292]

Here, Lucas not only refers to the institutionalizing of Muslim identity, but also calls the situation "strange." Lucas thus not only questions the religiousness of Bosnian Muslims, but goes as far as rejecting it altogether.

---

[289] Peter Michielsen, "De storm van de oorlog bereikt het zuiden; Tien jaar vechten om verdeling Joegoslavische boedel," *NRC*, March 24, 2001; "... de Mickey Mouse-oorlog in Slovenië."

[290] Goran Trkulja, "Montenegro wordt zeker onafhankelijk," *Trouw*, December 3, 1999.

[291] Baker, *Race and the Yugoslav Region,* 59.

[292] Nicole Lucas, "Er smeulen nog meer brokken van Joegoslavië," *Trouw*, August 8, 1992; "De moslims gelden in Joegoslavië ook als een nationaliteit en dat is al weer zo'n uitvinding van Tito. Het was eind jaren zestig toen hij besloot dat de islam zowel een cultuur als een religie is en hij 'moslim' tot nationaliteit verhief. … Daarmee ontstond de rare situatie dat een religie tot nationaliteit werd verheven, terwijl de meeste dragers van die 'titel' niet of nauwelijks religieus zijn. Want de meeste moslims in Bosnië zijn alleen maar islamiet, omdat ze geen Serviër of Kroaat zijn. Ze voel(d)en zich Bosniër, alleen dat was een nationaliteit die niet bestond."

The tendency to question or outright reject the religiousness of people is a recurring theme. A 1996 *NRC* article by Hans Steketee centers around this tendency.[293] Steketee, in the first paragraph, offers the reader imagery of Sarajevo: "'Salem Aleikum, brothers!,' shout their Bosnian fellow believers as they hide their beer bottles."[294] In this sentence, Steketee attempts to provide an oxymoron by mentioning the Bosnian Muslims' beer bottles: after all, if the Bosnian Muslims were *true* Muslims, they surely would not drink beer. This tendency can be related to the argumentative fallacy of "no true Scotsman" or "appeal to purity"–in this fallacy, the purity of a group identity is being guarded by arguing that some self-proclaimed Scotsmen, or Muslims in this case, do not fit the bill for "true Scotsmen" or Muslims as they engage in activities that true Scotsmen/Muslims would not. Steketee further claims that the Bosnian Muslims were the only Yugoslav people to derive their identity from their faith and, again attempting to provide an oxymoron, adding that "most of them rarely entered a mosque."[295]

Steketee alternates his own, often moralistic questions ("How opportunistic is the faith of the Bosnian Muslims?") with statements made by local Sarajevans, among whom a high-placed imam and a young female passer-by. They try to contextualize the imagined "rise" of Islam in Bosnia and Herzegovina: "They have tried to kill us because we are Muslims, that is why Islam is now a necessity."[296] At the end of his article, Steketee cites "non-religious inhabitants of Sarajevo," seemingly to offer a non-religious stance on the matter, who refer to the Bosnian Muslims as follows: "These they call *lubenicas*: watermelons; green on the outside, red on the inside. This proves that faith can never be deep, they say."[297]

Similarly, in a 1997 article in *de Volkskrant*, author Bart Rijs brings into question the Muslimness of Albanians: "Western security services raised the alarm when they discovered that fundamentalist Algerians were maintaining contacts with Albanians, the majority of whom are Muslim. While they are not overflowing with religious zeal, that does not prevent them from gratefully accepting help."[298] Rijs claims that Albanians "are not overflowing with religious zeal," without so much as attempting to substantiate this claim, and further uses the claim to argue a sentiment similar to Steketee: that religion in the region is not true faith, but that it is opportunistic at best.

---

[293] Hans Steketee, "Bosnische moslims en de wurggreep van Dayton; Gelegenheidsgeloof in een eigen natie," *NRC*, March 20, 1996.

[294] "'Salem Aleikum, broeders [sic]!', roepen hun Bosnische geloofsgenoten terwijl ze hun bierflessen verstoppen"; Steketee, "Bosnische moslims."

[295] "... al kwamen de meesten van hen zelden in een moskee"; Steketee, "Bosnische moslims."

[296] "Hoe opportunistisch is het geloof van de Bosnische moslims?"; "Ze hebben ons geprobeerd te vermoorden omdat we moslims zijn, daarom is de islam nu een noodzaak"; Steketee, "Bosnische moslims."

[297] "Die noemen ze lubenicas: watermeloenen; groen van buiten, rood van binnen. Dat bewijst dat het geloof nooit diep kan zitten, zeggen ze"; Steketee, "Bosnische moslims"; Here, the color green refers to Islam, with red referring to the traditional color of communist parties worldwide.

[298] Bart Rijs, "Land met twee volken is etnisch kruitvat op de Balkan; Macedonië leeft met de angt [sic] voor Albanees zelfbestuur," *de Volkskrant*, November 21, 1997; "Westerse veiligheidsdiensten sloegen alarm toen ze ontdekten dat fundamentalistische Algerijnen contacten onderhielden met Albanezen, die in meerderheid Moslim zijn. Hoewel ze niet overlopen van geloofsijver, hoeft dat geen beletsel te zijn om hulp dankbaar te aanvaarden."

4.2.3 Orientalism

As has been expressed in Chapter 1 of this thesis, many media narratives on the (Western) Balkans are orientalist, and more specifically balkanist in nature. In the aforementioned 1999 *AD* article by Carl Stellweg, Stellweg describes the Balkans as "an alternative Europe," "a Europe where emotions as destructive as they are incomprehensible to outsiders can dangerously darken the thinking from workers to academics, farmers to bank managers."[299] This line of arguing correlates with Said's orientalism in that it imagines an artificial divide between a rational, cultured and progressive civilization (the West) and an irrational, barbaric and conservative civilization (the Orient). It also correlates with Todorova's balkanism in that it describes the Balkans as "the Other within" Europe: there is a rational and "civilized" Europe, and an alternative Europe, which is irrational, emotion-driven and (self-)destructive.

Furthermore, as Stellweg proclaims, these emotions are explicitly "incomprehensible to outsiders." In the aforementioned 2001 *de Volkskrant* article by Olaf Tempelman, Tempelman places the rational-irrational divide *within* the Balkans: "In the current situation, irrational, radical forces in Macedonia and southern Serbia threaten to corner rational, moderate forces."[300] Here, Tempelman explicitly designates Kosovar-Albanian "boys" as the irrational, radical forces. Tempelman reinforces this perspective when he refers to the "successful, rational cooperation" between Macedonian prime minister Ljubčo Georgievski and leader of Macedonia's main Albanian political party, Arbën Xhaferi– explicitly designating the cooperation as "rational" implies that in this context, rationality is an anomaly.

In the aforementioned 1997 *de Volkskrant* article by Bart Rijs, Rijs offers a clear and literal example of orientalism. Rijs writes about men he encounters in the Albanian-majority Macedonian city of Gostivar: "Xaferi [political leader Arbën Xhaferi] has a large following among the young men who hang out in the modern, but already run-down center of Gostivar and who exude something oriental in their dress and mannerisms."[301] The men, according to Rijs' perspective, dress and behave "oriental," which here can be understood as synonymous with foreign, something "other" than what Rijs is familiar with.

In a 1999 *de Volkskrant* article, journalist Anet Bleich writes the following: "As is well known, things turned out differently and the resurgence of Serbian, Slovenian, Croatian and Albanian nationalism led to four new wars that - except for the first, with Slovenia - were fought in accordance

---

[299] Stellweg, "Een kruispunt van volken"; "Een Europa waar even destructieve als voor buitenstaanders onbegrijpelijke emoties het denken van arbeider tot academicus, van boer tot bankdirecteur, gevaarlijk kan verduisteren."

[300] Tempelman, "Rebellen leggen bom"; "In de huidige situatie dreigen irrationele, radicale krachten in Macedonië en Zuid-Servië rationele, gematigde krachten in het nauw te drijven."

[301] Rijs, "Land met twee volken"; "Xaferi heeft veel aanhang onder de jonge mannen die rondhangen in het moderne, maar nu al vervallen centrum van Gostivar en die in hun manier van kleden en manier van doen iets oriëntaals uitstralen."

with the most lurid Balkan traditions."[302] While Bleich's mentioning of the "old Balkan demons" is reported speech from which she distances herself–she makes explicit that Balkan experts argue that "these demons … have little to do with a centuries-old, mysterious Balkan mentality"–she does speak of the wars being "in accordance with the most lurid Balkan traditions."[303] Here, "lurid Balkan traditions" imply that the violence during the wars in the 1990s are proprietary to the Balkans, as violence is designated as some sort of tradition, something inherent to "Balkan culture" (insofar as that can be spoken of). Thus, while Bleich acknowledges that certain harmful frames of the region exist (the existence of "Balkan demons"), she chooses to reproduce a similar frame (the existence of "lurid Balkan traditions").

4.2.4 Zoomorphism and Dehumanization

A particular way of describing people, not unrelated to orientalism, is the use of zoomorphisms. Zoomorphisms, opposite of anthropomorphisms, refer to the assignment of animal characteristics to non-animals, including human beings. While the use of zoomorphisms can function as a literary device in animating inanimate subjects, it can also be used to refer to human beings as animals in the sense of inhabiting a "lower category": animals as a form of life without consciousness and self-determination, and explicitly non-human.[304] In the latter use, zoomorphism can also be a form of dehumanization. In the headline of a 2000 De Telegraaf article, journalist Frank van Vliet refers to Kosovo as "a hornets' nest."[305] A "hornets' nest" is an idiom that can be used as a metaphor for something that is harmless when unbothered and potentially harmful when bothered. [306] In the article, the KFOR is positioned to have to deal with the imagined hornets' nest, particularly the situation in the city of Mitrovica in the north of Kosovo, which is inhabited by both Albanians and Serbs, more or less divided by the Ibar river. The article makes use of the idiom to refer to the complex position of the international community ("In the Kosovar town of Mitrovica, the international peacekeeping force KFOR has found itself in a situation no army wants to be in: between two fires").[307] In a later, 2001 De Telegraaf article, an unnamed author uses the same idiom in the headline, this time to refer to the entire Balkans, again emphasizing what position the international community is in.[308] Designating Kosovo (or the entire

---

[302] Anet Bleich, "De oude Balkan-demonen huizen ook buiten Belgrado," de Volkskrant, June 26, 1999; "Zoals bekend is het anders gelopen en leidde de wederopleving van het Servische, Sloveense, Kroatische en Albanese nationalisme tot vier nieuwe oorlogen die - op de eerste, met Slovenië na - werden uitgevochten overeenkomstig de meest lugubere Balkan-tradities."

[303] "Deze demonen hebben … weinig te maken met een al eeuwen bestaande, mysterieuze Balkan-mentaliteit"; "werden uitgevochten overeenkomstig de meest lugubere Balkan-tradities"; Bleich, "De oude Balkan-demonen."

[304] Dagmar C. G. Lorenz, "Man and Animal: The Discourse of Exclusion and Discrimination in a Literary Context," Women in German Yearbook 14, no. 1 (1998): 201.

[305] Frank van Vliet, "Kosovo, een wespennest voor KFOR," de Telegraaf, February 24, 2000.

[306] Here, "idiom" refers to a literary device that uses figurative language to bear meaning.

[307] "De internationale vredesmacht KFOR is in de Kosovaarse stad Mitrovica in een situatie gekomen waar geen leger zich in wil bevinden: tussen twee vuren"; Van Vliet, "Kosovo."

[308] De Telegraaf, "NAVO klem in Balkan-wespennest," March 29, 2001.

Balkans) as "hornets' nests" implies that the inhabitants are the hornets, assigning to them a rather volatile characteristic.

Furthermore, another instance of zoomorphism can be found in the same 2000 article, which uses "hawks" to refer to (some) ethnic Albanians in Kosovo: "The ethnic Albanians don't want to know about such a "solution" at all. They want all of Kosovo. The problem is that the hawks among the Albanians have played into Milošević's hands by murdering and expelling Serbs who stayed behind. Therefore, there is no longer a multi-ethnic Kosovo."[309] Hawks have long been associated with war, either referring to "war hawks" or simply hawks. Hawks would symbolize being in favor of war, opposite of doves, which would symbolize the ideal of peace. In this case, it refers to some among the ethnic Albanians, implying that they favor conflict over conflict solution, again, characterizing them as volatile.

In a 2001 *de Volkskrant* article, journalist Olaf Tempelman offers another zoomorphic metaphor: "The Macedonian forces chase like a bull after the red rag of a toreador they will never be able to take to the horns."[310] Typical for Spanish bullfighting is that a toreador (which in this metaphor refers to the KLA) tries to provoke a bull (which in this metaphor refers to the Macedonian forces). As such, there is an implication made that the KLA in Macedonia is merely provoking the Macedonian forces, rather than having genuine and tangible aims and thus downplaying any serious motivations.

4.2.5 Ethnicity: "Ethnic Conflict" and "Ethnic Hatred"

The ethnicity of groups of people is referred to many times in the analyzed articles. The articles present clear delineations of ethnic groups living on the Balkan peninsula and as such, argue that when conflict arises, it is these groups that are in conflict with each other. Furthermore, it is argued that "ethnic conflict" did not just "happen" in the Balkans, but that it is actually traceable to some sort of (ancient) ethnic hatred, similar to what is the main tenet in *Balkan Ghosts* by historian Robert D. Kaplan (see Chapter 1).[311] In a 1996 *AD* opinion article, Cornel Colceru argues that "hostility toward one another has been the most normal thing in this peninsula since time immemorial."[312] Colceru makes a similar

---

[309] Van Vliet, "Kosovo"; "De etnische Albanezen moeten helemaal niets weten van zo'n 'oplossing'. Zij willen heel Kosovo. Probleem is dat de haviken onder de Albanezen Milošević in de kaart hebben gespeeld door achtergebleven Serviërs te vermoorden en te verdrijven. Van een multi-etnisch Kosovo is daarom geen sprake meer."

