Mladen Ančić: "Can Bosnia do Without Herzegovina?"

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Abstract

The author discusses frequent practices of rendering the name of Bosnia and Herzegovina as 'Bosnia' as well as the uses of the term 'Srpska' in the public discourse. Leaving aside the cases of benign mental inertia, practices with certain political background are further analyzed. They are seen in the context of nationalist discourse and development of a 'central narratives of national history' for three Bosnian nations: Bosniak-muslims, Croats and Serbs. The paper also sheds light on the shifting strategies of the nationalist elites and the way those strategies are materialized in the production of public discourse on the past.

Key words: Bosnia-Herzegovina; history; nationalism; public discourse

Introduction

Today's name for the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina emerged after the Berlin Congress awarded the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy with a mandate to occupy a part of the Ottoman Empire, in which a peasant's rebellion had been raging for some years.[1] The Ottoman authorities simply could not find a way to cope with the insurgents – they could not accept any of their demands, but they were also not able to militarily defeat them and pacify the region. Thus, it was within the framework of the realization of the occupational mandate that the name for the country was forged and used in the official version in the German language – *Bosnien und Herzegowina*. Seen from one of the possible historical perspectives, this fact could have a deeper symbolic meaning. Namely, from the period of the Austro-Hungarian occupation and shaping of the name from the German version to that of today, in other words, in the last century and a half, Bosnia and Herzegovina has functioned largely according to the wishes and dictates from outside. The question of whether it was to become a 'land' (in the sense of a separate administration) incorporated into a wider state organism, and the problem of how that would be accomplished with greater or lesser autonomy, along with the problem of internal organisation, depended on decisions made somewhere else – at large international or peace conferences, in Vienna and Budapest, or in Belgrade, the capital of the state of which this region was part for most of the 20th century, from 1918 to 1991.[2] On the other hand, in the last 130 years the inhabitants of this region have only once had the chance to openly and freely express what they think and how they imagine their political future.

At the beginning of 1992, according to instructions, which, once

[1] This is updated and reworked version of the paper published in Croatian as: 'Što je Bosna bez Hercegovine', *Status* 8 (2008): 66-84. Translated by Nevenko Bartulin.

[2] The place in which decisions were made about the political future of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the period between 1941 and 1945 was not Belgrade, but Zagreb, the capital of the Independent State of Croatia (NDH), or, on the other hand, places in which the leadership of the Partisan forces under J. B. Tito was located at any given moment.

again, came from the outside, the inhabitants of Bosnia and Herzegovina were supposed to state their positions in a referendum on whether they wished to live in an independent state. However, the local political elites at the time showed themselves incapable of functioning within the framework of a modern democracy – it was not possible to reach a consensus on whether a referendum should even be held, let alone reach a consensus on what the referendum question should look like. Although the referendum was held in the end and the official results were declared, twenty-five years later increasingly numerous voices in unofficial conversations have questioned the official results. Today one can hear stories from the participants of the events of that period about the way in which results that were given an official stamp of approval were obtained – for example, how ballots were filled out for those who did not vote in the referendum, how the real results were forged and so on. A particular part of the story surrounding the referendum is linked to the 'Serbian referendum', held somewhat earlier and organised by the 'Serbian authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina' without any controls or supervision, in other words without verification of the declared results – and sequentially to that fact, the 'official results' carried no weight.[3] The obvious inability of the local political elites to function within the framework of a democracy, and even any sort of rules, resulted in the fact that today's Bosnia and Herzegovina has been designed and assembled according to the dictate of the 'international community'.

The mechanisms of the practical installation of the construct

[3] The ability of the state apparatus in Bosnia-Herzegovina to 'record the conditions' is in any case of a very low level – the census of the population, the first since gaining independence (1992) was held in October 2013, but the results have not even been published now (March 2015). A particular problem, which is linked to the incompetence of the state apparatus, is a deeply entrenched urge amongst the country's subjects to 'cheat the state' – as an example I will only cite the words of my student who comes from a place in central Bosnia. According to his words, the census registered *fifteen residents* in the house which is located next to his own, but the house is practically empty. Those who are counted as its residents are scattered and actually live around the world, from neighbouring Croatia to Australia and the United States.

imposed in Dayton can be clearly discerned upon the basis of academic discussions, which are appearing more frequently, such as the argument by the American lawyer and professor Monroe E. Price. Price's thesis is more than significant, particularly because of the way in which a typical 'international official' explains the aims of the engagement of the 'international community' in Bosnia-Herzegovina. According to his interpretation, which can be considered a representative example of the view of ostensibly uninterested and very poorly informed external factors, the peace agreement of Dayton and the set of institutions arising from it, aimed: "… *to reconstitute Bosnia-Hercegovina's former multiethnic nature and create a Bosnian national identity against a backdrop of continuing ethnic hatred and loyalties.*"[4]

Taking into consideration the terminological but also semantic differences between the concepts of 'nation' (*nacija*: a 'people' with a state) and 'people' (*narod*: a community without a state) as is commonly used in the Croatian and Serbian linguistic area, on the one hand, and the concepts of *national identity* (state/national identity) and *ethnic identity* (which would be a type of equivalent to Croatian concept of *narod*) on the other, one is nevertheless able to clearly discern the tendency of a forced imposition of new solutions and the trampling and quashing of traditional values. Not realizing, some would say in a typically American, or better still, Anglo-Saxon manner, that such an 'export of ideologies' actually constitutes the use of rough force, Price and, of course, all other similar individuals cannot understand why the ideas which he defends encountered resistance in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Perhaps things would look much better, and the process of social reconstruction would have proceeded much easier, if 'international factors' had set as their task the option (obviously, without forced imposition of giving the values which were dominant in that world a chance).[5]

[4] Price (2002): 144; also see Kaldor (2003) for an example of a similar approach.

[5] Here my conclusions completely match those of Schöpflin (2001): 111, wherein the reasons for this accord can be found in the reliance on very similar sources and literature. Besides, very convincingly explains the principles upon which the 'discursive error' of Anglo-Saxon analysts and their epigones in the societies of

Almost the only actual function of Bosnia-Herzegovina is today tied to the necessities of that same 'international community' and is reduced to disabling a base for militant international (Islamic) terrorism on the territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina.[6] With the installation of a complex political mechanism, which in part takes into consideration, and mirrors, the results of military operations from the period between 1991 and 1995, two important things have been achieved: on the one hand, within the Bosnian Muslim political elite, the faction of nationalists has been strengthened at the expense of the militant Islamists who were led by Alija Izetbegović[7] and with whom the international terrorist network has, relatively easily, come to an understanding everywhere; on the other hand, the Croats and Serbs have been installed in mixed state institutions as a controlling mechanism (i.e. a kind of 'safety fuse'), which has disabled the functioning of those institutions as a logistical support base for the international terrorist network of Al-Qaida. Here one should recall the problems that emerged due to the fact that the authorities in Sarajevo had granted the right of Bosnian-Herzegovinian citizenship and passports to numerous members of that network between 1992 and 1996.

Central and South-Eastern Europe rest, so that a reading of his discussion is very useful.

[6] The way in which this base was created after 1991 can now be clearly perceived after the publication of Kohlmann (2005). Although Kohlmann does not mention it, his conclusions exquisitely coincide with the views of Michael Mann (2003), who argues that, in the majority of cases, radical Islamists from Bin Laden's network have infiltrated the areas inhabited by Muslims, where national dissatisfaction causes social and political tensions, crises and conflicts.

[7] The role of Bosniak leader Alija Izetbegović in the events from the period between 1990 and 2000 also becomes more problematic in the retrospective views that come from outside of Bosnia-Herzegovina. This is clearly discussed in Kohlmann (2005): 124, 126, 160-61, 204-07, 264-67, even though the author does not take into consideration the earlier texts of Izetbegović, such as the 'Islamic Declaration' – Izetbegović (1990). The positions which Izetbegović takes in this text can be seen in a completely different light in view of a deeper insight of his practical activities during the 1990s. That 'someone' is taking all of this into consideration is attested to by the practical activity of representatives of the 'international community', which, for example, has disabled the idea of renaming Sarajevo international airport after Alija Izetbegović.

However, under the surface of the political system installed by the Dayton peace treaty, ideas and political aims which led to the outbreak of war in 1991 still persist. These ideas are largely based on the revival, reconstruction and, what is very important to stress, the reinterpretation of the discourse that characterised the political life of the European South-East until 1941. But the elements of the mental landscape characteristic for the period of 'self-managed socialist and non-aligned Yugoslavia' are also almost imperceptibly maintained and reproduced in the public discourse.[8] All of this has been outlined in order for the reader to be able to understand why and how there exist great disagreements in today's Bosnia-Herzegovina, even at the level of debating what name to give to the country. Although its official name has remained the same since its introduction into use in the period of the Austro-Hungarian occupation, this name is rarely used in the public discourse. On the one hand, this name is frequently shortened, due to very different reasons, to the first part of the official version, so that instead of Bosnia-Herzegovina, only the term 'Bosnia' is used. On the other hand, there has appeared a name which never existed until 1992 – *Republika Srpska* – and denotes 49% of territory of the internationally recognised state which, according to the last peace treaty, became an autonomous political unit within that state. Here I will briefly outline the basis and significance of the semi-successful and still not deeply articulated endeavour to 'push' the new geographical concept – *Srpska* – into the public discourse, evidently conceived as a counterpart to the name of the neighbouring country, Croatia. I will also attempt to outline the background to the ejection of 'Herzegovina' from practical communication and, in connection to this, briefly point out the historical foundations upon which an old, premodern form of identity, the 'Herzegovinian', gains a new meaning and, at the same time, how and in what manner this identity is used in contemporary political discourse.

[8] The methodological models of analysing the 'communist heritage' in various domains of social life are outlined in the very valuable anthology by Ekiert & Hanson (2003).

'Strategies of the weak'

In a general sense, the shortening of the name of Bosnia and Herzegovina into the form of 'Bosnia' has a twofold background. On the one hand – and ultimately in this I have personal experience – this is the result of a benign mental inertia and deeper ignorance of circumstances. Namely, it seems to everyone who comes from 'outside' that, due to the practical necessity of colloquial speech, the name 'Bosnia' is a good substitute for the longer and 'impractical' name 'Bosnia and Herzegovina'. As a person born and raised in Sarajevo, I also followed this practice, which once included defining the title of a book of my selected articles in such a manner, in collaboration with my publisher in 1999. I had decided, as I thought at the time, on a provocative version for marketing – *Who Made a Mistake in Bosnia* – it being understood that 'Bosnia' in the title clearly referred to Bosnia and Herzegovina.[9] Over the years, however, it was made known to me, sometimes indirectly, sometimes openly, that I had made a big mistake – Bosnia is not the same as Bosnia and Herzegovina. In becoming acquainted with the world of Herzegovina and Herzegovinians, it became clearer to me that, if things are considered from 'within' and one is conscious of the importance that seemingly small cultural differences have for social relations, there do exist real and visible clefts between Bosnia, on the one hand, and Herzegovina on the other. This is the result of the differences in the natural and social surroundings and the influence of the Mediterranean civilizational circle in Herzegovina, the different sedimentation of what could be called historical experience, and, actually, a whole series of factors, which ultimately do justify the consistent use of the complete name of the country, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Remaining for a moment on the terrain of personal experience, I recall that my father, who had decades of experience of psychiatric work at a clinic in Sarajevo, once wrote (sometime at the end of the 1960s or the beginning of the 1970s) a short paper on the differences in the

[9] See the appendix at the end of the article.

psychotic diseases of 'Bosnians' and 'Herzegovinians'. Having observed real differences amongst the patients, my father explained them precisely in terms of differences in the cultural *facies*, in other words, to use the vocabulary of modern social science, in terms of the existence of different 'social mental mindscapes'.[10] Due to a set of circumstances, the paper remained in the form of a communique of results and never saw the light of day as a finished product. But its reading triggered the due attention of Czech and Austrian psychiatrists at a conference in Pula, where my father presented his paper, experience he later recalled on various occasions. In general, Bosnia and Herzegovina are indeed, at least for those that live there, two different socially constructed worlds, in the same or similar manner, generally incomprehensible to foreigners, in which the Serbian, Croatian and Bosniak Muslim worlds are differentiated. From that then arises the conclusion that the 'practical' condensation of the name of the country is indeed a consequence of a benign mental inertia and reveals an ignorance of local conditions.

On the other hand, however, the shortening of the name of 'Bosnia and Herzegovina' into the form of 'Bosnia' can have, and frequently does have, a completely different background and is not simply a means of resorting to the practicalities of colloquial speech. In the context of the discourse that has been produced in the last decades of the 20th century in Sarajevo and which has spread with varying degrees of success to various environments, the compression of the official name to the Bosnian component has a really strong and clear political background. Namely, the public discourse, which was constructed during the 1980s and 1990s by the Muslim (until 1993) or (after 1993) Bosniak-Muslim political, academic and cultural elite, has the clear characteristics of the last phase of the process of constituting a modern nation as a political community.

Changing the 'nation's name' is a concept that is difficult to understand outside of the context of *local knowledge* built in the former

[10] The phrase 'social mindscapes', in the book of the same title, is explained in detail by Zerubavel (1997).

Yugoslavia.[11] One should bear in mind that the socialist Yugoslavia institutionalised and recognised the *national identities* that were pre-existing in 1945 similar to the USSR. After 1945 Yugoslavia copied the Soviet constitutional arrangement and the principles of its implementation in reality.[12] In the 1960s, the existence of a separate nation of 'Muslims' was gradually recognised (in contrast to 'muslims', as Islamic believers were called), and from 1968 the *new nation* was 'recognised' by the state apparatus. For understanding the circumstances of the institutionalisation of the new nation it is advisable to start with texts written before the outbreak of the 'War of Yugoslav Succession'.[13] Then it was still possible to write the following sentence: "*There simply needs to be some skepticism about the credibility of the concepts offered by Yugoslav (Muslim) historians.*"[14] The status of 'the biggest victims of the War of Yugoslav Succession' simply abolished almost every such scepticism in later works. They disqualify, without much regard, the works of Croatian and Serbian historians as 'nationalist myths', but at the same time unconditionally accept the 'invented histories' of Bosniak-Muslims as true statements about the past.[15]

The breakdown and disappearance of Yugoslavia created new circumstances in which the new state, Bosnia (and Herzegovina) became the referential framework for a nation, 90% of whose members live on its territory. Thus, the decision to 'change the name of the nation' quickly matured in the political and intellectual elite, and is actually only one of the means of the discursive 'appropriation' of the state in which Bosniaks still form approximately 45% of the population. The act was formally conducted in September 1993 when around 450 'distinguished persons'

[11] As defined by Geertz (1983). The way this *local knowledge* looks in the eyes of an outside observer can be well seen in e.g. Lockwood (1975): 20-34; Jansen (2005).
[12] Brubaker (1996): 23-54.
[13] E.g. Ramet (1994); Brunner (1994); Höpken (1994); Popović (1994).
[14] Höpken (1994): 216.
[15] E.g. Bieber (2006): 5-28; Donia (2006): 30-59, and many others. See also Dzino (2015) in this volume discussing similar problems in contemporary works about history of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

from Bosnia-Herzegovina, but also the ambassadors of Iran, Turkey and USA, gathered in besieged Sarajevo to attend the meeting organized by the civil association named 'The Council of the Congress of Bosniak Intellectuals'. The gathered delegates voted in favour of a resolution, which changed the national name from 'Muslim' to 'Bosniak'. This would not in itself have signified much, but in the specific circumstances of the war, as well as the absolute control of the media by the advocates of the new 'national name', it had a fascinating effect – almost a 1,500,000 people unconditionally accepted the directive of the national 'distinguished persons' and adopted the new name of the collectivity.