[310] Olaf Tempelman, "De nooduitgang gaat in nevelen gehuld," *de Volkskrant*, June 7, 2001; "De Macedonische strijdkrachten jagen als een stier achter de rode lap aan van een toreador die zij nooit op de hoorns zullen kunnen nemen."

[311] Interestingly enough, in 2022, Robert D. Kaplan published a new book, *Adriatic: A Concert of Civilizations at the End of the Modern Age*, in which he expresses sorrow about the way he had framed the Balkans in *Balkan Ghosts* and thereby agreeing with the many criticisms his earlier book elicited.

[312] Colceru, "Bosnië vraagt om offensieve aanpak"; "Vijandigheid tegenover elkaar is sinds mensenheugenis op dit schiereiland de normaalste zaak van de wereld geweest."

argument in his later 2001 *Trouw* opinion article, in which he speaks of "centuries of enmity" and a centuries-old mix of "nationalistic and religious tensions."[313]

Also in 2001, in an *AD* article, activist and former politician Roel van Duijn writes that "hatred reigns in Tetovo" and that Macedonians barely dare to return to their homes, as there, "Albanian hatred" will be waiting.[314] While in Colceru's articles, (ethnic) hatred is something inherent to the entire Balkans, in Van Duijn's article, it is proprietary to Albanians, assigning the characteristic to an entire ethnic group. In a 2020 *de Volkskrant* interview with former diplomat Daan Everts, journalist Theo Koelé paraphrases Everts, "who notes twenty years after the fact, that citizens and politicians in both countries are still hateful."[315] Here, hatred is extended from belonging to particular ethnic groups to belonging to entire populations–those of Kosovo and Serbia. Hatred then becomes a characteristic, rather than a spatial and temporal circumstance with possible legitimizing origins.

4.2.6 Race: Racialization and the "True Nature" of Ethnic Groups

As has been explored in more detail in Chapter 2, "race" in this thesis does not refer to skin color (alone), but also takes on biological, cultural, linguistic and religious signifiers. While there is one 2019 *AD* article that discusses racism within Eastern Europe, specifically focusing on racism during soccer matches, race is not made explicit.[316] This means that the aforementioned blatant racism of the SFRY is not reiterated–authors do not write of the existence of different "races"–yet, racializing language is used. An instance of racialization could already be recognized in Bart Rijs' designation of the (Albanian) men in Gostivar as "oriental." The racialization of Albanians in the Balkans has a pre-Yugoslav history (see the statements about Albanians by the Serbian historian Vladan Đorđević in 1913 in Chapter 2), but lives through in some of the analyzed articles. In a 2003 *de Telegraaf* article, author Hans Kuitert writes that "When things went wrong in the Balkans in recent years, Albanians were always involved."[317] This not only (again) reinforces discourse that Albanians favor conflict over conflict solution, but it also constructs "Albanians" as a fixed group with stable characteristics–a technique of racialization. Then, not only the Macedonian Albanians can be characterized as favoring conflict, but Kosovo Albanians can too, and possibly, so can other Albanians. Specifically, this concern is voiced by a 2015 commentary article in *Trouw* by the editorial board of the newspaper: "There are still advocates of a Greater Albania, combining Albania itself with Kosovo and parts of Macedonia and

---

[313] Colceru, "Welvaart is sleutel"; "eeuwen vijandschap"; "nationalistische en religieuze spanningen."

[314] Roel van Duijn, "In Tetovo broeit een nieuwe oorlog; Aanhangers van Groot-Albanië terroriseren Macedoniërs," *Algemeen Dagblad*, December 29, 2001; "Daar wacht hen alleen maar de Albanese haat."

[315] Theo Koelé, "Haat is nooit uit Kosovo verdwenen," *de Volkskrant*, July 22, 2020; "... die twintig jaar na dato constateert dat burgers en politici in beide landen nog steeds haatdragend zijn."

[316] Bob van Huët, "Is het racisme in Oost-Europa erger dan hier?" *AD*, April 6, 2019.

[317] Hans Kuitert, "Analyse: Experiment Macedonië onder druk," *De Telegraaf*, September 3, 2003; "Als het de afgelopen jaren misging op de Balkan, waren er altijd Albanezen in het spel."

Serbia."[318] This favoring conflict over conflict solution by Albanians can also be found in a 2001 *de Volkskrant* article by Olaf Tempelman, in which he writes that "It is only obvious what they [Albanian boys] do not want: to live a normal, peaceful life in Kosovo."[319]

In the headline of a 2001 *AD* article, journalist Aart Heering writes of "an Albanian of good will in Macedonia."[320] The title suggests that the existence of "an Albanian of good will" is noteworthy and thus makes an anomaly out of it–being of "good will" is an anomalous characteristic for Albanians. In another 2001 *AD* article by Heering, a similar sentiment is shared:

> Autochthonous freedom fighters, infiltrators from neighboring Kosovo, terrorists, smugglers or drug dealers? The true nature of Albanian fighters in Macedonia's northwestern mountains has been shrouded in mystery since their National Liberation Army UCK (Ushteria Clirimtare Kombetar) [sic] emerged from nowhere a month ago.[321]

Here, Heering questions the "true nature" of Albanian fighters, suggesting that their "true nature" might as well be that they are Kosovar infiltrators, terrorists, smugglers or drug dealers, rather than what they "pretend" to be–that is, freedom fighters. Again, the reliability of Albanians (in this case, Albanian fighters as a subgroup) is questioned. While Heering, in the headline of the article, suggests that the population was misled ("Extremists misled the population with moderate demands"), Heering also makes explicit that "numerous Macedonian Albanians" were active participants in the war in Kosovo and that "many thousands" of Albanians donate their income to a Swiss foundation that has financed the NLA (National Liberation Army), suggesting that Albanian support for the NLA's causes is great.[322]

4.3 Conclusion

This chapter brings into view what frames of religion, race, ethnicity and national identity in the Western Balkans are prominent in Dutch discourses. The first set of observations entails that

---

[318] *Trouw*, "Een uiteenspattend Macedonië is het laatste wat Europa kan gebruiken," May 18, 2015; "Nog steeds zijn er voorstanders van een groot-Albanië, dat Albanië zelf combineert met delen van Macedonië en Servië."

[319] Tempelman, "Rebellen leggen bom"; "Het is slechts duidelijk wat zij niet willen: in Kosovo een normaal, vreedzaam leven leiden."

[320] Aart Heering, "Een Albanees van goede wil in Macedonië," *Algemeen Dagblad*, March 27, 2001.

[321] Aart Heering, "Anatomie van een guerrillabeweging op de Balkan; Extremisten misleidden de bevolking met gematigde eisen," *Algemeen Dagblad*, March 27, 2001; "Autochtone vrijheidsstrijders, infiltranten uit aangrenzend Kosovo, terroristen, smokkelaars of drugsdealers? De ware aard van de Albanese strijders in de noordwestelijke bergen van Macedonië is in geheimzinnigheid gehuld, sinds hun Nationaal Bevrijdingsleger UCK (Uchteria Clirimtare Kombetar) een maand geleden opdook uit het niets."

[322] Here, NLA refers to the Macedonian Albanian liberation army, which is not to be confused with the KLA, the Kosovar Albanian liberation army; "Extremisten misleidden de bevolking met gematigde eisen"; "De stichting van de Macedonische UCK dateert van na de oorlog in Kosovo waaraan talrijke Macedonische Albanezen actief deelnamen"; "De beweging werd gefinancierd door *Het Moederland Roept*, een in Zwitserland gevestigde stichting waaraan vele duizenden Albanezen drie procent van hun inkomen schenken en waarvan Ameti vice-voorzitter is."

categorizations of the Balkans (or more specifically, the Western Balkan countries) within Europe differs. Some narratives place the countries within Europe, but designate them as being different from other European countries, for instance, by deciding they are a "corner" or an "alternative" Europe. Other narratives place the Western Balkan countries outside of Europe, or consider specific Western Balkan countries to be European, while others are not.

Furthermore, the analysis has revealed what this thesis calls "a discourse of distrust" towards the Western Balkan countries, their leaders and inhabitants. Religion is instrumentalized in this endeavor as it is used to show that certain groups might be opportunistic in their religious identification—particularly addressing Bosnian and Albanian Muslims. In the articles, national identity is mentioned in passing but is not described in detail: possible nuances, such as feelings of belonging to more than one national identity, are overlooked. The identity marker of race is not made explicit in the articles. Rather, groups of people are categorized by ethnicity: ethnic groups are taken as solid, clearly delineated entities. In some instances, however, these ethnic groups are racialized, which brings race into the equation.

5. Critical Discourse Analysis: Discussions

In this chapter, the results of the Critical Discourse Analysis in the previous chapter will be discussed. This will be done in accordance with theory about CDA by both Fairclough and Richardson, both of whom emphasize that sociocultural practices are of uttermost importance within CDA–in fact, it is what lends CDA the "C" of "Critical." As has been established, "what texts 'do' in the world cannot be explained solely through text analysis or analytic language," theory about popular discourses in the Netherlands will be referred to.[323] The concluding remarks of this chapter will summarize what interpretations can be taken away from this present study.

5.1 The (Re)construction of the Western Balkans

In 2022, the researchers behind the BiEPAG report *Strict, Fair and More Open Towards EU Enlargement!* concluded that the Dutch public's knowledge about the Western Balkan countries is low.[324] *Why* this is the case is beyond the scope of this thesis, but BiEPAG also reported that in their research, "decision-makers attributed a large role to the media in the production of negative narratives and sentiments that would decisively shape public opinion."[325] Similarly, political scientist Maria Armoudian argues that while journalistic "norms and structures attempt to achieve accuracy, balance, and fairness, ideology and journalistic structures still act on the unconscious level to influence story choice, frames, and portrayals of issues, persons, and groups in either a negative or a positive framework."[326] When these considerations are being taken seriously, Dutch journalistic endeavors to represent (and to make sense of) the Western Balkans can be problematized.

In the previous chapter, discussions on whether the Balkans can be counted as European were examined. This examination, however, poses a question of authority. Whether the Balkans are Europe, a subgroup of Europe, partly Europe or not Europe at all depends on who is asked, and thus who is *allowed* to speak on the matter. In the articles that were analyzed, both opinion writers and journalists took on the question and as such, took on authority over it. While the Dutch public might have limited knowledge about the Western Balkan countries, the writers take on the "knowing" role, those who have access to what the "truth" would be–themselves leaving little room for reflection on why they would be the right persons to make the designation of what the Balkans are, instead of, say, an actual inhabitant of the geographical region. In Said's words, "To have such knowledge of such a thing is to dominate it, to have authority over it. And authority here means for 'us' to deny autonomy to 'it.'"[327] Benevolent or

---

[323] Richardson, *Analysing Newspapers*, 43.
[324] BiEPAG, *Strict, Fair and More Open Towards EU Enlargement!*, 2.
[325] BiEPAG, *Strict, Fair and More Open Towards EU Enlargement!*, 31.
[326] Maria Armoudian, "Constructing "the Others" During Conflict: How Journalism's Norms and Structures Temper Extreme Portrayals," *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 20, no. 3 (July 2015): 361.
[327] Said, *Orientalism*, 32.

not, the writers of the articles take an entire region and go on to discuss and decide where it "belongs," what it is and what it is not.

Dutch anthropologists Marc de Leeuw and Sonja van Wichelen argue that there exists an idea that "cultural Others need to become like us … 'we' – the Western and Northern European countries … – expect new countries from middle and Eastern Europe to become 'like us'. First, they are expected to implement existing European rules, laws and treaties. Then 'we' decide whether they can join 'us.'"[328] De Leeuw and Van Wichelen add to this that regarding Eastern Europe, the main dividing elements between "us" and "them" can be summarized in terms of corruption, rule of law and economic equality, while for Turkey, the "clash of civilizations" discourse (Muslims vs. "non-Muslims" or Christians) is key. The Western Balkans then find themselves in an awkward space between, a space where corruption, rule of law and economic equality lead to un-Europeanness, but where the "clash of civilizations" discourse does as well.

Not only does the "we-they" dichotomy function on a European level, but it can be applied to Dutch societal discourse too. This in terms that those who have a sense of authority (politicians, journalists, public figures) take the liberty to "decide" who correctly conforms to "Dutchness." According to De Leeuw and Van Wichelen, "Dutchness" becomes most evident when the public debate concerns those who do not conform to it yet: "This Dutchness is then what immigrants, refugees, and, in particular, Muslims are expected to assimilate to."[329] Religion, here, becomes instrumental in the divide between "we" and "they"–it is, among others, "the Muslims" who are yet to conform to "Dutchness." Furthermore, othering and thinking in terms of "we" and "they" is reinforced by the differentiations made by the Dutch Central Agency for Statistics (CBS), which distinguishes those who have a "migrant background" from those who do not. As has been mentioned before, this means that children of at least one parent born outside of the Netherlands are labeled as having a "migrant background," even if they themselves are born in the Netherlands, immediately placing them on the "they" end of the spectrum.[330]

As has been expounded upon before, while the "Western Balkans" as a denominator refers mainly to the geographic region, the "Balkans" is a discursively loaded subject. Writers addressing the subject, as has been exhibited in the previous chapter, often lack knowledge about these discourses and above all, exhibit a blatant lack of self-reflexivity. An example of this is journalist Anet Bleich mentioning "lurid Balkan traditions," making it seem as though violence is somehow a Balkan doctrine, rather than something specific to European countries pioneering global colonialism. This is not unrelated to the approach of aforementioned anthropologist Gloria Wekker, who argued that in the

---

[328] Marc de Leeuw and Sonja van Wichelen, "Transformations of 'Dutchness': From Happy Multiculturalism to the Crisis of Dutch Liberalism," in *Identity, Belonging and Migration*, eds. Gerard Delanty, Ruth Wodak and Paul Jones (Liverpool University Press, 2011), 270.

[329] De Leeuw and Van Wichelen, "Transformations of 'Dutchness'," 270.