For a full understanding of this fact, it should be noted that Muslims who live outside of Bosnia-Herzegovina and accepted the national identification of 'Muslim' during the 1960s were not at all 'thrilled' with the new name. In Croatia approximately 50% of Muslims accepted the new national denomination, while the other half retained the old name of 'Muslim'.[16] In Montenegro, lively discussions amongst Muslims and Bosniak-Muslims are ongoing with regard to the question of whether the old name is foundational and whether the new name should be accepted, while there is no precise statistical data on the 'success' of the new name.[17] The way in which the process of changing the name in Bosnia-Herzegovina has, through a distortion of the sequence of events, been turned into a myth produced by the intellectual elite is reflected in the words of the historian Mustafa Imamović, who otherwise emphasises, with pride, his role as the author of national myths: "*in wartime the old historical name – Bosniaks – was spontaneously returned in usage by the Bosnian-Muslim people itself*." This 'spontaneous decision of the people' was formally: "… *confirmed by the decision of the second Bosniak parliament, held in Sarajevo in the fall of 1993. Since then, all Bosnian-Muslim institutions have officially taken the Bosniak name.*"[18] No serious analysis of this 'change in the

[16] Pokos & Hasanbegović (2014).
[17] Dimitrovova (2001).
[18] Imamović (1998): 569. On the author and cited work see Kværne (2003); Ančić (2008): 81-93.

nation's name' exists in the scholarly literature, which only confirms the thesis of a lack of scepticism toward 'stories about ourselves' that derive from the Bosniak milieu.

One could consider the pamphlet entitled 'The Bosnian Spirit in Literature – What is that', written by a member of the Academy of Sciences and Arts of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Muhamed Filipović, and published for the first time in 1967, to represent the programmatic text of the construction of that discourse.[19] It is in any case worth noting that, even in the title of this text, Bosnia and Herzegovina is reduced to its Bosnian component, which will remain a permanent feature of the discourse of constituting the Muslim or Bosniak-Muslim nation. Practicality is not the only reason for this shortening (as it would indeed be difficult and impractical to speak of a 'Bosnian-Herzegovinian language' or a 'Bosniak-Herzegovinian people'), since it is also directly linked to the tenets of the master narrative of Bosniak-Muslim national history, as it has been shaped in the last twenty years. The main role in the shaping of that narrative has been appropriated by the aforementioned author of the pamphlet on the 'Bosnian Spirit', Muhamed Filipović. In the position of the chief editor of the then *Encyclopaedia of Yugoslavia* for Bosnia-Herzegovina, he was able to explicate in detail on, and provide an official stamp to, the ideas exposed in the program of the 'Bosnian Spirit'. In the encyclopaedic texts on Bosnia-Herzegovina, in which there are many things that are considered generally accepted facts, the basic tenets of that program have been embellished by such fictions as the existence of the 'tribe of Bosna', which settled the area of today's Bosnia-Herzegovina in the early Middle Ages - further enumeration of similar fabrications would be pointless.

The development of the Bosniak-Muslim national discourse and, within that, the development of what could be termed the central narrative of national history, was conducted until the early 1990s through the defensive 'strategies of the weak'. This in turn meant, in practice, the rejection of the more or less aggressive attempts to nationally assimilate

[19] Filipović (1967).

the Muslim population, and a new Muslim nationalistic discourse conceptually leaning on Bosnia would grow out of this rejection and its rationale. This discourse acquired a social space as well as more substantial momentum from the mid-1970s within the reconstructed constitutional-legal framework. From the 1990s onwards this discourse gained in aggressiveness, while the political leadership which emerged from and was legitimized by this discourse employed the same 'strategy of the weak' during the entire course of the war.[20]

As a brief illustration of the 'strategies of the weak', one should draw attention to the way the official Muslim political and intellectual elite sought, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, to avoid the possibility that the newly recognised nation of Muslims be accused of exclusively arrogating Bosnia-Herzegovina, whilst nevertheless leaving open the possibility of emphasising a 'special right to Bosnia-Herzegovina'. This is wonderfully illustrated in two books by Salim Ćerić, a distinguished Communist leader and a member of the inner circle of the 'creators of the new nation' in the 1960s. The first book, represents a historical-political study that explained the changes to the constitution of Bosnia-Herzegovina, formally adopted in that very year, which entered into its

[20] The literature which could be cited here would actually require a whole separate publication, so instead I refer the reader to the excellent recent review in which Sadkovich (2005) outlines the changes of the political landscape in Bosnia-Herzegovina during the 20th century, using and citing the most relevant literature. From his explanations it is possible to clearly observe the reliance of the Bosniak Muslim political and intellectual elite on the 'strategies of the weak' during the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, which is clearly recognised and named as such in one of the more serious analyses of the war, Gow (2003): 241. The changed social position of the Muslims from the 1970s onwards is registered by Banac (1993: 145), in an informative discussion, which, however, accepts some very problematic interpretations of history by Bosniak-Muslim nationalists including theses such as: Islamicization in Bosnia was more massive than in other lands under the Sultan's rule due to the fact that the followers of the 'Bosnian Church' more easily converted to Islam than the Catholics and Orthodox; 'Bosniakdom' in Ottoman times as a form of proto-nationalism; the non-participation of Muslims in Ustasha crimes; the denial of Izetbegović's desire to create an 'Islamic society' in Bosnia-Herzegovina. A balanced view from the 'inside', by an active participant of all these events from the 1940s, is provided in Redžić (2000).

provisions the 'nation of Muslims'.[21] The author consistently insists on the Muslim and not Bosnian name for the nation, the origins of which he traces to the Middle Ages. Neither Ćerić nor all the others who have followed him have succeeded in resolving the contradiction between these allegedly Bosnian roots and the central significance of the Islamic component in the national identity, which, as the *conditio sine qua non* of its very appearance required the destruction of the Kingdom of Bosnia. The book concludes with a cryptic prediction about the 'amalgamation' of various ethnic communities, wherein 'one wider group, more connected than the others' will finally prevail, while it is; "*... the duty of progressive Muslims to support such processes ... It is not of no importance as to which "lepta" will enter into the culture of the future and in what volume ...*"[22] The cryptic nature of these words gains in clarity, however, if one compares this sentence with what the same author wrote later when he more precisely predicted:

> "*… that the state of Bosnia-Herzegovina will, through the logic of its existence, have to help the creation of a new, wider Bosnian nationality ... This should be done carefully, slowly and patiently. Proceed from the small, for example, abolish the name of Herzegovina, make that 'harmless' move, only for the reason of practicality, so that the name of the republic is shorter; then, downplay the 'sins' of the Muslim ancestors, downplay their disagreements with Serbs and Croats ... collect past manifestations of Bosnian consciousness, exaggerate their cohesive significance ... future disputes with the Socialist Republic of Serbia and the Socialist Republic of Croatia over material and other questions, which certainly exist, will automatically separate the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Serbs and Croats from their compatriots in the home countries ... which will practically create a favourable*

[21] Ćerić (1968).
[22] Ćerić (1968): 246 – *lepta* is the ancient Greek designation for small change, and here it is obviously used as a synonym for 'value'.

climate for the new Bosnian nation."[23]

Alongside the indicated happy-end to this process it is clearly stated as to who will benefit from this: "so, one fine day, it will come a new Bosnian nationality. Only then will the *Bosnian-Herzegovinian Muslims* definitely *breathe a sigh of relief*." The message and lesson, clearly recognisable as a red thread in today's Bosniak nationalism in its significantly aggressive variant, is clear: in order for *the Muslims to breathe a sigh of relief*, the Croats and Serbs from Bosnia-Herzegovina must cease to be what they are and become something else. In such circumstances the then Muslim nationalist discourse, which conceptually leaned on Bosnia, was constructed through publications with a small reach, intended for the intellectual elite. Such is the case with Muhamed Filipović's foundational pamphlet, which was published on the pages of the then fairly obscure journal *Život*. The circle within which that discourse was further developed can be sensed from the fact that it was reproduced on the pages of publications such as, for example, *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju*, which is published by the Oriental Institute in Sarajevo.