[330] "Wat verstaat het CBS onder een allochtoon?" CBS, accessed December 20, 2023, https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/faq/specifiek/wat-verstaat-het-cbs-onder-een-allochtoon-.

public debate, the Netherlands' colonial and imperial history is skillfully left out. Similarly, De Leeuw and Van Wichelen argue that the Dutch myth of tolerance has taken the place of acknowledging and reconciling with the national past.[331] Better yet, as argued by linguist Van Dijk, the Dutch myth of "tolerance" (which Van Dijk refers to as "Western") is often combined with the habit of denying racism, which is then favored by both national and local "decision-making, agenda-setting and public opinion management," as recognizing racism would imply that "*we* are the real problem, and not *they*."[332] This present study finds that the lack of knowledge about existing discourses about the Western Balkan countries perpetuates these discourses.

5.2 Discourses of Distrust

As argued by Said, if authority is taken by "us," that means that authority is denied to "it." In the analyzed articles, the denial of authority, autonomy or self-agency can be recognized in multiple ways. One such way the latter chapter has demonstrated this is done is by the infantilization of the Western Balkan states, its political leaders and its inhabitants (for instance, by the use of diminutives). Said, paraphrasing orientalist authors, writes that "the Oriental is irrational, depraved (fallen), childlike, 'different'; thus the European is rational, virtuous, mature, 'normal.'"[333] Here, discourse on the Western Balkans places them outside of the "European" category as it is made explicit that "they" behave irrationally and infantile–they cannot yet sit at the "adult table." Serbian anthropologist Sanja Lazarević Radak argues that the infantilization of the Balkans (and Serbia, which is her particular focus) can be associated with "images of ignorance and primitiveness."[334] If the Western Balkan states are represented as childlike entities, one might argue that "mature entities" are necessary to guide "them," enabling and even urging "the West" to go help "them." Moreover, childlike entities, with their limited rationality and plain ignorance, are not to be trusted. Similarly, dehumanizing and zoomorphist tropes, as described in the previous chapter, reinforce this idea, as groups are stripped of their human attributes (such as rationality and integrity) and reduced to entities mainly acting on their instincts, rather than on rational, learned experience. This tendency can be described as a discourse of distrust: the Western Balkan states and its peoples are fundamentally *untrustworthy*.

Interestingly, religion is also instrumentalized as a way of showing distrust. As the previous chapter has shown, inhabitants' "true" religion is questioned: Albanians and Bosnians are accused of not being "true Muslims." When taking into consideration the journalists' proposed existence of "Muslim countries" in Europe, this leads to a strange phenomenon: the existence of "Muslim countries"

---

[331] De Leeuw and Van Wichelen, "Transformations of 'Dutchness'," 262.

[332] Teun van Dijk, *Prejudice in Discourse: An Analysis of Ethnic Prejudice in Cognition and Conversation* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1984), 96-97.

[333] Said, *Orientalism*, 40.

[334] Sanja Lazarević Radak, "The Geography of Childhood and Affective Archetypes: A Discursive-Mythological Approach to the Representations of Serbia in British and American Interwar Travel Accounts," *Poznańskie Studia Slawistyczne* 23, no. 1 (2022): 132.

while the countries' actual inhabitants are not *really* Muslims. If anything, this suggests that these narratives, which attempt to essentialize the identities of groups of people, are rather incoherent. Nevertheless, this phenomenon can again be boiled down to the "rational West" claiming authority: whether the Western Balkan countries are Muslim, whether its inhabitants are Muslims, it is all in the eye of the Western beholder. Self-agency of the Western Balkan countries and their inhabitants is diminished, authority is denied to "it," as the rational and mature actor at play is to decide. As the authors also understand the religious identity of the inhabitants to be closely related to their national identity, consequently, their national identity is also questioned.

5.3 "Clash of Civilizations" Discourse

As has been explained, the use of "ethnicity" as a stable element in understanding regions, peoples and conflicts has been criticized, not in the least by Brubaker. Therefore, Brubaker calls for a "sensitivity to framing dynamics, to the generalized coding bias in favor of ethnicity, and to the sometimes strategic or even cynical use of ethnic framing to mask the pursuit of clan, clique, or class interests."[335] What Brubaker calls "overethnicization" upholds the notion that these ethnic differences are effectively causing instability, rather than paying attention to other areas of influence, such as economics, (international) politics, power relations and class differences. Instead of understanding ethnicity as something that is strategically used by those in power to "provide a rationale for violence," ethnicity is given credibility.[336] Consequently, the imagined "realness" of explicitly "ethnic" conflicts plays into the hands of Huntington's "clash of civilizations" theory.

In the analyzed articles subject to this thesis, racializing language is primarily used to describe Albanians.[337] This racializing language does not emanate out of a vacuum, but is the result of decades of Serbian academics and politicians propagating Slav superiority, or specifically Serbian superiority, "identifying Serbs in the Balkans with white Europeans in America and Africa by suggesting they enjoyed civilizational superiority over yet were threatened by the subordinate Albanians."[338] Even if Albanians are portrayed as the "good guys" in conflict reporting, the articles' conveyed suspicion about the "true nature" of Albanians adds to essentialism and reducing Albanians to certain tropes, which is not a phenomenon that only pertains to them: "The majority of commentators on Kosovo today evoke the generic Albanian as nothing less than a Muslim fanatic, drug-runner, or CIA-puppet. These assertions of collective guilt mirror those in other contexts, especially Afghanistan, Yemen and Pakistan, whose inhabitants' mere proximity to identified militants is grounds for affiliation."[339]

---

[335] Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups,* 18.
[336] Ibid., 11.
[337] Ruigrok, "Journalism of attachment and objectivity," 300.
[338] Baker, *Race and the Yugoslav Region*, 64.
[339] Blumi, "Religion and Politics among Albanians," 300.

The analysis in this thesis begs the question, how does continuing certain discourses about the Western Balkans benefit the readers of the Dutch newspapers in question? It seems the case that by using certain tropes and discourses when writing about the Western Balkan countries, certain Dutch discourses are also reproduced, for instance, the existence of major differences or even an irreconcilability between "ethnic," religious or racialized groups. Nuances are often left out, which leads to the overgeneralization of entire groups. While not directly comparable–racism towards Muslims in the Netherlands has its own particular history and characteristics–the tendency to overgeneralize can be recognized, for instance, in the way "Moroccan," "Muslim," and "foreigner" are commonly used interchangeably in Dutch discourses.[340] The time period in which the analyzed articles were published includes the years 2002 to 2008, which, according to Moroccan-Dutch anthropologist Miriyam Aouragh, was

> a phase during which the limits of what is considered acceptable in the dominant Dutch public debate were pushed to the extreme. The style of the debate nurtured anti-Muslim sentiments and produced a new modus operandi of Dutch xenophobia. This creeping racism was partly familiar because it reflected a continuation of Dutch racism that shaped the Netherlands long before, yet it was also different, and on the surface, somehow, invisible.[341]

5.4 Positive Critique

As has been explained in Chapter 4, "critique assesses what exists, what might exist and what should exist on the basis of a coherent set of values."[342] In this present study, most of the critique has been *negative critique*, which according to Fairclough is "analysis of how societies produce and perpetuate social wrongs."[343] What remains unmentioned here are instances of *positive critique*, "which is analysis of how people seek to remedy or mitigate them, and identification of further possibilities for righting or mitigating them [social wrongs]."[344] While there are only few instances of positive critique in this thesis–for instance, journalist Anet Bleich acknowledging that certain harmful frames, such as the existence of "Balkan demons" occur–this is not to say that there are absolutely no instances of Dutch journalism that are self-aware and self-reflective or even critical about perpetuating harmful narratives about the Western Balkan countries and their inhabitants.

---

[340] Miriyam Aouragh, "Refusing to be Silenced: Resisting Islamophobia," in *Dutch Racism*, eds. Philomena Essed and Isabel Hoving (Leiden: Thamyris/Intersecting, 2014), 360.
[341] Aouragh, "Refusing to be Silenced," 355.
[342] Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis*, 7.
[343] Ibid.
[344] Ibid.

One article that was not examined in this thesis' CDA, but is relevant to mention nevertheless, is a 2021 *NRC* opinion article by the Bosnian-Dutch sociologist Dino Suhonić.[345] In the article, Suhonić reacts to the CBS' decision to no longer refer to migrants as either "Western" or "non- Western" and voices his support for this decision. Suhonić argues that Bosnia and Herzegovina is an excellent example why terms such as "Western" and "non-Western" are useless, as Bosnia and Herzegovina often falls somewhere in the middle. Bosnians in the Netherlands such as himself, Suhonić recalls, are often coded as white and considered not-racialized, yet Bosnia and Herzegovina is often considered too Muslim to be Western and as such is "a part of orientalist fantasies."[346] In the article, Suhonić argues that "language about populations is not innocent" as "our language influences reality," and that differentiating between "Western" and "non-Western" above all creates "a false hierarchy between people who also belong to minorities and oversimplifies our representation of how ethnicity, ancestry, race and migration history are intertwined."[347] Simply put, Suhonić shows that self-critical journalism is in fact possible and even identifies how harmful frames can be mitigated.

5.5 Variations

5.5.1 Differences in Ideology and Genre

Generally speaking, the CDA in this thesis has shown that thinking in terms of "we versus they" and the "clash of civilizations" discourse has permeated articles of all five newspapers: what are considered "quality newspapers" (*de Volkskrant, NRC*), as well as the more sensationalist newspapers (*De Telegraaf, AD*), and newspapers with a clearer niche (*Trouw*). There are, however, small dissimilarities that are worth mentioning. First, it is important to mention that most of the news articles center around specific events (such as the wars in the 1990s or the unrest in North Macedonia in 2001), and that fewer articles are "long reads," of which some can be identified as human-interest stories. Where there are long reads, they can mostly be found in the quality newspapers *de Volkskrant*, *NRC* and *Trouw*.

As has been expounded upon before, *de Telegraaf* finds itself on the sensationalist end of the journalistic spectrum. In the articles, this can be recognized in the unbridled use of hyperbole, for instance, describing Albania as a "narco-state" and the Balkans as a "black hole."[348] Moreover, *de Telegraaf* does not shy away from racializing tactics and pejoratives, for instance, referring to inhabitants of the Balkans as "Balkan gypsies."[349] *AD*, which scholars either place on the sensationalist

---

[345] Dino Suhonić, "Bosnië laat de onzin van 'westers' en 'niet-westers' zien," April 22, 2021.

[346] "Dat Bosnië geen westers land is, is ook onderdeel van oriëntalistische fantasieën"; ibid.

[347] "Taal over bevolkingsgroepen is niet onschuldig"; "onze taal beïnvloedt de werkelijkheid"; dit vertekende beeld veroorzaakt bovendien een valse hiërarchie tussen mensen die ook tot minderheden behoren en versimpelt onze voorstelling van hoe etniciteit, afkomst, ras en migratieverleden met elkaar verwikkeld zijn"; ibid.

[348] *De Telegraaf*, "Ramp-uitbreiding maakt EU kapot," April 20, 2018; Frank van Vliet, "Lastig feest," *De Telegraaf*, February 17, 2018.

[349] Guido van de Kreeke, "Topdiplomaat Daan Everts: Na Bosnië probeert Nederlandse OSVE-leider [sic] Kosovo weer leefbaar te maken," *De Telegraaf*, November 13, 1999; "Bent u inmiddels zelf een Balkan-zigeuner geworden?"

end of the spectrum or somewhere in the middle, in this analysis seems to be the main provider for generalizations of the Balkans as a whole. These generalizations are communicated by means of metaphors, for instance, illustrating the Balkans as a "puzzle" or a "powder keg."[350]

Regarding what are considered quality newspapers, it stands out that *de Volkskrant* and *NRC* have their articles on the Western Balkan countries written by the same authors—the newspaper's regular reporters. While this impression should not be understood as representative–after all, not all articles that have been written about the region have been considered in this study–it is striking that especially those two newspapers seem to rely on the knowledge of the same reporters (or, correspondents) rather than having the articles written by the newspapers' general international reporters.

5.5.2 Longitudinal Differences

As has been elucidated before, both the contents and the lexicon of news articles cannot be understood fully if the time in which they were written, edited and published is not taken into consideration. For instance, the aforementioned statement made by Aouragh, arguing that between 2002 and 2008, "the limits of what [was] considered acceptable in the dominant Dutch public debate were pushed to the extreme." Anti-Muslim sentiments and xenophobia in this case cannot, for instance, be dissociated from what happened on 9/11.

Self-evident is that the articles about the conflicts in the 1990s as well as the unrest after the turn of the millennium are strongly embedded in international discourses about those events at the time. What becomes clear is that after the wartime reporting in the 1990s, popular analyses, for instance, references to "ethnic" conflict rather than just "conflict" permeate Dutch discourses as well. It is this "spin" that Brubaker refers to as "overethnicization."[351] Besides the emphasis on ethnicity, there are other minor changes that can be seen developing over time. After the declaration of independence of Kosovo in 2008, for instance, articles became more saturated with contents about the integration into the EU. During this time also, there seemingly was a re-delineation of "how" the Western Balkans countries should be identified: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo were designated "Muslim countries" and Serbia was assumed as closely connected to Russia through their shared Orthodox Christian heritage. While essentialisms about Montenegro and North Macedonia are generally missing from the analyzed articles, Croatia is *almost* exempted from being a Western Balkan country as it has become a fully integrated EU member and therefore barely "fits" in the peripheral region the Western Balkans are seen as any longer.

---

[350] "En Bosnië is nog maar één stukje van de Balkan-puzzel"; "Opvallend is ook de gelijkenis tussen de huidige Oost-Europese puinhoop met het Balkankruitvat als onbetwiste koploper"; Cornel Colceru, "Bosnië vraagt om offensieve aanpak; Gevaren in achtertuin van Europa nog steeds volop aanwezig," Algemeen Dagblad, April 16, 1996.

[351] Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups,* 18.