The construction of a nationalist discourse, and within that framework, the reinterpretation of history, regardless whether it is a question of a defensive or aggressive phase, provokes various reactions, in which a wide spectre of views are expressed, from paternalistic benevolence to aggressive rejection. But, before any sort of reaction, it should be noted that the whole process in the eyes of the Bosniak-Muslims' neighbours – first and foremost the Croats and Serbs – can acquire the extremely clumsy appearance of turning 'things known to all' upside down, and alongside this, it is in its spirit completely obsolete and anachronistic. This perception, however, is the consequence of forgetting, in other words ignoring, the simple fact that the Croatian and Serbian national discourses with a central narrative of national history were already completely constructed an entire century ago.[24] In the

[23] Ćerić (1971): 92-99, author's emphasis – M. A.

[24] It is certainly worth noting the following: the Croatian narrative grew out of the historiographical tradition of the 17th and 18th century, above all relying on the

meantime, these discourses have, through secondary and, over time, primary socialization, become deeply embedded in the collective memory, in other words, they have been accepted and interiorized in the individual consciousness and have in this way become something that is 'known to all'. However, the very process of construction flowed more or less in the same manner as it is unfolding today amongst the Bosniak-Muslims; it thus provoked similar reactions and opposition amongst neighbouring peoples in the same way that that process today provokes Croats and Serbs.

The atmosphere of constructing the main narrative of national history (in which the above stated positions played a key role) is reliably outlined in the case of the debate surrounding the text known under the name *Pacta conventa*. In the midst of bitter debates, conducted at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century between Croatian and Hungarian historians over the credibility and interpretation of information presented in that text, Iso Kršnjavi attempted to write about it in a manner which was at odds with the heated tone and black-and-white positions of historical-political debates. Through a sober historiographical process, Kršnjavi attempted to discern the circumstances of the emergence and realistic background of that text, arriving at results that did not satisfy either Croatian or Hungarian political-historical ambitions. Consequently, the editorial staff of the Zagreb newspaper *Obzor* (the main platform of the discourse on the Croatian side) requested from Kršnjavi "*a statement as to whether he accepts the Hungarian or Croatian viewpoint.*" The true nature and real background of the whole debate is revealed in the fact that the heated debates between Croatian and Hungarian historians over the *Pacta conventa* were simply extinguished by the dissolution of the state-legal union of Croatia and Hungary in 1918. The question as to what the text known under the name *Pacta conventa* really represents again became

works of Ivan Lucius-Lučić (Kurelac [1994]) and Pavao Ritter Vitezović (Blažević [2002]), while the Serbian narrative emerged in the 19th century almost *ex nihilo* – Ančić (2008): 190-92.

current in the 1960s, but only within Croatian historiography, and occurring after the beginning of a principally healthy process of demythologising Croatian national history.[25]

Besides this, one should bear in mind that the construction of a national discourse with a central narrative of national history is a key step in the construction of 'the nation as an imagined community'. This narrative complex, which some authors term a 'national myth', has a decisively important role in the life of an 'imagined community' because, as G. Schöpflin explains, it becomes:

a) an instrument of self-identification, since the acceptance of basic tenets secures membership in the community (in this way the borders of the community are established)

b) an instrument of the transfer of identity (from an imagined collectivity to a real individual and back)

c) an instrument of communication that simplifies ideas and enables the arrangement (construction) of the social world of the community

d) a way of restricting the cognitive field and thus reducing complex realities to simpler forms, which thereby become accessible to the wider public and enable a collective reaction.[26]

In the light of the aforementioned facts, the shortening of the name of 'Bosnia and Herzegovina' to the form 'Bosnia' points to the first initial steps in the reduction of complex realities to simpler and more easily understood forms. However, if one compares such a process with the practice found amongst Bosnia-Herzegovina's immediate neighbours certain differences will become apparent. Namely, the term 'Croatia', as the overall name for the regions in which Croats live, subsumes the historical heritage of regional peculiarities and, in a certain way, 'covers' the toponymes: Dalmatia, Slavonia, Istria, Lika and even Herzeg-Bosnia (*Herceg-Bosna*). In recent times, since the beginning of the 1990s, the

[25] The whole debate surrounding the *Pacta conventa* is amply shown in Antoljak (1980): 12, 18.

[26] All of these functions of the 'national myth', or, what appears to me a better term, the central narrative of national history, is analysed in detail by Schöpflin (1997): 22.

attempt has been made to install Herzeg-Bosnia in the public discourse as a regional term of reference for the parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina which are inhabited by Croats; one should point out that this process has had much more success in Bosnia-Herzegovina than in Croatia.

The name 'Croatia' transforms the regional names into second-class terms, and as part of a larger entity, which is reified through the agency of contemporary state institutions, so that it is eagerly used, in particular, in the circles of old-school nationalists – the so-called 'state-builders'. However, in the discourse of professional academic historiography, especially with regard to research on the premodern period, the historical provinces remain a clear framework, so that almost no one will say 'southern Croatia' instead of 'Dalmatia', while the imagined entity of the national territory is usually referred to as the 'Croatian lands'.

The discourse on Republika Srpska

A certain similarity, which appear to make it more similar to the Bosnian/Bosniak case, can be observed in the Serbian national discourse. The spatial dispersion of members of the modern Serbian nation seems to be a great problem within the national/nationalistic discourse – namely, if today's Serbs are inhabitants of historical lands which, according to their terminology, are clearly not Serbian, then there does appear to be a great problem with regard to the need to explain how that very same Serbian nationalism can claim territories where today's Serbs live, even though they did not live there 'in times past'. The problem is even more acute and bigger because the Serbian nationalist discourse is centred in Belgrade and from there it makes aggressive claims on certain regions precisely on the basis of 'historical rights' on the basis of the fact that 'Serbs once lived there' and that those regions 'were once Serbian lands', although today the Serbian population represents a noticeable minority in these areas. The first is Kosovo, which is regularly called 'Kosovo and Metohija' (*metohija*=Serb. church property) in Serbian public discourse, and Macedonia which until recently was, and in some circles is, known as 'Old Serbia'.

Here it is necessary to interrupt the thread of the narrative on Bosniak Bosnia and its relationship to Bosnia and Herzegovina and highlight the innovation which is represented by the introduction of the geographical term *Srpska* ('Serbian') in the social discourse, above all through the media of mass communication. One should note that it would be difficult to imagine how this process could be the result of an elaborated strategy organised in a national/nationalistic central location. It seems to be more a case of an intuitive process, which fits into a coherent whole produced by the nationalist discourse. This discourse was equally reconstructed through an (archaic) academic and journalistic production which came out of Belgrade, Banja Luka and Pale, by the 'political testament' which was presented *in vivo* to viewers by Slobodan Milošević in The Hague, and the practical agency of local political factors. In order to understand this complex, however, a key fact which has so far been hidden from the wider public eye, and which refers to changes in international norms in relation to the disintegration of the world communist movement and Yugoslavia in the late 1980s and 1990s, needs to be taken into consideration.

In short, in the case of the former Yugoslavia the previously valid system of international norms linked to the question of minority rights, according to which the principle of maintaining established state borders transcended the principle of self-determination, was abandoned. This, in turn, means that the right to self-determination could not be utilized in those cases where its realization would threaten existing state borders. The case of Yugoslavia was, however, specific in that its internal administrative borders corresponded to a large degree with the ethnic composition of the population, and in that way national federal units were created which acquired the characteristics of real statehood in the 'internal' Yugoslav discourse after 1974. When two of these units (Slovenia and Croatia) asked to exercise the right to self-determination in 1991, the international community undertook a policy which surprised and angered, with at least some justification in relation to the established system of norms, a part of the administrative structures of Yugoslavia in Belgrade. The verdict of the well-known 'Badinter commission'

established a new principle – the right to utilize self-determination for 'nations which live in a region that is a defined territory with an already existing right of autonomy'. This change was very quickly observed by both theoreticians of international relations and East European politicians; for example, this was the basis for the change in the discourse of representatives of the Hungarian minority in Romania, which started to demand territorial autonomy. The commission's verdict, however, outlined the procedure whereby the right to self-determination could be realized, but the basic prerequisite for this, as already mentioned, was the existence of a compact territory with a specific degree of autonomy in relation to the rest of the state.[27]

In light of the above, the legal constituting of the Republika Srpska

[27] For more on this see the paper by M. Rady (1993), written and published quite some time ago. The changes that have developed in political theory at the end of the 20th century are examined in the interestingly conceived book, together with a series of authors mainly from central Europe – Kymlicka & Opalski (2001). Kymlicka restricts himself to a small number of facts and schematically outlines cases which he uses as an example and frequently neglects details, which, however, change the meaning of the whole case that is being examined. A good example is the manner in which he outlines the Serb rebellion in Croatia – Kymlicka (2001): 63. So his research shows itself to be a complete failure in comparison with the detailed reconstructions and studies such as Barić (2005), and Gow (2003).
The problems which result from such a methodological process are brought to light in the case of the discussion unfolded on the pages of the Sarajevo journal *Prilozi Instituta za istoriju u Sarajevu* in relation to an article by one of the authors in Kymlicka's collection, Pål Kolstø. Kolstø, a distinguished expert for ethnic relations in Eastern Europe and a professor at the University in Oslo, published his discussion on the use of flags in the new states of Eastern Europe in *Prilozi* in 2004, examining the case of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Mesud Šadinlija responded in the journal's following issue, while Kolstø answered him in the same issue. Accepting some of the remarks made by Šadinlija, Kolstø (2005: 85) acknowledged that the information he drew on for his article came from the Internet. It would certainly be interesting to see how such a distinguished scholar would respond if someone wrote an academic discussion on Norwegian issues by using information collected from tourist guides or internet websites of extremely questionable credibility. Certainly, the biggest problem here is the fact that the results of analyses acquired through such an non-academic process frequently become the basis for the practical functioning of the 'international community', so that it is no wonder that the effect of such actions is, as a rule, opposite to what is expected.

through the peace agreement contracted in November 1995 in Dayton acquires a completely new significance. It is doubtful that the changes to the system of international norms could have escaped the political and academic elite in Belgrade. Namely, the influence of these changes can be clearly seen in the fact that the Republika Srpska was constituted as a 'compact territory with a high degree of autonomy' in relation to the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina, so that one could conclude that it is completely equipped for the process of secession from that state.[28] Through ethnic cleansing[29] and the migration of Serbs from Croatia, the prerequisites have been created for the eventual future referendum on independence to be voted in the affirmative with an absolute majority. The representatives of the international community, who have aided through their inaction the authorities of Republika Srpska in the prevention of the mass return of refugees, have also contributed unintentionally or deliberately to the complete success of the future eventual referendum. This process, however, will not be initiated until the USA has an interest in keeping the Serbs within the framework of Bosnia-Herzegovina for the sake of controlling the Islamic radical element. It is precisely this point that shows the importance of the aforementioned nationalistic discourse, within which the geographical and political term 'Srpska' has been introduced and implanted.

The basis of this discourse is in large part formed by the production of academic historiography, with its origins, in the first instance, in Belgrade, which I will deal with in more detail here. This production is illustrated, for example, by the published doctoral and MA theses by

[28] This is precisely the proper context of the pronouncement by Dobrica Ćosić, according to which the provisions of the Dayton peace treaty: "*establish for the first time in modern history the basis of a Serbian state beyond the Drina*" – cited according to Barić (2005): 525.

[29] It is completely mistaken to speak of 'genocide' in this case – see the accurate analysis by Mann (2005), which, while not denying the indisputable fact that ethnic cleansing is a crime, considers, and convincingly demonstrates, that it is also an unavoidable and attendant phenomenon of the construction of the 'liberal-democratic national state'.

Siniša Mišić and Jelena Mrgić-Radojčić.[30] The subject of the book by Mrgić-Radojčić is the medieval history of the Lower Regions (*Donji Kraji*), the western part of today's Bosnia and Herzegovina in the upper and middle river basins of the Vrbas and Sana. The book is actually a MA thesis submitted at the Faculty of Philosophy of Belgrade University, which, along with the book (doctoral dissertation) by Mišić, shares an underlying intention – to prove that Serbs have 'always' lived in the regions which are being studied. Within the framework of the imaginative constructs of these authors, 'always' means from the times of the Slavic migrations of the 7th century. Furthermore, both works have the semblance of serious academic literature – they are furnished with a scholarly apparatus in the form of footnotes based on primary and secondary sources from which the authors derive facts, and they pretentiously wish to be ranked in the genre of historiographical-geographical studies. But, similarly to Mišić, who is in that sense more explicit and who is invoked by Mrgić-Radojčić as a model, the latter actually has only one aim, and that is: to prove the original Serbian character of the regions which form the subject of her analysis. This aim is reached with a relatively simple technique of arranging already established pictures of the past from existing historiographical works, on the one hand, and suppressing everything that is contrary to her fixed theses, on the other.

The initial phase implies the restriction of the discourse's range of knowledge to the freely imagined 'Serbian lands', as is done by Mišić, and as is clarified by Mrgić-Radojčić in her 'Introductory reflections':

> "*the comparative research of the medieval history of Serbia and Bosnia has been shown to be exceptionally productive and methodologically completely accurate, since both states sprang from a common foundation – one of the oldest Serbian states which was named Baptized Serbia by Constantine Porphyrogenitus.*"[31]

[30] See more about the book by Mišić in Ančić (2001): 143-46.

[31] Mrgić-Radojčić (2002): 22-23. For more on the same process in Mišić's work, see Ančić (2001): 143.

There can actually be no serious commentary on such views because to prove the existence of such a Serbia from the time of the migration of Serbs requires something more than the very imprecise statements (in time and space) removed from the work *De Administrando Imperio* (*DAI*) created only in the middle of the 10th century – the very fact that the work speaks of events which took place *three centuries earlier* is enough to provoke skepticism – and the powerful desire of Serbian historians to trust their own interpretations of those statements. Along with such reflections there remains only space for derisive views and a great number of questions such as: how many 'Serbian states' were there if 'Baptised Serbia' was 'one of the oldest'. Anyone with a remote knowledge of the Middle Ages would have written 'baptised Serbia' – it is an adjective with which the anonymous Byzantine author from the first half of the 10th century explains the difference between *two* Serbian states which he himself has named as such. If it already existed, was this state a 'national state' including subjects with a uniform identity, in other words why did the Serbs create various states out of the framework of such an imagined political community, but only one of those states was named 'Serbia'? How many Serbs were there if they created numerous states? What would the migration of hundreds of thousands of people in the 7th century, as implied by these and similar views, have resembled – who organised and led it, and in what manner, how did they traverse the huge wide expanses that separate the region of 'unbaptised White Serbia', far to the north, and 'baptised Serbia', wherever it was located in the region of contemporary Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina? What did the 'springing forth from the common foundation' look like and what sort of relations existed between the various Serbian states in various periods? And finally when, how and why did 'baptised Serbia' crumble, into which parts, and what did that 'state' in general look like, a state about which sources until the mid-10th century do not say anything?