Todorova's argument in the 2009 afterword to *Imagining the Balkans*, that journalists are becoming more "politically correct" and more conscious of balkanist tendencies in their reporting seems to be true in some articles from the second half of the 2010s and onwards.[352] Generally spoken, the articles that are most saturated with harmful stereotypes are published during the 1990s and the early 2000s–*de Telegraaf* is the clear exception to this generalization, as the newspaper (still) regularly engages with populist rhetoric.[353]

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter featured a discussion of the results of the Critical Discourse Analysis of Chapter 4. Here, theories about social and discursive practices in the Netherlands are discussed in regard to the results. The first result is the inclination to discuss whether the Western Balkans, which are often referred to as just "the Balkans," are properly "European." This fits with the broader tendency of hegemonic groups to decide who truly belongs somewhere and who does not. By doing so, the feeling and the idea of "we versus they" are reinforced. This idea is particularly perpetuated by the lack of knowledge about existing discourses about the Western Balkan countries in the Netherlands.

Furthermore, the "we versus they" dichotomy lends certain characteristics to the "they" end of the spectrum. The Western Balkan countries, their leaders and inhabitants are attributed with negative characteristics, such as being irrational and primitive, which in turn legitimizes distrust towards them. The way the inhabitants' Muslim identities are doubted further feeds into this distrust. However, as the countries of which the inhabitants' Muslimness is made suspicious are also designated as "Muslim countries," it becomes clear that these narratives are not necessarily coherent.

These discourses–the "clash of civilizations" narrative, the "we versus they" dichotomy and the discourse of distrust–are not communicated point-blank in the analyzed articles. Rather, they are wrapped in the choice of words and expressions. Moreover, the articles, through the use of metaphors, idioms and other rhetorical devices, attempt at begetting a literary quality–attempting to make news articles read like well-written thinkpieces rather than straightforward news articles. However, the opposite also goes, as some articles seem to use metaphors to enhance the readability of articles, for instance, by simplifying the subject matter to what is understandable to the reader.

What these discourses do, above all, is that they perpetuate the idea that the Western Balkan countries will necessarily bring violence upon themselves. If the analyzed articles are taken as they are and the Western Balkan countries consist of violent habits and traditions, one might wonder why they should be given the chance to become EU members at all. While singularities exist–for instance, Dino Suhonić' critique and Anet Bleich acknowledging that harmful frames of the region exist–the narratives

---

[352] Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, 192.
[353] Matthijs Rooduijn, "A populist Zeitgeist? The impact of populism on parties, media and the public in Western Europe," PhD diss., (University of Amsterdam, 2013), 117.

that *are* perpetuated in the articles add to a corpus of discourses that eventually does more harm by stereotyping than good by informing.

6. Conclusion

In this thesis, the way discourses on religion, race, ethnicity and national identity function in the framing of the Western Balkans by Dutch newspapers between 1991 and 2023, has been analyzed. While there are exceptions to this–the 2002 NIOD report on Srebrenica and two extensive research papers written by Nel Ruigrok and Michel van Duijnen–the terms that are used in the framing of the Western Balkans and its countries' inhabitants are rarely ever scrutinized. As both the BiEPAG report *Strict, Fair and More Open Towards EU Enlargement!* and Ruigrok argued that the production and distribution of negative narratives can shape public opinion and influence the public debate, this thesis departs from the idea that these terms *should* be scrutinized. The fact that the Western Balkan countries are either (potential) candidates or already in negotiations for EU accession reinforces this argument: future negotiations and accession should not be hindered by a lack of knowledge and harmful narratives as (re)produced by the media.

The first two chapters of this thesis have offered a conceptual framework for the Critical Discourse Analysis in Chapter 4 and answer two of the subsidiary questions as posited in the introduction. First, what are the key aspects of the (historical) context of the identity markers of religion, race, ethnicity and national identity in the Western Balkans? Here, it is important to recognize the dynamicity and overlapping nature of the identity markers. Furthermore, the chapters find that the identity markers have often functioned as and still function as instruments to imagine divisions between people: for instance, static "racial differences" or "ethnic differences." These constructed differences can be seen as a part of balkanist attempts to "make sense" of the Balkans, which is expounded upon in Chapter 1. Moreover, these (imagined) differences are sometimes emphasized when the framing of the "Other within" focuses on the Balkans as an "ancient breeding ground" of "Balkan turmoil."

Chapter 4 and 5 respectively offer the results and a discussion of the Critical Discourse Analysis. In the analysis, the differences in localization of the Western Balkans in the articles are paid close attention to. The Western Balkans are either placed unequivocally within Europe, they are considered "a part" of Europe, they are considered "an alternative to Europe" or they are not a part of Europe at all. Some articles even interchange different localizations, placing the Western Balkans within Europe as well as considering it an alternative to it, emphasizing the inherent "differentness" of the Western Balkans. What these localizations have in common, however, is that the authors of the news articles are "in charge" of deciding what the Western Balkans "are" and what they are a part of (or not). This tendency of "deciding" what the Western Balkans are or are not can be found in many of the analyzed articles. The "true nature of ethnic groups" is questioned, whether their religion is actually "their religion" is made suspicious and the unseriousness and childlike-ness of the Western Balkans is emphasized. This tendency can be described as being orientalist, as if "the West" has to tend for the "irrational actors" of the Western Balkans, but is perhaps better described as being balkanist, as the

close vicinity to "proper European" actors is often mentioned. Concluding, this tendency can best be described as a "discourse of distrust," where "proper Europe" has to take care of the Western Balkan states, which are imagined as not fully developed yet. However, as the states are also conceptualized as perpetually violent, "help" for the Western Balkan states in the form of EU accession is withheld.

Answering the research question, religion, ethnicity and national identity are mostly used instrumentally. Religious, ethnic and national identities are imagined as central to the identities of Western Balkan people: the "Muslimness" of Bosnians; the emphasis on the "ethnic" identity of Albanians; the religious brotherhood between Montenegrins and Serbs. It is important to note that these categories are not necessarily appointed from the outside: Chapter 2 has shown that this instrumentalization of identity markers has just as well been a matter of policy (for instance, the delineation of ethnoreligious "nations" in the SFRY) and many times, the identity markers are also self-appointed (a Macedonian will tell you that they are Macedonian, just as a Christian Serb will tell you so). That being said, they sometimes are used as mechanistic categories which do not necessarily align with a way of living (for which the modern and divided Bosnia and Herzegovina is an example). By reproducing these categories in Dutch newspapers, it is not only the organizations or political parties that attempt to be representative for entire groups of people, but they are also confirmed by outsiders– being a regular citizen with a Kosovar passport, without special regard for one's religion or ethnicity, becomes nearly impossible. These kinds of outside identifications in the form of harmful narratives, even when they are *meant* well, can have real-life impacts within the world's social sphere.

As this thesis is limited in terms of time spent and word count, it would be best if seen as exploratory research. All four categories–religion, race, ethnicity and national identity–can be expounded upon extensively, which also applies to discourses about the Western Balkans as a whole. Similarly, each Western Balkan country deserves its own examination, as the consequence of lumping the countries together in the "Western Balkans" is that the countries and their peoples are essentialized, which is precisely what this thesis attempts to be critical of. The title of this thesis, *Beyond "Europe's backyard"* refers to one of the articles which denotes the Balkans "Europe's backyard"–an entire chapter or even an entire thesis could be dedicated to the one sentence. Furthermore, the researcher's positionality has likely had an influence on the specificity of the outcomes of this study: despite the aim for objectivity, narratives that particularly cause discomfort are more likely to end up being analyzed. This consequence of one's positionality can be a disadvantage as it can lead to blind spots, yet it can also be an opportunity to develop more engaged styles of research.

As Todorova argued, in the opening quote of this thesis, there is not yet a "complementing and ennobling antiparticle" for balkanism.[354] This thesis has explored real-life instances of balkanism, and as such, anticipates the development of such an antiparticle in future research.

---

[354] Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (Oxford University Press, 2009), 189.

Bibliography

Books and journal articles

Armoudian, Maria. "Constructing "the Others" During Conflict: How Journalism's Norms and Structures Temper Extreme Portrayals." *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 20, no. 3 (July 2015): 360-381).

Baker, Catherine. *Race and the Yugoslav Region: Postsocialist, Post-Conflict, Postcolonialist?* Manchester University Press, 2018.

Boutin, Bérénice. "Responsibility of the Netherlands for the Acts of Dutchbat in Nuhanović and Mustafić: The Continuous Quest for a Tangible Meaning for 'Effective Control' in the Context of Peacekeeping." *Leiden Journal of International Law* 25, no. 1 (2012): 521-535.

Brubaker, Rogers. *Ethnicity without Groups*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004.

Brubaker, Rogers. *Nationalism Reframed.* Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Delanty, Gerard, Ruth Wodak and Paul Jones. *Identity, Belonging and Migration*. Liverpool University Press, 2011.

Driessen, Henk. *In het huis van de islam*. Nijmegen: SUN, 1997.

Erni, Fiorella Larissa. *Tired of Being a Refugee: Social Identification among Young Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon*. Geneva: Graduate Institute Publications, 2013.

Essed, Philomena, and Isabel Hoving. *Dutch Racism*. Leiden: Thamyris/Intersecting, 2014.

Fairclough, Norman. *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*. Harlow: Routledge, 2010.

Fairclough, Norman. *Media Discourse*. London: Hodder Headline Group, 1995.

Flick, Uwe. *An Introduction to Qualitative Research: 6th Edition*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publishing, 2019.

Flick, Uwe. *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis.* London: SAGE Publishing, 2014.

Hall, Stuart. *The Fateful Triangle: Race, Ethnicity, Nation.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017.

Imre, Anikó. "Whiteness in Post-Socialist Eastern Europe: The Time of the Gypsies, the End of Race." In *Postcolonial Whiteness: A Critical Reader on Race and Empire*, edited by Alfred J. López, 79-102. State University of New York Press, 2005.

Kaplan, Robert D. *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey through History*. New York: St. Martin Press, 2005.

Lapidus, Ira M. *A History of Islamic Societies*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

Lazarević Radak, Sanja. "The Geography of Childhood and Affective Archetypes: A Discursive-Mythological Approach to the Representations of Serbia in British and American Interwar Travel Accounts." *Poznańskie Studia Slawistyczne* 23, no. 1 (2022): 129-146.

Lazar, Michelle M. "Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis: Articulating a feminist discourse praxis." *Critical Discourse Studies* 4, no. 2 (2007): 141-164.

Lorenz, Dagmar C. G. "Man and Animal: The Discourse of Exclusion and Discrimination in a Literary Context." *Women in German Yearbook* 14, no. 1 (1998): 201-224.

Krivokapić, Marija, and Armela Panajoti. "On Postcolonial Influence in Balkan Travel Writing." Journal *of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 20, no. 2 (2018): 183-195.

Mazower, Mark. *The Balkans: From the End of Byzantium to the Present Day*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2001.

McCormick, John. *European Union Politics*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.

Morse, Janice M. ""Cherry Picking": Writing From Thin Data." *Qualitative Health Research* 20, no. 3 (2010): 1.

Moser, Albine, and Irene Korstjens. "Series: Practical guidance to Qualitative Research. Part 3: Sampling, Data Collection and Analysis." *European Journal of General Practice* 24, no. 1 (2018): 9-18.

Mujanović, Jasmin. "The EU and the Crisis of Democracy in the Balkans." *Political Insight* 9, no. 1 (April 2018): 9-11.

Mullet, Dianna R. "A General Discourse Analysis Framework for Educational Research." *Journal of Advanced Academics* 29, no. 2 (2018): 116-142.

Parry, Ken. *The Blackwell Companion to Eastern Christianity.* Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2007.

Parry, Ken, David J. Melling, Dimitri Brady et al. *The Blackwell Dictionary of Eastern Christianity.* Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999.

Pedrelli, Stefano. "Scare Quotes and Their Relation to Other Semantic Issues." *Linguistics and Philosophy* 26, no. 1 (2003): 1-28.

Preece, Jennifer Jackson. "The League of Nations Systems of Minority Guarantees (1919-1939)." In *National Minorities and the European Nation-States System*, edited by Jennifer Jackson Preece, 67-94. Oxford University Press, 1998.

Ramet, Sabrina P. *Religion and Politics in Post-Socialist Central and Southeastern Europe: Challenges since 1989*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

Ramet, Sabrina P. and Marko Valenta. *Ethnic Minorities and Politics in Post-Socialist Southeastern Europe*. Cambridge University Press, 2016.

Ramet, Sabrina P., and Sladjana Lazić. "The Collaborationist Regime of Milan Nedić." In *Serbia and the Serbs in World War Two*, edited by Sabrina P. Ramet and Ola Listhaug, 17-43. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

Reynolds, Chelsea. "Building Theory from Media Ideology: Coding for Power in Journalistic Discourse." *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 43, no. 1 (2019): 47-69.

Richardson, John E. *Analysing Newspapers: An Approach from Critical Discourse Analysis*. Macmillan International, 2007.

Rooduijn, Matthijs. "A Populist Zeitgeist? The Impact of Populism on Parties, Media and the Public in Western Europe." Phd diss. University of Amsterdam, 2013.

Ruigrok, Nel. "Journalism of attachment and objectivity: Dutch journalists and the Bosnian War." *Media, War & Conflict* 1, no. 3 (2008): 293-313.

Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1978.

Saldaña, Johnny. *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. London: Sage, 2016.

Sardelić, Julija. *The Fringes of Citizenship: Romani Minorities in Europe and Civic Marginalisation*. Manchester University Press, 2021.

Schrover, Marlou. "De opkomst van de asielzoeker." In *De vluchtelingenrepubliek: een migratiegeschiedenis van Nederland*, edited by David de Boer and Geert Janssen, 222-239. Amsterdam: Prometheus, 2023.

Semetko, Holli A., and Patti M. Valkenburg, "Framing European Politics: A Content Analysis of Press and Television News." *Journal of Communication* 50, no. 2 (2000): 93-109.

Strausberg, Michael, and Steven Engler. *The Routledge Handbook of Research Methods in the Study of Religion*, edited by Michael Strausberg and Steven Engler. Abingdon: Routledge, 2011.

Todorova, Maria. *Imagining the Balkans*. Oxford University Press, 2009.

Tudor, Alyosxa. "Ascriptions of migration: Racism, migratism and Brexit." *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 26, no. 2 (2023): 230-248.