The problems, however, with demonstrating the historical roots of Serbdom in these areas already begin in Mrgić-Radojčić's case at the level of geographical terminology. It is not clear to her, or at the least she cannot accept, that the medieval term, the *Donji Kraji* ('Lower Regions'),

actually has no connection with the contemporary term *Bosanska Krajina* ('Bosnian Frontier'). The transformation of geographical terms has, however, a deep and important causal-effect connection with changes in the composition of the population in this region from the 16th century onward.[32] Therefore, she has made an etymological error in equating the term *Kraji* – in the sense of the contemporary term *krajevi* (commonly translated as *partes* in medieval Latin, in this case *partes inferiores*) – with the term *Krajina*, in the sense of a frontier region. In Latin that would be *confines* or *limes*; it is significant that the well-known 'Krajinas' from the Middle Ages were not translated into Latin, but rather the term was retained as a geographical term, while only the military organization of frontier regions that originated in the early modern era was translated into German as *Militärgrenze*. The contemporary term 'Bosanska Krajina' can be traced to the period of Habsburg-Ottoman wars, when the term became deeply rooted as signifying a military organization on the frontier of the Bosnian pashaluk (*paşalık*) on the Ottoman side in contrast to the Habsburg 'Military Frontier (Krajina)'.[33] The narrative about Kraji and Krajinas is, however, necessary in order for the author to be able to affirm that "*several krajinas are well-known in the Serbian medieval states*",[34] amongst them

[32] This was reliably discussed and written about long ago, with excellent knowledge of relevant Ottoman sources, by the Serbian historian Milan Vasić, cited by Mrgić-Radojčić. Among other things, Vasić (1962: 234) established that the geographical term, 'Bosanska Krajina', appears for the first time at the end of the 16th century in an entry from 1593 linked to the Orthodox Church, the organization and hierarchy of which began to spread into these areas with the arrival of a new population.

[33] A picture of the frontier world has, in the most recent times, begun to be sketched in completely new colours, see Roksandić (1998); (2003) and Roksandić & Štefanec (2000).

[34] Mrgić-Radojčić (2002): 27. The *Krajinas* of Serbian historical narratives, which easily omit centuries and huge spaces, are the direct conceptual basis for the 'Republic of Serbian Krajina' (as a part of the territory of the Republic of Croatia under the occupation of rebel forces in the first half of the 1990s was known). The term 'Krajina' is, however, far from being exclusively tied to the 'Serbian medieval states', as one might conclude from the manner in which the author has written about the subject. It is enough to point out the term is mentioned on the well-known Baška Tablet, a monument written in the 12th century in the Croatian language and

the Krajina on the littoral between the River Neretva and Vrulje, which is nothing more and nothing less than the "*frontier province of the Nemanjić state facing the Hungarian Kingdom.*"[35] This sequence of deducting conclusions, as well as the choice of comparable cases, confirms and establishes, on the one hand, that which has already been discussed – namely, her paragon Siniša Mišić already wrote in the same manner, while, on the other hand, it creates a space for conquering historical Serbian areas. Entangled in constructs of the narrative of the 'school' from which she has sprung forth, the author evidently is not capable of asking herself whether that region was a Krajina before the Nemanjić state, which it ruled this region relatively briefly in the first half of the thirteenth century and before the Hungarian ruler Coloman became King of Croatia through the coronation in Biograd in 1102.

The consequence of the trend directed toward the unprovable demonstration of Serbdom is the lack of time and space for consideration of realistic historical problems, so that ordinary nonsense and absurd assertions appear in such texts. Thus, it seems to Mrgić-Radojčić that the 'epithet Lower (in the term Lower Regions) illustrates the height above sea level of this province',[36] which, and everyone can be persuaded of this by looking at a physical map of Bosnia-Herzegovina, is distinctly mountainous – should one even waste words on introducing the concept of 'height above sea level' into the mental frameworks of the Middle Ages. Her paragon, on the other hand, arrived at the following wisdom in his scholarly treatment of the subject: the advantage of the life of medieval people in the area of the land of Hum was found in the warm climate with hot summers and mild winters, which suited them more than the continental climate, above all because they had no need for warmer clothing and heating of the space in which they lived'.[37] A real example

Glagolitic script and originating on the island of Krk. On this tablet the term Krajina defines the "*frontier province* (of the Croatian Kingdom) *facing Germany*" – Barada (1952): 13-16.

[35] Mrgić-Radojčić (2002): 28.

[36] Mrgić-Radojčić (2002): 28.

[37] Mišić (1994): 241.

of the inappropriate nationalistic discourse is, however, represented by Mrgić-Radojčić's claim that, in the aforementioned mid-10th century *DAI* Bosnia was designated by the term 'little land' (*horion* in Greek) in order to "*designate the size of the territory of Bosnia in relation to size of the whole of Serbia, by which it was surrounded on all sides*."[38] That Mrgić-Radojčić actually speaks, and is probably not aware of doing so, only and exclusively about the times of the present day and that she only wraps the discourse in historical garb, is best seen when she considers the individual districts of the Lower Regions. She thus includes three counties which never belonged to the Lower Regions – Vrbas, Sana and Dubica.[39] These three counties were, amongst other things, encompassed by a network of church parishes of the Bishopric of Zagreb, which is a reliable sign that they never belonged to either the Lower Regions or (especially) medieval Bosnia, but such an explanation would demolish the enchanting simplicity of the assertion that all regions in which Serbs live today were 'Serb from the beginning'. Besides, the population of these regions, at least as can be established today, spoke the ikavian dialect, so that one of the medieval towns in these regions was not called Levač, but Livač, while the fact that it "*survived the fall of the Bosnian state in 1463*" does not signify anything because it was never a part of medieval Bosnia.[40] But medieval Bosnia is invoked here because it represents the already conquered part of the 'historical Serbian lands', so that the placement of some region within its borders automatically transforms it into a 'historical Serbian land'. Medieval Bosnia was, according to the opinion of Serbian historians, definitively conquered

[38] Mrgić-Radojčić (2002): 29. It would certainly be very interesting and instructive to extrapolate from these reflections the theoretical starting point of the author in regard to the relationship of the whole (Serbia) and one of its parts (the little land of Bosnia), as she sees it. It would also be instructive to illuminate the transfer of the conceptual matrix of a contemporary nationalist/historian onto the author who lived in the first half of the 10th century. This is a question of a process which is far from being limited only to Serbian historiography.

[39] Mrgić-Radojčić (2002): 244-62.

[40] Mrgić-Radojčić (2002): 252. It would, again, be very interesting to theoretically examine what the assertion of the *town* 'surviving' the *fall of the state* means.

'academically' in recent times by the academic Sima Ćirković; the idea of Bosnia surrounded by baptised Serbia derives from his analyses and discourses.[41] But not even Ćirković spoke of a complete encirclement because, by citing that which could be found in *DAI* as support for his views, and thus giving those quotations the weight of complete authority, he had to take into consideration what had been written about Croatian counties on the border with Bosnia in the same text. And it is precisely here where Mrgić-Radojčić makes a real breakthrough and leads the 'Serbian national cause' a step further with a very simple but, in the eyes of an informed reader, ignorant and awkward process. Namely, in her reflections on individual counties, the author always starts with the oldest references in the sources, refraining from that principle only in the case of the county of Pliva, in other words, precisely the one which the text from the 10th century places in medieval Croatia.[42]

Instead of a further analysis of the other more or less similar methodological procedures, which rely upon the traditional matrix of modern Serbian historiography,[43] and which render the text by Mrgić-Radojčić a classic work within the framework of that tradition identical in spirit to the work of Mišić, I would suggest there is a general rule which can be derived from all of this. Namely, it is worth noting that the

[41] Ćirković (1998). It would be going too far to go into a more detailed discussion of the way in which the author treats facts derived from the work originating in the mid-10th century and brings them into a sort of connection with facts and relations from the 14th and 15th centuries (of which he otherwise has an excellent knowledge). It is only worth stating that citations from *DAI* are treated in such a way as if its anonymous author was really excellently acquainted with and masterfully governed facts which outline the contemporary political landscape of the deep hinterland of the eastern Adriatic coast in his time, which is in complete contrast with the results of serious discussions. On the other hand, one can clearly discern the conquering of historical spaces in his argument as a reflex of the current environment, which is, for example, clearly reflected when the author speaks of Bosnia-Herzegovina, which then functioned as a separate state to a large degree as the "*former Yugoslav republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina*" – Ćirković (1998): 31.

[42] Mrgić-Radojčić (2002): 193.