Van Dijk, Teun. *Ideology: A Multidisciplinary Approach.* London: SAGE Publications, 1998.

Van Dijk, Teun. *Prejudice in Discourse: An Analysis of Ethnic Prejudice in Cognition and Conversation*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1984.

Van Dijk, Teun. "Principles of Critical Discourse Analysis." *Discourse and Society* 4, no. 2 (1993): 249-283.

Van Duijnen, Michel. "'The Stepchildren of the Balkans': How Nationalism Affected the Dutch Press Coverage of Kosovo and Macedonia during the Break-up of Yugoslavia." *Jonge Historici Schrijven Geschiedenis* 35, no.1 (2012): 1-125.

Van Gorp, Jasmijn, and Kevin Smets. "Diaspora organizations, Imagined Communities and the Versatility of Diaspora: The Case of Former Yugoslav Organizations in the Netherlands." *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 25, no. 1 (2015): 70-85.

Veliu, Liridona. *#Balkanization: A Critical Study of Otherness through Twitter*. Wiesbaden: Springer, 2018.

Wekker, Gloria. *Witte onschuld: paradoxen van kolonialisme en ras*. Amsterdam University Press, 2016.

Widdowson, H.G. "Discourse analysis: a critical view." *Language and Literature* 4, no 3. (1995): 157-172.

Willey-Sthapit, Claire, Sarah Jen, Heather L. Storer and Odessa Gonzales Benson. "Discursive Decisions: Signposts to Guide the Use of Critical Discourse Analysis in Social Work." *Qualitative Social Work* 21, no. 1 (2022): 129-146.

Zgut, Edit."Informal Exercise of Power: Undermining Democracy Under the EU's Radar in Hungary and Poland." *Hague Journal on the Rule of Law* 14, no. 2-3 (2022): 287-308.

News articles and other media

"Accession to the EU." European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, European Commission. Accessed May 23, 2023, https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/enlargement-policy/glossary/accession-eu_en#:~:text=Accession%20of%20new%20member%20states,and%20undertake%20to%20promote%20them.

Analistennetwerk Nationale Veiligheid. *De gevolgen van de Russische oorlog in Oekraïne voor de nationale veiligheid van het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden*. Clingendael Institute, 2023. https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/rapporten/2023/04/03/tk-bijlage-2-de-gevolgen-van-de-russische-oorlog-in-oekraine-voor-de-nationale-veiligheid.

Bayoumi, Moustafa. "They are 'civilised' and 'look like us': the racist coverage of Ukraine." *The Guardian*, March 2, 2022. https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/mar/02/civilised-european-look-like-us-racist-coverage-ukraine.

"Bevolking; geslacht; leeftijd; generatie en migratieachtergrond." Statline, CBS. Last modified May 31, 2022. https://opendata.cbs.nl/statline/#/CBS/nl/dataset/37325/table?ts=1693909678700.

Boffey, Daniel. "Mind our language: Bulgaria blocks North Macedonia's EU path." *The Guardian*, November 17, 2020. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/nov/17/mind-our-language-bulgaria-blocks-north-macedonias-eu-path.

"Bosnia and Herzegovina," EU enlargement policy, European Council. Last reviewed July 20, 2023. https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/enlargement/bosnia-herzegovina/.

De Munter, André. "The Western Balkans." External relations, European Parliament. Last modified April 2023. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/168/the-western-balkans.

De Zorzi, Ivo. "10 goedkope vakantielanden voor een betaalbare droomvakantie." Corendon, March 27, 2023. https://www.corendon.nl/inspiratie/top-5-goedkope-vakantiebestemmingen/.

De Waal, Marijn, Derk Walters, Floris van Straaten and Jamila Meischkeet. "De wereld buiten Europa heeft andere vergezichten." NRC, December 30, 2023. https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2022/12/30/de-wereld-buiten-europa-heeft-andere-vergezichten-a4152988.

"Education." European Studies, University of Amsterdam. Accessed September 15, 2023. https://www.uva.nl/en/discipline/european-studies/education/article.html.

Emmott, Robin, Francesco Guarascio and Marine Pennetier. "France under fire for "historic error" of blocking Balkan EU hopefuls." *Reuters,* October 18, 2019. https://www.reuters.com/article/us-eu-summit-balkans-idUSKBN1WX1CT.

"Excuses van premier Rutte voor Dutchbat III, 27 jaar na val van Srebrenica." Nieuws, Rijksoverheid. June 6, 2022. https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/actueel/nieuws/2022/06/18/excuses-van-premier-rutte-voor-dutchbat-iii-27-jaar-na-val-van-srebrenica.

Hessels, Thomas. *Voormalig Joegoslaven in Nederland.* CBS, 20005. https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/achtergrond/2005/11/bevolkingstrends-1e-kwartaal-2005.

"Hilde Kieboom bei #TheCryForPeace," Sant'Egidio. Accessed May 23, 2023. https://preghieraperlapace.santegidio.org/pageID/31533/langID/nl/text/3769/Hilde-Kieboom-bei-thecryforpeace.html.

Hiltermann, G. B. J. "De wereld vandaag: barbaars geweld eist maatregelen." *De Telegraaf*, January 23, 1999.

Hovet, Jason, Robert Muller and Fatos Bytyci, "Kosovo formally applies to join EU," *Reuters*, December 15, 2022. ttps://www.reuters.com/world/europe/kosovo-submits-eu-membership-application-2022-12-15/.

"Kabinetscrisis 2002: Srebrenica." Parlement.com. Accessed December 20, 2023. https://www.parlement.com/id/vh8lnhrp8wsg/kabinetscrisis_2002_srebrenica.

Koinova, Maria. *Minorities in Southeast Europe: Roma of Albania*. Greece: Center for Documentation and Information on Minorities in Europe - Southeast Europe, 2000.

"Kosovo visa liberalisation signed for entry in early 2024." Migration and Home Affairs, European Commission. April 21, 2023. https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/news/kosovo-visa-liberalisation-signed-entry-early-2024-2023-04-21_en.

"Kroatië, op de grens van Europa en de Balkan." Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, Rijksoverheid. January 13, 2023. https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/ministeries/ministerie-van-buitenlandse-zaken/het-werk-van-bz-in-de-praktijk/weblogs/2023/nederlandse-ambassadeur-in-kroatie

Meindertsma, Ben. "Albanezen grootste groep die nu asiel aanvraagt." NOS Nieuws, March 28, 2016. https://nos.nl/artikel/2095645-albanezen-grootste-groep-die-nu-asiel-aanvraagt.

"Nabestaanden genocide Srebrenica naar Europees Hof." NOS Nieuws, January 20, 2020. https://nos.nl/collectie/13844/artikel/2319460-nabestaanden-genocide-srebrenica-stappen-naar-europees-hof.

"Nabestaanden Srebrenica over excuses: 'Eindelijk is het zover.'" NOS Nieuws, July 11, 2022, https://nos.nl/artikel/2436299-nabestaanden-srebrenica-over-excuses-eindelijk-is-het-zover.

"Nederland biedt nabestaanden Srebrenica excuses aan." Nieuws, Rijksoverheid. July 11, 2022. https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/actueel/nieuws/2022/07/11/nederland-biedt-nabestaanden-srebrenica-excuses-aan.

News Media and Political Attitudes in the Netherlands." Pew Research Center. Accessed December 20, 2023. https://www.pewresearch.org/global/fact-sheet/news-media-and-political-attitudes-in-netherlands/.

"World Religion: National/Regional Profiles," The Association of Religion Data Archives, accessed December 19, 2023, https://www.thearda.com/world-religion/national-profiles?u=23r

Sadée, Tijn. "De Albanezen doen het wel zonder Brussel." *De Groene Amsterdammer*, July 13, 2022. https://www.groene.nl/artikel/de-albanezen-doen-het-wel-zonder-brussel.

Secularac, Ivana., "Head of European Council says EU must be ready for new members by 2030." *Reuters*, August 28, 2023. https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/head-european-council-says-eu-must-be-ready-new-members-by-2030-2023-08-28/.

"Srebrenica 21 years on: another 127 victims buried," News, International Commission on Missing Persons, accessed September 14, 2023, https://www.icmp.int/news/srebrenica-21-years-on-another-127-victims-buried/.

"Srebrenica, een 'veilig' gebied." NIOD Instituut voor Oorlogs-, Holocaust- en Genocidestudies. Accessed December 20, 2023. https://www.niod.nl/nl/publicaties/srebrenica-een-veilig-gebied.

Stojanović, Dušan. "EU official proposes 2030 as enlargement deadline for states that have long been waiting in line," *AP News*, August 28, 2023. https://apnews.com/article/balkans-european-union-enlargement-russia-ukraine-michel-51be2bc9c53092c16d4011bc8542c156

Taylor, Alice. "Scholz asks EU to keep promises to Western Balkans." *Euractiv*, May 10, 2023. https://www.euractiv.com/section/politics/news/scholz-asks-eu-to-keep-promises-to-western-balkans/.

The Balkans in Europe Policy Advisory Group. *Strict, Fair and More Open Towards EU Enlargement!* BiEPAG, 2022. https://biepag.eu/publication/strict-fair-and-more-open-towards-eu-enlargement/.

"The EU's geopolitical holiday is over." *EPP Group*. February 22, 2022, https://www.eppgroup.eu/newsroom/news/the-eu-s-geopolitical-holiday-is-over.

Van der Linde, Irene. "Als Alma Mustafić omkijkt." *De Groene Amsterdammer*, July 6, 2022. https://www.groene.nl/artikel/als-alma-mustafic-omkijkt

"Vijf vragen over de invoering van de euro in Kroatië." Algemeen nieuws, De Nederlandsche Bank. January 13, 2023. https://www.dnb.nl/algemeen-nieuws/nieuwsberichten-2023/vijf-vragen-over-de-invoering-van-de-euro-in-kroatie/.

"'Where is Balkan?' by Slavoj Žižek." Youtube. February 21, 2022. Video, 14:16. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3rpEQmtkstM.

Wieten, Jan. *Srebrenica: een 'veilig' gebied: Srebrenica en de journalistiek.* Amsterdam: Nederlands Instituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie, 2002.

"World Religion: National/Regional Profiles." The Association of Religion Data Archives. Accessed December 19, 2023. https://www.thearda.com/world-religion/national-profiles?u=23r.

Zweers, Wouter, Niels Drost and Baptiste Henry. "Russian influence in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro." Research, Clingendael Institute. August 17, 2023. https://www.clingendael.org/publication/russian-influence-serbia-bosnia-and-herzegovina-and-montenegro.

Newspaper articles (CDA)

Bleich, Anet. "De oude Balkan-demonen huizen ook buiten Belgrado." *De Volkskrant*, June 26, 1999.

Brouwers, Arnout. "Risk op Balkan is geen spelletje." *De Volkskrant*, September 4, 2017.

Colceru, Cornel. "Bosnië vraagt om offensieve aanpak; Gevaren in achtertuin Europa nog volop aanwezig." *Algemeen Dagblad*, April 16, 1996.

Colceru, Cornel. "Welvaart is sleutel voor Balkanvrede; Macedonië." *Trouw*, April 4, 2001.

Crijnen, Ton. "Een prik die veel pijn doet; Joegoslavië." *Trouw*, June 19, 1999.

De Groen, Els. "Angst voor de islam? Niet hun religie verbindt Grieken en Serviërs; 'Eetlust' ten koste buurvolken." *Trouw*, July 1, 1993.

De Groen, Els. "Macedoniërs en Albanezen: de stiefkinderen van de Balkan." *Algemeen Dagblad*, January 8, 1994.

De Koning, Marloes. "Europa's nieuwe grens gaat pijn doen." *NRC*, June 29, 2003.

De Krom, P. and A. Visser. "Dansen kan, maar samenleven op Balkan nog niet; Ex-Joegoslavië." *Trouw*, May 19, 2005.

De Telegraaf. "Balkan is ideaal kruitvat voor Poetin; Moskou blijft er vuurtje opstoken om Westen op de proef te stellen." August 2, 2022.

De Telegraaf. "Brand in de vallei." May 7, 1999.

De Telegraaf. "NAVO klem in Balkan-wespennest." March 29, 2001.

De Telegraaf. "Ramp-uitbreiding maakt EU kapot." April 20, 2018.

De Telegraaf. "Tadić gooit olie op vuur Kosovo." February 15, 2005.

De Telegraaf. "Verdeeldheid over opvang Kosovaren." April 6, 1999.

Elshout, Arie. "Brussel durft weer aan uitbreiding te denken." *De Volkskrant*, February 7, 2018.

Faber, Mient Jan. "Balkan ontwricht 50-jarige NAVO." *Algemeen Dagblad*, April 4, 1999.

Heering, Aart. "Anatomie van een guerrillabeweging op de Balkan; Extremisten misleidden de bevolking met gematigde eisen." *Algemeen Dagblad*, March 27, 2001.

Heering, Aart. "Een Albanees van goede wil in Macedonië." *Algemeen Dagblad*, March 27, 2001.

Heering, Aart. "Macedonië: Balkanstaatje vreest voor opleving van Albanees separatisme - Kosovo is de grootste kopzorg van Macedonië." *Algemeen Dagblad*, November 27, 2007.

Holslag, Jonathan. "Het kan weer escaleren." *Trouw*, January 5, 2018.

Kettenis, Thijs. "Albanië is teleurgesteld in Nederland." *Trouw*, October 25, 2019.

Kettenis, Thijs. "Steeds minder Noord-Macedoniërs, maar niemand vindt dat erg." *Trouw*, April 2, 2022.

Klerks, Martijn. "Grenzen." *De Telegraaf*, May 17, 2015.

Kliphuis, James. "Soms zet Kosovo zijn etnische beginselen even opzij." *Trouw*, October 31, 1996.

Koelé, Theo. "Haat is nooit uit Kosovo verdwenen." *De Volkskrant*, July 22, 2020.

Koelé, Theo. "Israël herkent zichzelf in Kosovo." *De Volkskrant*, April 6, 1999.