[43] For more on the social circumstances of the emergence of this historiography and the shaping of its tradition under the wing of Serbian nationalism, see Ančić (2008): 190-92.

appetite of some Serbian historians for the original historical territory increases parallel to the distance of those authors from the discourse that prevails in the contemporary world. Thus, Stevan K. Pavlowitch, an historian who lives and works in England, which subsequently makes it hard where to place him in Serbian historiography, laconically asserts that the Serbian name "*spread to those* (Slavs) *who set themselves up in the valleys and basins south of the Danube, between the rivers Bosna and Ibar*."[44] In fact, Pavlowitch, and this should be particularly noted, does not assert that the Serbs settled this wide area compactly, but rather that their *name* extended to the population of these regions, which is completely in line with contemporary knowledge of early medieval ethnic communities. Nevertheless, being nearer to the tradition of local discourse, Sima Ćirković cannot restrain himself from considerably expanding the area of settlement of the Serbs, so that he vaguely speaks – in a book intended for the world market and originally published by Blackwell – of a "*Serbian tribe in the karst basins suitable for agriculture between the Dinaric Alps and the Adriatic coast*", but on an enclosed map he extends his 'Baptised Serbia' to the Vrbas and Cetina Rivers, as well as to the Sava in the north and the Adriatic in the south, forced to recognize the fact that his favourite (and selectively used) authority, the work *DAI*, expressly places the counties Pliva, Livno and Imota (Imotski) in Croatia.[45]

It is worth observing the following – Ćirković knows that his book will be reviewed and that this will be done by someone with a minimum of necessary knowledge, so that he shows a kind of self-control and lets his imagination run wild only in those places where the preserved sources do not directly contradict his assertions. In a book with only local reach and intended for a domestic audience, which needs to once again be convinced that the regions in which Serbs have 'always' lived were 'theirs', there is nothing standing in way of preventing Mrgić-Radojčić from arbitrarily imagining history. The conceptual basis of her

[44] Pavlowitch (2002): 1.
[45] Ćirković (2004): 10-13.

undertaking can be more or less outlined as the following: who amongst Serbs would dare to respond negatively to the author's achievement in the historical conquest of areas for those same Serbs, and, in any case, if somebody else responds then it is not important because that will be automatically denounced as an 'anti-Serbian intrigue' and part of a wider anti-Serbian conspiracy.

Therefore, by being part of such a discourse, which corresponds with almost nothing in modern historiography, authors such as Ćirković and Mrgić-Radojčić, but also the entire school of thought which is persistently reproduced through their activity, have more of a resemblance to a classic nationalist, as described by Anthony Smith, than to a professional historian.[46] Comparing the nationalist to an archaeologist, Smith concludes that he or she "*places the* [one should not forget: imagined – M. A.] *community in its historical time and in that way creates the symbolic and cognitive foundation for that community*."[47] The definition of the temporal and spatial framework of the community gains weight, however, if one takes into consideration very specific circumstances – the part of Serbian historiography in question probably operates in this manner instinctively and within the *habitus* of 'national activism', which defines a whole 'social and mental landscape'. I use the term *habitus* in the sense of Pierre Bourdieu's definition, according to which it is (in somewhat simplified terms) a self-regulated framework of deeply embedded predispositions in the human mind that enable, on the one hand, the valorization and interiorization of experiences, and, on the other, the regulated improvisation of agency in line with the demands of objective possibilities of that agency.[48] The mass reproduction of a partly

[46] Here one should point to one example which possibly outlines the way in which these authors experience themselves. In a book in which he published two 'conversations' with another well-known Serbian historian/nationalist, Vasilije Krestić, Miloš Jevtić called his collocutor a 'national activist', which Krestić, who otherwise claims that he is not a nationalist, simply accepts – see Jevtić (2001): 138 for his rejection of the term 'nationalist', and 201, for his acceptance of the formulation, 'national activist'.
[47] Smith (1999): 176.
[48] Bourdieu (1977): 78.

standardized *habitus*, through the process of secondary socialization and education, creates 'mental social landscapes' within specific social groups which then determine the possibilities and scope of individual perceptions and the elaboration of collected information.[49] In such a context it is possible to presume that, for example, Mičić and Mrgić-Radojčić 'did not see' at all, in other words they unconsciously ignored or regarded as unimportant information that contradicted their 'discoveries' and views, which were deduced from these 'discoveries'. At the same time, however, this occurs in the expectation of the moment in which it will be possible to achieve the aim of separating the Republika Srpska from Bosnia-Herzegovina. It is not difficult to foresee that, in the imagination of 'national activists', this moment will then open the *grand finale* of national history, the revival of the 'golden age' through the reconstruction of the original community and a return to (imagined) roots.

For all that, on the level of a conscious articulation of views, which will presumably be accepted in the wider environment, Ćirković thinks that:

> "*There is no 'struggle for liberation and unification' awaiting the divided parts of the Serb people. Their objective is to renew severed ties with their neighbors, the European and international community, and restore the capacity to welcome what the modern world has to offer for the good and progress of humankind.*"[50]

To what degree this is contrary to Ćirković's actual behaviour and discourse intended for domestic use can be discerned from his practical conduct, which includes the following: the signature on a 1991 petition for the suspension of the bombardment of Dubrovnik. However, he did not sign petition against the bombardment of other Croatian towns,

[49] For more on the way 'mental and social landscapes' define social groups see the discussion by Zerubavel (1997): 49.
[50] Ćirković (2004): 296.

because Dubrovnik 'is important for Serbs and for Croats', while the remaining towns are important, perhaps, only for Croats; the expression 'the former Yugoslav Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina' in the text from 1998; and finally, the production, through this entire period, of historians such as Mišić and Mrgić-Radojčić who both proudly stress the contribution of Ćirković to the forming of their scholarly careers, and in both cases he was indeed a member of the committee before which they defended their works, while afterwards he was a reviewer of their books. These actions remain to be judged by the author himself.[51]

The path from such 'knowledge', which creates the academic 'national activist', to the public discourse is too complex to be explained in detail here, so that it is enough to note that this 'knowledge' is the actual basis, or the 'symbolic and cognitive foundation', of this discourse. This practically means that – mediated and simplified through the diligence of publicists, journalists, writers of textbooks and teachers and professors of history in primary and secondary schools – for the media audience that is much larger than readers of masters' and doctoral theses – this 'knowledge' is included in the notion of the Republika Srpska as an original and 'centuries-old Serbian land'. This ensures, at first glance, the incomprehensible and appalling, massive acceptance and adoption of a geographical term that appeared from nowhere in 1992, at the moment that an entire social (Yugoslav) reality, which was built and

[51] The strategy (probably unconscious) of a dual face – one orientated toward the domestic audience, while the other is intended for communication with the outside world – has proven to be successful, as highlighted by the fact that the Austrian historian Ulf Brunnbauer places Ćirković, together with R. Mihaljčić (also a member of the examining committee of the theses of Mišić and Mrgić-Radojčić and a reviewer of their books), amongst the messengers of change in the historiography of south-eastern Europe, "*dissatisfied with the consequences of politics and the instrumentalization of politicized historiography*" – Brunnbauer (2003): 441. This viewpoint is not surprising because, like the majority of badly informed foreigners who observe things from the 'outside', Brunnbauer relies on the one-sided information of his 'internal' informers. He is evidently unconscious of the fact that in this communication, among other things, he becomes an instrument in the strategies of settling scores, so that the information that he receives is less a reliable mirror of reality and more a perception of one of the 'sides in the conflict'.

reconstructed over seventy years, suddenly disappeared.[52] But, in truth, it is worth nothing that this 'knowledge' has not taken root easily. Two examples from direct communication, on an anecdotal level, can be more or less used to illustrate this. A kind reporter from a television station in Banja Luka, through whom I came into possession of the book by Jelena Mrgić-Radojčić, gave his opinion on this book through a brief comment in a conversation: 'we are Serbs and this (Republika Srpska) is ours, but we nevertheless cannot distort history this much'. The second example: a student whom I teach in Zagreb, and who happened to attend lectures by the aforementioned Milan Vasić at a higher educational institution in Banja Luka, related to me that the Professor constantly warned his students at his lectures that 'these new' historians 'invent history' in a new (hyper)national key. Taking into consideration the possibility that this was all uttered in conversation with an outsider, which is conducted differently than the daily communication of a (nationally) homogeneous environment, one can nevertheless clearly discern the doubts and cracks in the seemingly monolithic new picture of reality and the way it is historically generated.