Krielaars, Michel. "Iedereen zou dit boek over een verlaten uithoek van Europa moeten lezen." *NRC*, June 10, 2021.

Kuitert, Hans. "Analyse: Experiment Macedonië onder druk." *De Telegraaf*, September 3, 2003.

Lucas, Nicole. "Er smeulen nog meer brokken van Joegoslavië." *Trouw*, August 8, 1992.

Michielsen, Peter. "De storm van de oorlog bereikt het zuiden; Tien jaar vechten om verdeling Joegoslavische boedel." *NRC*, March 24, 2001.

Michielsen, Peter. "Het is nu even gedaan met grenswijzigingen op Balkan; Er zijn nu twee Albanese staten, maar een Groot-Albanië mag er van de internationale gemeenschap niet komen." *NRC*, February 23, 2008.

Michielsen, Peter. "Joegoslavië vecht tot de boedel is verdeeld." *NRC*, September 26, 1991.

NRC. "EU tot Skopje: aanvaard compromis." July 15, 2022.

Rijs, Bart. "Land met twee volken is een etnisch kruitvat op de Balkan; Macedonië leeft met de angst [sic] voor Albanees zelfbestuur." *De Volkskrant*, November 21, 1997.

Roessingh, Martijn. "Macedonië is van iedereen; Cartografie." *Trouw*, March 22, 2001.

Rosman, Cyril. "'Herdenking is een circus.'" *Algemeen Dagblad*, July 11, 2016.

Sampiemon, J. H. "Groot-Albanese gedachte is rijp voor schroothoop." *NRC*, March 16, 2001.

Santing, Froukje. "Etnisch conflict Bosnië dreigt uit te groeien tot religieus conflict." *NRC*, August 17, 1992.

Schelfaut, Sanne. "Conflict Servië en Kosovo loopt weer hoog op." *Algemeen Dagblad*, December 28, 2022.

Schimmelpenninck, Sander. "De EU is als een nachtclub waarvoor iedereen zenuwachtig in de rij staat." *De Volkskrant*, May 8, 2023.

Steketee, Hans. "Bosnische moslims en de wurggreep van Dayton; Gelegenheidsgeloof in een eigen natie." *NRC*, March 20, 1996.

Stellweg, Carl. "Een kruispunt van volken; Positie van Macedonië uiterst kwetsbaar." *Algemeen Dagblad*, April 22, 1999.

Tempelman, Olaf. "Bosnië en Kosovo; De etnisch homogene staat onvermijdelijk?" *De Volkskrant*, December 3, 1999.

Tempelman, Olaf. "De nooduitgang gaat in nevelen gehuld; Macedonië." *De Volkskrant*, June 7, 2001.

Tempelman, Olaf. "Multi-etnisch herstel in Kosovo is kansloos." *De Volkskrant*, April 7, 2004.

Tempelman, Olaf. "Rebellen leggen bom onder multi-etnisch Macedonië." *De Volkskrant*, March 16, 2001.

Termote, Roeland. "Een steunpunt van de nationale identiteit." *NRC*, July 13, 2018.

Termote, Roeland. "Territoriale taaltwist om Alexanders koninkrijk." *NRC*, June 14, 2018.

Thomassen, Michel. "Genscher liet geweld in Kroatië exploderen." *Algemeen Dagblad*, May 1, 1992.

Trkulja, Goran. "Montenegro wordt zeker onafhankelijk." *Trouw*, December 3, 1999.

Trouw. "'Afscheiding heeft voor ons geen zin'; Macedonië; Albanezen pesten Macedoniërs en andersom; Wat moet je anders?" March 8, 2001.

Trouw. "Een uiteenspattend Macedonië is het laatste wat Europa kan gebruiken." May 18, 2015.

Trouw. "Houd Bosnië in het keurslijf van Dayton." December 22, 2020.

Van Aalderen, Maarten. "Spanningen terug in Kosovo; Grenspost met geweld overmeesterd na importrel." *De Telegraaf*, July 27, 2011.

Van Assen, Mark. "Laatste uitspraak Joegoslavië Tribunaal; Pleegde Mladić een of twee keer genocide?" *Algemeen Dagblad*, June 8, 2021.

Van den Boogaard, Raymond. "'De Balkan verdwijnt'; Belgische historicus Raymond Detrez over de saaiheid van de homogene staat." *NRC*, August 7, 1999.

Van den Boogaard, Raymond. "Na elk Joegoslavisch akkoord meer strijd." *NRC*, October 22, 1992.

Van de Kreeke, Guido. "Topdiplomaat Daan Everts: Na Bosnië probeert Nederlandse OSVE-leider [sic] Kosovo weer leefbaar te maken." *De Telegraaf*, November 13, 1999.

Van der Zweerde, Evert. "Heel ex-Joegoslavië moet bij de EU." *De Volkskrant*, May 30, 2011.

Van Duijn, Roel. "In Tetovo broeit een nieuwe oorlog; Aanhangers van Groot-Albanië terroriseren Macedoniërs." *Algemeen Dagblad*, December 29, 2001.

Van Egmond, Joost. "Bosnië durft te dromen van EU-lidmaatschap." *Trouw*, February 13, 2012.

Van Houwelingen, Karlijn. "Paar vonken nodig en het escaleert." *Algemeen Dagblad*, April 10, 2014.

Van Hövell tot Westerflier, Wilbert. "Bouwen aan multi-etnisch Kosovo moet doorgaan." *NRC*, July 26, 2000.

Van Huët, Bob. "Is het racisme in Oost-Europa erger dan hier?" *Algemeen Dagblad*, April 6, 2019.

Van Outeren, Emilie. "Albanië snijdt zo diep dat het geen rechter overhoudt." *NRC*, June 17, 2019.

Van 't Hof, Gerben. "Oorlogstaal: Nationalistische oud-strijders willen afrekenen met Albanezen - Servische wolf gromt naar Kosovo." *Algemeen Dagblad*, December 3, 2007.

Van Vliet, Frank. "Gebed zonder end." *De Telegraaf*, July 11, 2020.

Van Vliet, Frank. "Kosovo, een wespennest voor KFOR." *De Telegraaf*, February 24, 2000.

Van Vliet, Frank. "Lastig feest." *De Telegraaf*, February 17, 2018.

Vervaeke, Leen. "Kosovo werkt koortsachtig aan P-day; Vlag van Kosova moet politiek neutraal zijn." *De Volkskrant,* February 15, 2008.

Weststrate, Job. "Meer natiestaten maken Europa er niet mooier op." *De Volkskrant*, October 8, 1997.

Wiersma, Jan Marinus. "EU moet West-Balkan integreren." *De Volkskrant,* October 27, 2017.

Appendix 1

Attribute codes						
Publication title	Publication date (dd-mm-yyyy)	Author name	Article headline	Author's occupation	Article genre	Article code in Appx. 2
Algemeen Dagblad	1-5-1992	Michel Thomassen	Genscher liet geweld in Kroatië exploderen	Journalist	News	1AD1
Algemeen Dagblad	8-1-1994	Els de Groen	Macedoniërs en Albanezen: de stiefkinderen van de Balkan	Journalist	News	1AD2
Algemeen Dagblad	16-4-1996	Cornel Colceru	Bosnië vraagt om offensieve aanpak; Gevaren in achtertuin Europa nog volop aanwezig	Director Romania-focused consultancy firm	Opinion	1AD3
Algemeen Dagblad	4-4-1999	Mient Jan Faber	Balkan ontwricht 50-jarige NAVO	General secretary Interkerkelijk Vredesberaad (IKV)	Opinion	1AD4
Algemeen Dagblad	22-4-1999	Carl Stellweg	Een kruispunt van volken; Positie van Macedonië uiterst kwetsbaar	Journalist	News	1AD5
Algemeen Dagblad	24-3-2001	Aart Heering	Een Albanees van goede wil in Macedonië	Journalist	News	2AD1
Algemeen Dagblad	27-3-2001	Aart Heering	Anatomie van een guerrillabeweging op de Balkan; Extremisten misleidden de bevolking met	Journalist	News	2AD2

				gematigde eisen			
Algemeen Dagblad	29-12-2001	Roel van Duijn	In Tetovo broeit een nieuwe oorlog; Aanhangers van Groot-Albanië terroriseren Macedoniërs	Politician; activist	Opinion	2AD3
Algemeen Dagblad	27-11-2007	Aart Heering	Macedonië: Balkanstaatje vreest voor opleving van Albanees separatisme - Kosovo is de grootste kopzorg van Macedonië	Journalist	News	2AD4
Algemeen Dagblad	3-12-2007	Gerben van 't Hof	Oorlogstaal: Nationalistische oud-strijders willen afrekenen met Albanezen - Servische wolf gromt naar Kosovo	Journalist	News	2AD5
Algemeen Dagblad	10-4-2014	Karlijn van Houwelingen	Paar vonken nodig en het escaleert	Journalist	Interview	3AD1
Algemeen Dagblad	11-7-2016	Cyril Rosman	Herdenking is een circus	Journalist	News	3AD2
Algemeen Dagblad	6-4-2019	Bob van Huët	Is het racisme in Oost-Europa erger dan hier?	Journalist	Sports news	3AD3
Algemeen Dagblad	8-6-2021	Mark van Assen	Laatste uitspraak Joegoslavië Tribunaal; Pleegde Mladić een of twee keer genocide?	Journalist	News	3AD4
Algemeen Dagblad	28-12-2022	Sanne Schelfaut	Conflict Servië en Kosovo loopt weer hoog op	Journalist	News	3AD5
de Telegraaf	6-4-1999	/	Verdeeldheid over opvang Kosovaren	/	News	1TG1

de Telegraaf	7-5-1999	/	Brand in de vallei	/	Entertainment news	1TG2
de Telegraaf	13-12-1999	Guido van de Kreeke	Topdiplomaat Daan Everts: Na Bosnië probeert Nederlandse OSVE-leider [sic] Kosovo weer leefbaar te maken	Journalist	Interview	1TG3
de Telegraaf	24-2-2000	Frank van Vliet	Kosovo, een wespennest voor KFOR	Journalist	News	2TG1
de Telegraaf	29-3-2001	/	NAVO klem in Balkan-wespennest	/	News	2TG2
de Telegraaf	3-9-2003	Hans Kuitert	Analyse: Experiment Macedonië onder druk	Author	Opinion	2TG3
de Telegraaf	15-2-2005	/	Tadić gooit olie op vuur Kosovo	/	News	2TG4
de Telegraaf	27-6-2011	Maarten van Aalderen	Spanningen terug in Kosovo; Grenspost met geweld overmeesterd na importrel	Journalist	News	2TG5
de Telegraaf	17-5-2015	Martijn Klerks	Grenzen	Journalist	News	3TG1
de Telegraaf	17-2-2018	Frank van Vliet	Lastig feest	Journalist	News	3TG2
de Telegraaf	20-4-2018	/	Ramp-uitbreiding maakt EU kapot	/	News	3TG3
de Telegraaf	11-7-2020	Frank van Vliet	Gebed zonder end	Journalist	News	3TG4
de Telegraaf	2-8-2022	/	Balkan is ideaal kruitvat voor Poetin; Moskou blijft er vuurtje opstoken om Westen op de proef te	/	News	3TG5

			stellen			
De Volkskrant	8-10-1997	Job Weststrate	Meer natiestaten maken Europa er niet mooier op	Student	Opinion	1VK1
De Volkskrant	21-11-1997	Bart Rijs	Land met twee volken is een etnisch kruitvat op de Balkan; Macedonië leeft met de angt [sic] voor Albanees zelfbestuur	Journalist	News	1VK2
De Volkskrant	6-4-1999	Theo Koelé	Israël herkent zichzelf in Kosovo	Journalist	News	1VK3
De Volkskrant	26-6-1999	Anet Bleich	De oude Balkan-demonen huizen ook buiten Belgrado	Journalist	News	1VK4
De Volkskrant	3-12-1999	Olaf Tempelman	Bosnië en Kosovo; de etnisch homogene staat onvermijdelijk?	Journalist	News	1VK5
De Volkskrant	16-3-2001	Olaf Tempelman	Rebellen leggen bom onder multi-etnisch Macedonië	Journalist	News	2VK1
De Volkskrant	7-6-2001	Olaf Tempelman	De nooduitgang gaat in nevelen gehuld; Macedonië	Journalist	News	2VK2
De Volkskrant	7-4-2004	Olaf Tempelman	Multi-etnisch herstel in Kosovo is kansloos	Journalist	News	2VK3
De Volkskrant	15-2-2008	Leen Vervaeke	Kosovo werkt koortsachtig aan P-day; Vlag van Kosova moet politiek neutraal zijn	Journalist	News	2VK4
De Volkskrant	30-5-2011	Evert van der Zweerde	Heel ex-Joegoslavië moet bij de EU	Scholar	Opinion	2VK5
De Volkskrant	4-9-2017	Arnout Brouwers	Risk op de Balkan is geen	Journalist	Opinion	3VK1

			spelletje			
De Volkskrant	27-10-2017	Jan Marinus Wiersma	EU moet West-Balkan integreren	Former politician; fellow at Clingendael Institute	Opinion	3VK2
De Volkskrant	7-2-2018	Arie Elshout	Brussel durft weer aan uitbreiding te denken	Journalist	News	3VK3
De Volkskrant	22-7-2020	Theo Koelé	Haat is nooit uit Kosovo verdwenen	Journalist	Analysis	3VK4
De Volkskrant	8-5-2023	Sander Schimmelpenninck	De EU is als een nachtclub waarvoor iedereen zenuwachtig in de rij staat	Opinion maker	Opinion	3VK5
NRC	26-9-1991	Peter Michielsen	Joegoslavië vecht tot de boedel is verdeeld	Journalist	Opinion	1NRC1
NRC	17-8-1992	Froukje Santing	Etnisch conflict Bosnië dreigt uit te groeien tot religieus conflict	Journalist	News	1NRC2
NRC	22-10-1992	Raymond van den Boogaard	Na elk Joegoslavisch akkoord meer strijd	Journalist	News	1NRC3
NRC	20-3-1996	Hans Steketee	Bosnische moslims en de wurggreep van Dayton; Gelegenheidsgeloof in een eigen natie	Journalist	Analysis	1NRC4
NRC	7-8-1999	Raymond van den Boogaard	"De Balkan verdwijnt"; Belgische historicus Raymond Detrez over de saaiheid van de homogene staat	Journalist	Interview	1NRC5

NRC	26-7-2000	Wilbert van Hövell tot Westerflier	Bouwen aan multi-etnisch Kosovo moet doorgaan	Former deputy chief of UNHCR	Opinion	2NRC1
NRC	16-3-2001	J. H. Sampiemon	Groot-Albanese gedachte is rijp voor schroothoop	Journalist	Opinion	2NRC2
NRC	24-3-2001	Peter Michielsen	De storm van de oorlog bereikt het zuiden; Tien jaar vechten om verdeling Joegoslavische boedel	Journalist	News	2NRC3
NRC	23-2-2008	Peter Michielsen	Het is nu even gedaan met grenswijzigingen op Balkan; Er zijn nu twee Albanese staten, maar een Groot-Albanië mag er van de internationale gemeenschap niet komen	Journalist	News	2NRC4
NRC	29-6-2013	Marloes de Koning	Europa's nieuwe grens gaat pijn doen	Journalist	Human interest	2NRC5
NRC	14-6-2018	Roeland Termote	Territoriale taaltwist om Alexanders koninkrijk	Journalist	News	3NRC1
NRC	13-7-2018	Roeland Termote	Een steunpilaar van de nationale identiteit	Journalist	Sports news	3NRC2
NRC	17-6-2019	Emilie van Outeren	Albanië snijdt zo diep dat het geen rechter overhoudt	Journalist	News	3NRC3
NRC	10-6-2021	Michel Krielaars	Iedereen zou dit boek over een verlaten uithoek van Europa moeten lezen	Journalist	Book review	3NRC4
NRC	15-7-2022	/	EU tot Skopje: aanvaard compromis	/	Analysis	3NRC5

Trouw	8-8-1992	Nicole Lucas	Er smeulen nog meer brokken van Joegoslavië	Journalist	News	1TRW1
Trouw	1-7-1993	Els de Groen	Angst voor de islam? Niet hun religie verbindt Grieken en Serviërs; 'Eetlust' ten koste buurvolken	Journalist	Commentary	1TRW2
Trouw	31-10-1996	James Kliphuis	Soms zet Kosovo zijn etnische beginselen even opzij	Journalist	News	1TRW3
Trouw	19-6-1999	Ton Crijnen	Een prik die veel pijn doet; Joegoslavië	Journalist	Analysis	1TRW4
Trouw	3-12-1999	Goran Trkulja	Montenegro wordt zeker onafhankelijk	Journalist	Opinion	1TRW5
Trouw	8-3-2001	/	Afscheiding heeft voor ons geen zin; Macedonië; Albanezen pesten Macedoniërs en andersom; wat moet je anders?	/	News	2TRW1
Trouw	22-3-2001	Martijn Roessingh	Macedonië is van iedereen; Cartografie	Journalist	Analysis	2TRW2
Trouw	4-4-2001	Cornel Colceru	Welvaart is sleutel voor Balkanvrede; Macedonië	Director Romania-focused consultancy firm	Opinion	2TRW3
Trouw	19-5-2005	P. de Krom, A. Visser	Dansen kan, maar samenleven op Balkan nog niet; Ex-Joegoslavië	Members of Parliament (VVD)	Opinion	2TRW4
Trouw	13-2-2012	Joost van Egmond	Bosnië durft te dromen van EU-lidmaatschap	Journalist	News	2TRW5

Trouw	18-5-2015	Editorial board	Een uiteenspattend Macedonië is het laatste wat Europa kan gebruiken	/	Editorial	3TRW1
Trouw	5-1-2018	Jonathan Holslag	Het kan weer escaleren	Political scientist	Analysis	3TRW2
Trouw	25-10-2019	Thijs Kettenis	Albanië is teleurgesteld in Nederland	Journalist	News	3TRW3
Trouw	22-12-2020	Editorial board	Houd Bosnië in het keurslijf van Dayton	/	Editorial	3TRW4
Trouw	2-4-2022	Thijs Kettenis	Steeds minder Noord-Macedoniërs, maar niemand vindt dat erg	Journalist	News	3TRW5

Appendix 2

Descriptive codes			
Topic	Discourse strand or sub-topic	Sub-strand or sub-topic	Example
Albanians	Albanians (group)	Albanians are where problems are	"When things went wrong in the Balkans in recent years, Albanians were always involved"[355]
		Albanians as a "forgotten entity"	"... the Albanians, a forgotten entity in the ethnically rich Balkans"[356]
Religion	Religious fanaticism	~	"the Sandzak, a region on the border of Serbia and Montenegro known both for its unpolished ways and its religious fanaticism"[357]
	Religious fundamentalism	Religious fundamentalism is almost absent in Albania	"Religious fundamentalism is virtually absent in Albania - more women walk in hotpants than headscarves"[358]
	Islam	Rise of radical Islam	"But China and Russia are gaining influence there, and even the radical Islam is advancing in this 'black hole' of Europe"[359]
	Muslim identity	"Muslim" as synonym for "Bosniak"	"The three main Serbian suspects were stuck in Scheveningen with Croats and

---

[355] "Als het de afgelopen jaren misging op de Balkan, waren er altijd Albanezen in het spel"; 2TG3.

[356] "... de Albanezen, een vergeten entiteit op de etnisch rijk geschakeerde Balkan"; 2NRC2.

[357] "... de Sandzak, een regio op de grens van Servië en Montenegro die zowel bekend staat om haar ongepolijste manieren als haar religieuze fanatisme"; 1NRC4.

[358] "Religieus fundamentalisme is vrijwel afwezig in Albanië – er lopen meer vrouwen in hotpants dan met een hoofddoek"; 3NRC3.

[359] "Maar China en Rusland winnen er aan invloed en zelfs de radicale islam is aan een opmars bezig in dit 'zwarte gat' van Europa"; 3TG2.

			Muslims"[360]
		Albanian Muslims–belief is questioned	"Although they [Albanians] are not overflowing with religious zeal"[361]
		Bosnian Muslims are opportunistic–belief is questioned	"'Salem Aleikum, brothers!, shout their Bosnian fellow believers as they hide their beer bottles. How opportunistic is the faith of Bosnian Muslims?"[362]
	Christian identity	Serbian-Orthodox Church as the only symbol of national identity for Serbs	"For the church is still the only symbol of nationality"[363]
	Christian brotherhood	Brotherhood through shared belief of Greece and Serbia is questioned	"What binds Serbs and Greeks together is not their mutual religion, but their common interest in a weak Macedonia that bends to their wishes"[364]
		Brotherhood through shared belief of Montenegro and Serbia	"A close bond exists between Serbs and Montenegrins, mainly because both peoples mostly belong to the same faith: the Serbian Orthodox Church."[365]
Race	Racialization	Orientalism	"... the young men hanging around ... and who in their manner of dress and mannerisms exude something

---

[360] "De drie belangrijkste Servische verdachten zaten in Scheveningen vast met Kroaten en moslims"; 3AD4.

[361] "Hoewel ze [Albanezen] niet overlopen van geloofsijver"; 1VK2.

[362] "'Salem Aleikum [sic], broeders!' , roepen hun Bosnische geloofsgenoten terwijl ze hun bierflessen verstoppen. Hoe opportunistisch is het geloof van de Bosnische moslims?"; 1NRC4.

[363] "Want de kerk is nog immer het enige symbool van nationaliteit"; 1TRW4.

[364] "Wat Serven en Grieken aaneensmeedt is niet hun beider religie, maar hun gemeenschappelijk belang bij een zwak Macedonië dat zich plooit naar hun wensen"; 1TRW2.

[365] "Tussen Serviërs en Montenegrijnen bestaat een hechte band, vooral doordat beide volkeren merendeels tot hetzelfde geloof behoren: de Servisch Orthodoxe kerk [sic]"; 1TRW5.

			oriental"[366]
	Racial pejoratives	Gypsies	"By now, have you become a Balkan gypsy yourself?"[367]
Ethnicity	Ethnic groups	Discrimination of ethnic groups	"This has to do with an old law from the time of the Federation, when Albanian classes could only be formed at a minimum of 30 students, while no conditions were imposed on Macedonians"[368]
	Ethnically sensitive areas	~	"Albanian-Kosovar police KPS tried to take over border posts in this very ethnically sensitive north of Kosovo"[369]
	Ethnic cleansing	Ethnic cleansing of Kosovo	"Kosovo is being ethnically cleansed at breakneck speed"[370]
		Ethnic cleansing in Bosnia	"Bosnian Serbs wanted to include faith and ethnicity in the census; Muslims saw this as an attempt to legitimize wartime ethnic cleansing"[371]
		Ethnic cleansing by Albanian Kosovars	"The impression that subversive groups of Albanian Kosovars are tinkering with an ethnically cleansed Greater Kosovo

[366] "... de jonge mannen die rondhangen … en die in hun manier van kleden en manier van doen iets oriëntaals uitstralen"; 1VK2.

[367] "Bent u inmiddels zelf een Balkan-zigeuner geworden?" 1TG3.

[368] "Dat heeft met een oude wet uit de tijd van de Federatie te maken, toen Albanese klassen pas mochten worden gevormd bij een minimum van 30 leerlingen, terwijl aan Macedoniërs geen voorwaarden werden gesteld"; 1AD2.

[369] "De Albanees-Kosovaarse politie KPS probeerde juist in dit etnisch gevoelige noorden van Kosovo de grensposten over te nemen"; T2G5.

[370] "Kosovo wordt in ijltempo etnisch gezuiverd"; 1AD4.

[371] "Bosnische Serviërs wilden geloof en etniciteit in de telling meenemen, moslims zagen hierin een poging om de etnische schoonmaak van de oorlogstijd te legitimeren"; 2TRW5.

			by violent means is gaining credibility by the day"[372]
		Ethnic cleansing in Macedonia	"The Ohrid agreement gives hope, but it will quickly dissipate if in the coming months the practice of violence and ethnic cleansing like in Tetovo is repeated"[373]
		Ethnic cleansing in the Balkans	"Ethnic cleansing is the plague of the Balkans"[374]
	Ethnic conflict	Ethnic conflict in Bosnia	"Ethnic conflict in Bosnia risks turning into religious conflict"[375]
		Ethnic conflict in Macedonia	"An ethnic conflict is raging in Macedonia with the Albanian minority that led to a violent storming of parliament last year"[376]
	Ethnic hatred	~	"In the center of Kosovo lies the Drenica Valley, the battleground of ethnic hatred[377]
		Ethnic powder keg	"Country with two peoples is an ethnic powder keg in the Balkans"[378]

---

[372] "De indruk dat subversieve groepen Albanese Kosovaren met gewelddadige middelen sleutelen aan een etnisch gezuiverd groot-Kosovo wint met de dag aan geloofwaardigheid"; 2NRC2.

[373] "Het akkoord van Ohrid geeft hoop, maar die zal snel vervliegen als de komende maanden de praktijk van geweld en etnische zuivering zoals in Tetovo zich herhaalt"; 2AD3.

[374] "Etnische zuiveringen zijn de pest van de Balkan"; 1AD5.

[375] "Etnisch conflict in Bosnië dreigt uit te groeien tot religieus conflict"; 1NRC2.

[376] "In Macedonië woedt een etnisch conflict met de Albanese minderheid dat vorig jaar tot een gewelddadige bestorming van het parlement leidde"; 3TG3.

[377] "In het centrum van Kosovo ligt de Drenica Vallei, het slagveld van de etnische haat"; 1TG2.

[378] "Land met twee volken is een etnisch kruitvat op de Balkan"; 1VK2.

	Ethnic bickering	~	"... unrest, instability and ethnic bickering, violent or otherwise, will continue for years or even decades to come"[379]
	Ethnic tensions	~	"Political stability is nowhere to be found and ethnic tension also lurks under the skin"[380]
	Ethnic battle	~	"The battle for Mitrovica is not only an ethnic battle"[381]
	Ethnic contradictions	~	".... political elite in the Balkans, leading a population plagued by high unemployment ... and old ethnic divisions"[382]
	Ethnic symbols	~	"... ethnic symbols were absolutely taboo"[383]
	Ethnoreligion	Ethnoreligious powder keg	"... the fact that the Middle East is as much an ethnic-religious powder keg as the Balkans"[384]
		Ethnoreligious bond between Montenegrins and Serbs	"Most Serbs regard Montenegrins as a branch of the same family tree, with which most Montenegrins agree"[385]

[379] "... de onrust, de instabiliteit en het etnisch geruzie, al dan niet met geweld, nog jaren of zelfs decennia zullen blijven voortduren"; 1NRC1.

[380] "De politieke stabiliteit is ver te zoeken en ook sluimert onderhuids etnische spanning"; 3TRW1.

[381] "De strijd om Mitrovica is niet alleen een etnisch gevecht"; 2TG1.

[382] "... de politieke elite op de Balkan, die leiding geeft aan een door hoge werkloosheid … en oude etnische tegenstellingen geteisterde bevolking"; 3TG4.

[383] "... waren etnische symbolen absoluut taboe"; 2VK4.

[384] "... het feit dat het Midden-Oosten evenzeer een etnisch-religieus kruitvat is als de Balkan"; 1VK3.

[385] "De meeste Serviërs beschouwen de Montenegrijnen als een tak van dezelfde stambom [sic], waarmee de meeste Montenegrijnen het eens zijn"; 1TRW5.

	Ethno-religious conflict	~	"What began with a massive eavesdropping scandal - of the two million Macedonians, 20,000 were being spied on by the government - has grown into an ethnic-religious conflict"[386]
	Ethno-religious bickering	~	"But what is certain is that no matter how the borders will turn out, ethnic-religious bickering will continue to play a role in the long run"[387]
	Ethno-nationalism	~	"... that the apparently powerful KFOR can only provide a very limited response to new ethnic-nationalist trends"[388]
	Multi-ethnicity	~	"The struggle for Kosovo would have been conducted primarily from a humanitarian point of view with the goal of a multi-ethnic Kosovo"[389]
National identity	Nationalism	Ghost of nationalism	"Does the spirit of nationalism fade or will the Balkans remain the prisoner of its ancient demons?"[390]
		~	"... it was a hideous expression of delirious nationalism"[391]
	National myths	Historical claims to territory	"Greece and Serbia hastily pushed forward, pulling out Alexander the Great

[386] "Wat met een omvangrijk afluisterschandaal begon – van de twee miljoen Macedoniërs werden er 20.000 van regeringswege bespioneerd – is uitgegroeid tot een etnisch-religieus conflict"; 3TG1.

[387] "Maar zeker is dat, hoe de grenzen ook zullen uitvallen, etnisch-religieus geruzie ook op de lange termijn een rol zal blijven spelen"; 1NRC1.

[388] "... dat de ogenschijnlijk machtige KFOR maar een zeer beperkt antwoord kan geven op nieuwe etnisch-nationalistische tendensen"; 2TG2.

[389] "De strijd om Kosovo zou vooral gevoerd zijn uit humanitair oogpunt met als doel een multi-etnisch Kosovo"; 2TG1.

[390] "Vervluchtigt de geest van het nationalisme of blijft de Balkan de gevangene van zijn oude demonen?"; 1VK4.

[391] "... het was een wanstaltige uiting van delirisch nationalisme"; 1VK5.

			and Greater Serbia to live up to their historical claims to the territory"[392]
	National symbols	Flags	"The new Kosovo flag, to be unveiled on Independence Day, will be politically neutral. But the question is whether that neutral Kosovar flag will also reflect a true Kosovan sense of nationhood"[393]
Migration	Forced migration	Refugee streams	"The stream of refugees continues unabated"[394]
Morality	True nature of groups	Albanians' goodwill is made an anomaly	"An Albanian of good will in Macedonia"[395]
		True nature of Albanian freedom fighters is questioned	"Autochthonous freedom fighters, infiltrators from neighboring Kosovo, terrorists, smugglers or drug dealers? The true nature of Albanian fighters in Macedonia's northwestern mountains is shrouded in mystery"[396]
Albania	Albania	Albania as a narco-state	"We are talking about a narco-state where 100,000 kilos of Afghan heroin enter this continent every year"[397]

---

[392] "Griekenland en Servië drongen haastig naar voren en haalden Alexander de Grote en Groot-Servië uit de kast om hun historische aanspraken op het grondgebied waar te maken"; 1AD2

[393] "De nieuwe Kosovaarse vlag, die op de dag van de onafhankelijkheid zal worden onthuld, zal politiek neutraal zijn. Maar het is de vraag of die neutrale Kosovaarse vlag ook een werkelijk Kosovaars natiegevoel zal weerspiegelen"; 2VK4.

[394] "De stroom vluchtelingen houdt onverminderd aan"; 1AD4.

[395] "Een Albanees van goede wil in Macedonië"; 2AD2.

[396] "Autochtone vrijheidstrijders [sic], infiltranten uit aangrenzend Kosovo, terroristen, smokkelaars of drugsdealers? De ware aard van de Albanese strijders in de noordwestelijke bergen van Macedonië is in geheimzinnigheid gehuld"; 2AD2.

[397] "We hebben het over een narcostaat waar jaarlijks 100.000 kilo Afghaanse heroïne dit continent binnenkomt"; 3TG3.

		Albania as a Muslim country	"If that country [North Macedonia] is allowed a step up the accession ladder, Albania will be left behind with Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo, fellow Muslim countries"[398]
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Bosnia's governance as a jigsaw puzzle	"Bosnia's governance is still most like a jigsaw puzzle"[399]
		Bosnia as a Muslim country	"If that country [North Macedonia] is allowed a step up the accession ladder, Albania will be left behind with Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo, fellow Muslim countries"[400]
Kosovo	Kosovo	Kosovo as a Muslim country	"If that country [North Macedonia] is allowed a step up the accession ladder, Albania will be left behind with Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo, fellow Muslim countries"[401]
		Kosovo as having a powder keg	"Serbian President Boris Tadic has lit the fuse in Kosovo's powder keg again"[402]
		The complexity of Kosovo	"Ivanović himself, suspected of war crimes against the Albanians and yet an advocate of reconciliation, was the

---

[398] "Als dat land [Noord-Macedonië] een treedje hoger mag op de toetredingsladder, blijft Albanië achter met Bosnië-Herzegovina en Kosovo, mede-moslimlanden"; 3NRC3.

[399] "Het bestuur van Bosnië heeft nog het meest weg van een legpuzzel"; 2TRW5.

[400] "Als dat land [Noord-Macedonië] een treedje hoger mag op de toetredingsladder, blijft Albanië achter met Bosnië-Herzegovina en Kosovo, mede-moslimlanden"; 3NRC3.

[401] "Als dat land [Noord-Macedonië] een treedje hoger mag op de toetredingsladder, blijft Albanië achter met Bosnië-Herzegovina en Kosovo, mede-moslimlanden"; 3NRC3.

[402] "De Servische president Boris Tadic heeft de lont weer in het kruitvat van Kosovo gestoken"; 2TG4.

			embodiment of Kosovo's complexity"[403]
		Kosovo as a problem	"If the international community ever wants to be rid of the Kosovo problem"[404]
		Kosovo as violent	"Kosovo remains unsettled and violent"[405]
(Former) Yugoslavia	Former Yugoslavia	Former Yugoslavia as a wound	"The great open wound in Europe called "former Yugoslavia" may soon be closed"[406]
		Former Yugoslavia as a source of European problems	"Second, it brings a source of European problems (migration, crime, disadvantage of Roma, but also interference by Saudi Arabia) into the EU and thus makes it manageable"[407]
Russia	Russia	Russia as sharing a religion and culture with Serbia	"Russia, aided by a shared religion and culture, still stands with one leg in Serbia"[408]
Balkans	The Balkans as a subcategory of Europe	The Balkans as Europe's backyard	"Dangers in Europe's backyard still plentiful"[409]
		The Balkans as an abandoned corner of	"Everyone should read this book about

---

[403] "Ivanović zelf, verdacht van oorlogsmisdaden tegen de Albanezen en toch een voorstander van verzoening, was de belichaming van de complexiteit van Kosovo"; 3TG2.

[404] "Als de internationale gemeenschap ooit van het probleem Kosovo verlost wil worden"; 2VK3.

[405] "Kosovo blijft onrustig en gewelddadig"; 2NRC1.

[406] "De grote open wond in Europa die 'voormalig Joegoslavië' heet, kan snel gedicht worden"; 2VK5.

[407] "Ten tweede wordt een bron van Europese problemen (migratie, criminaliteit, achterstelling van Roma, maar ook inmenging door Saoedi-Arabië) binnen de EU gehaald en daarmee beheersbaar gemaakt"; 2VK5.

[408] Rusland staat, geholpen door een gedeelde religie en cultuur, nog steeds met één been in Servië"; 3TG4.

[409] "Bosnië vraagt om offensieve aanpak; Gevaren in achtertuin van Europa nog steeds volop aanwezig"; 1AD3.

		Europe	an abandoned corner of Europe"[410]
	The Balkans as "not-entirely-Europe"	~	Reference to 'Europe', meaning the Balkan League and the Great Powers (leaving out Macedonians and Albanians)[411]
	The Balkans as "not-Europe"	~	"Balkans with open borders, with more ties to Europe"[412]
	The Balkans as "an alternative Europe"	~	"[The Balkans] A Europe where emotions as destructive as they are incomprehensible to outsiders can dangerously darken the thinking of [all]"[413]
	The Balkan as not yet fully grown	Childlike/infantilizing representations of the Balkans/Balkan politicians	"plans [diminutive form] for multilateral consultations ... or roundtables where a range of representatives from all those Yugoslav nations sit down to take a whiff of international politics."[414]
	The Balkans as unfinished business	~	"Border changes on Balkans are over for now"[415]
	The Balkans or its politicians are not to be trusted	~	"At the negotiating table in Geneva, the warring parties in the former Yugoslavia may make fine agreements, but the

---

[410] "Iedereen zou dit boek over een verlaten uithoek van Europa moeten lezen"; 3NRC4.

[411] 1AD2.

[412] "Een Balkan met open grenzen, met meer binding met Europa"; 1TG3.

[413] "Een Europa waar even destructieve als voor buitenstaanders onbegrijpelijke emoties het denken … kan verduisteren"; 1AD5.

[414] "plannetjes voor multilateraal overleg … of rondetafelconferenties waar ritsen vertegenwoordigers van al die Joegoslavische naties aanschuiven om even aan de internationale politiek te ruiken"; 1NRC1.

[415] "Het is nu even gedaan met grenswijzigingen op Balkan"; 2NRC4.

			practice of every day is that the fighting between the different population groups only intensifies."[416]
	The Balkans as unmannerly	~	"the Sandzak, a region on the border of Serbia and Montenegro known both for its unpolished ways and its religious fanaticism"[417]
	The Balkans as a place where time stands still	~	"... In which you are taken to a remote corner of Europe where, at first glance, time stands still"[418]
	The Balkans as a problem (area)	The Balkans as a scenario	"He fears the 'Balkans scenario' with lots of violence"[419]
		The Balkans as a black hole	"... and even the radical Islam is advancing in this 'black hole' of Europe"[420]
		The Balkans as a patchwork	"... the patchwork of peoples and peoples [diminutive], ethnic and religious groups is too complicated for clear and fair boundaries.[421]
		The Balkans as inherently troubled	"The Balkans has always been a troubled region"[422]

---

[416] "Aan de onderhandelingstafel in Genève mogen de strijdende partijen in het voormalige Joegoslavië mooie akkoorden sluiten, de praktijk van iedere dag is dat de gevechten tussen de verschillende bevolkingsgroepen alleen maar in hevigheid toenemen"; 1NRC3.

[417] "... de Sandzak, een regio op de grens van Servië en Montenegro die zowel bekend staat om haar ongepolijste manieren als haar religieuze fanatisme"; 1NRC4.

[418] "... waarin je wordt meegenomen naar een uithoek van Europa waar de tijd op het eerste gezicht stil staat"; 3NRC4.

[419] "Hij vreest het 'Balkanscenario' met veel geweld"; 3AD1.

[420] "... zelfs de radicale islam is aan een opmars bezig in dit 'zwarte gat' van Europa"; 3TG2.

[421] "... de lappendeken van volkeren en volkjes, etnische en religieuze groepen is te ingewikkeld voor duidelijke en eerlijke grenzen"; 1NRC1.

[422] "De Balkan was altijd al een onrustige regio"; 3TG4.

		The Balkans' inability to settle down	"... the Balkans, that part of Europe that ... just won't settle down"[423]
		The Balkans' self-destructiveness (driven by emotions)	"[The Balkans] A Europe where emotions as destructive as they are incomprehensible to outsiders can dangerously darken the thinking of [all]"[424]
		The Balkans as a puzzle	"And Bosnia is just one piece of the Balkan puzzle"[425]
		The Balkans as a powder keg	"Balkan powder keg"[426]
		The Balkans as a place of perpetual hostility/animosity	"Hostility toward one another has been the most normal thing in this peninsula since time immemorial"[427]
		The Balkans as a place of ancient enmities	"The ancient Balkan demons also live outside Belgrade"[428]
		The Balkans as volatile	"This summer, a new war in the Balkans had almost broken out over a flag"[429]
		The Balkans as violent	"the most sinister Balkan traditions""[430]

---

[423] "de Balkan, dat deel van Europa dat … maar niet tot rust wil komen"; 1AD5.

[424] "Een Europa waar even destructieve als voor buitenstaanders onbegrijpelijke emoties het denken … kan verduisteren"; 1AD5.

[425] "En Bosnië is nog maar een stukje van de Balkan-puzzel"; 1AD3.

[426] "Balkankruitvat"; 1AD3.

[427] "Vijandigheid tegenover elkaar is sinds mensenheugenis op dit schiereiland de normaalste zaak van de wereld geweest"; 1AD3.

[428] "De oude Balkan-demonen huizen ook buiten Belgrado"; 1VK4.

[429] "Bijna was er deze zomer om een vlag een nieuwe oorlog op de Balkan uitgebroken"; 1VK2.

[430] "de meest lugubere Balkan-tradities"; 1VK4.

		The Balkans as an area of bloody land grabbing	"From what historical example do the Serbs take their current bloody land grabbing?"[431]
		The Balkans as something to fix	"A solution for the region has not been found 25 years after Srebrenica"[432]
Rivalries	Rivalries	Serbia and Kosovo as archenemies	"Archenemies Serbia and Kosovo begin a joint search this week for missing persons from the war fought in the Balkans late last century"[433]
Victimhood	Assumed victimhood	~	"Recognition allowed Croatia to assume the role of victim"[434]
Violence	Sectarian violence	~	"Orahovac was one of the scenes of sectarian violence last year"[435]
	Violence as an instrument	Violence as the UÇK's instrument	"It would be proof that only violence works - after Kosovo, the second success for the KLA"[436]

---

[431] "Van welk historisch voorbeeld gaan de Serviërs uit bij het huidige bloedige landjepik?"; 1NRC1.

[432] "Een oplossing voor de regio is 25 jaar na Srebrenica nog niet gevonden"; 3TG4.

[433] "De aartsvijanden Servië en Kosovo beginnen deze week met een gezamenlijke zoektocht naar vermiste personen uit de oorlog die eind vorige eeuw op de Balkan werd uitgevochten"; 3VK4.

[434] "Door de erkenning kon Kroatië zich de rol van slachtoffer aanmeten"; 1AD1.

[435] "Orahovac was vorig jaar een van de tonelen van sektarisch geweld"; 2TG4.

[436] "Het zou het bewijs zijn dat alleen geweld zoden aan de dijk zet - na Kosovo het tweede succes voor het UCK"; 2VK2.