Bosnia vs. Bosnia-Herzegovina

It would be extremely erroneous for the reader to think that all that has been said relates exclusively to Serbs and the whole Serbian historiography. On the one hand, undoubtedly not all Serbian academic historians are simultaneously 'national activists' in the manner that has been outlined. Any such attempt at quantification in this sense, without detailed and reliable research, would be a complete failure. On the other hand, national 'workers' and 'activists' can be easily recognised amongst Croatian and Bosniak-Muslim historians. Being relatively well-

[52] The process of destruction of the socially constructed reality of the former Yugoslavia in the late 1980s and early 1990s, that is, the consequences which that destruction had together with the awkward and parallel reconstruction, can now be observed with precision in relation to a limited territory which the rebel Serbs in Croatia held under their control on the basis of a meticulous and multidimensional analysis of relevant sources presented in the work by Nikica Barić (2005).

acquainted only with current Croatian historiography,[53] I can conclude that such a *habitus* is becoming more and more regarded as unacceptable and illegitimate and provokes offence and implicitly includes a certain degree of exclusion, based on professional ethics and not 'directives' received from the political sphere, although one should still not completely exclude this. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, however, as much as can be discerned from the position of an 'outside' observer, the discourse of academic historians is still heavily under the influence of wider social and political conditions, predominantly registered as national/nationalistic. This holds the key to how one should interpret the background of the greater part of the practice of shortening the name 'Bosnia and Herzegovina' to 'Bosnia' – as an expression of the Bosniak-Muslim nationalistic discourse, which, from the early 1990s, came out of the phase of using the 'strategies of the weak' and, at least in one part of

[53] It is worth noting that there exists a whole series of texts, which, emerging from the need for self-reflection, make possible the consideration of the developmental arc of that discipline from 1945 until the present day: Najbar-Agičić (2013); Antoljak (2004); Lipovčan & Dobrovšak (2005).
The picture of this historiography is much more complex than the sketch depicting a black and white division into 'nationalists' and those that are not, presented by authors such as Brunnbauer, Fine and similar 'objective outside observers' recruited mainly from the camp of 'experts on Yugoslavia' who suddenly lost the subject of their interests, such as Brunnbauer (2003); Fine (2006). For these authors who view the world from a simple perspective, the image of Yugoslavia still flickers before their eyes, so that the main divide between the 'good guys and bad guys' actually reflects their relationship toward the state which originated and was organized by the will of foreign political factors, while it disappeared due to the will of its citizens. The myth of Yugoslavia as a state that resulted from the wish for unification on the part of its 'peoples' is clearly visible in, for example, in Lampe (2000), or Hudson (2003). For the reality behind that myth as well as for the role of foreign factor in creation of Yugoslavia see Djokić (2003), especially paper by Rusinow; Drapac (2010) and Evans (2008). Not one of these 'experts on Yugoslavia' noticed that the subject of their expertise disintegrated before their eyes and *in vivo* precisely because of the will of those who lived in that state, as was clearly seen by uninterested analysts of the American CIA in 1990 in the document titled, 'Yugoslavia Transformed: National Intelligence Estimate' dated 18/12/1990 begins with the following sentence: "*Yugoslavia will cease to function as a federal state within one year, and will probably dissolve within two*" – Finger (2006): 653-74.

the territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina, became the dominant one and, as a result, also turned more aggressive.[54] The insistence on this shortening in the public discourse, based on the aforementioned background, is entirely equal to the use of the term 'Srpska' because it expresses the desire for domination and, if possible, even greater monopolization of social power, which is then substantiated by historical argumentation and the demand to ostensibly become a 'normal country'. At first glance, it might seem that the demand for a 'united and normal country', which comes from the Bosniak-Muslim political and intellectual elite and implies repudiating the legitimacy of the national/nationalistic discourse of Croats and Serbs, aims for the same thing publicly desired by international factors. Namely, if one compares it to my designation of the activity of these international factors as illustrated by the words of Price regarding the desire to create a 'Bosnian national (state) identity',[55] then it does indeed seem to be a question of the same thing. But, while the Bosniak-Muslim discourse implies domination, which is given shape in the idea of a 'foundational nation' that is the basis of the state and the identity which derives from it, the idea of a united 'national (state) identity' is anchored in the tenets of the liberal democratic political culture with its emphasis on the rights of the individual, the amended European version of which should be the idea of a 'consociational democracy'.[56] The outline of such a superficial similarity of aims created, in the period after 1995, an atmosphere in which the circles of the Bosniak-Muslim political elite (in particular its nationalist segment) became the main allies of international factors. But, this alliance is fragile and is untenable in the long run because of basic ideological differences. It seems that it is possible here to also invoke the

[54] This developmental path is clearly discerned in the short analysis presented in Kasapović (2005): 140, even though the author does not herself deduce the consequences of her own interpretation.
[55] Price (2002): 144.
[56] See Schöpflin (2001) and the 'reversal', above all in the area of analysing the views of the Bosniak-Muslim political and intellectual elite, that is reflected in the work of Kasapović (2005), who examines the conditions in Bosnia-Herzegovina precisely from the angle of the representatives of the idea of a 'consociational democracy' as a way out of the deep social and political crisis.

example of the fragile and untenable alliance between these same nationalist circles and the international network of Islamic terrorists,[57] for whom nationalism, even in the case where it is partly based on Islam, is simply unacceptable. What only remains unknown is how long this fragile and unstable alliance will last.

If the frequent shortening of the name 'Bosnia and Herzegovina' to 'Bosnia' in the public discourse is the result of a change in the social atmosphere, in other words, the result of an increasingly aggressive Bosniak-Muslim nationalism, it remains to be seen as to who the 'defenders' of the full name of the country are and why they are defending it. Apart from the small number of those who hold firm to established norms due to mental inertia and the inability to adjust quickly, and in the situation in which (until this moment) Serbian nationalists along with the Republika Srpska, do not even want to hear about Bosnia and Herzegovina,[58] the official name for the country has gained advocates from a completely unexpected side. Namely, similarly to the way the fiercest Bosniak-Muslim nationalists joined even by classic Islamists have called for the application of the liberal rights of the individual, within the framework of strategies for realizing their aims, the official name of Bosnia-Herzegovina has also become a stronghold of resistance of Croatian nationalist discourse. The point in question is that of a great 'ideological shift', which can be explained by the fact that in the early 1990s, and then during the course of the war, this nationalist discourse, dependant on conditions in neighbouring Croatia, passed through an aggressive phase, marked by the frequent use of the name,

[57] Brilliantly shown by Kohlmann (2005).

[58] In the public discourse in the Republika Srpska, as well as in Serbia and Montenegro, the name 'Bosnia-Herzegovina' is only reserved for the 51% of territory which is not included in the Republika Srpska. This goes so far that there are, for example, separate labels for imports of various products from Serbia or Montenegro, in other words, a separate label 'for Republika Srpska' and one 'for Bosnia-Herzegovina'. This then supports the conviction that one is dealing with separate countries and states. Here one should remember the expression: 'the former Yugoslav Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina', which gains its proper significance in this context.

'Herzeg-Bosnia'. During the period when the tripartite division of Bosnia-Herzegovina appeared to be a very real option,[59] this geographical term, with its traditional foothold in the Croatian discourse, was meant to 'cover' the Croatian share of the future division.

But, in the late 1990s and beginning of the 21st century, the total political and social atmosphere has essentially changed, in the first instance in relation to the marked narrowing of space for the nationalist discourse in Croatia. There is also pressure from 'international factors', which, keeping an eye on the 'line of least resistance', demonstrate their effectiveness in suppressing 'ethnic loyalties' by results attained precisely in the Croatian milieu as the weakest. Finally, in the projection of future scenarios, there seems to be, especially in light of everything that has been said about the reproduction of the Serbian nationalist discourse, the very real possibility that, after conducting the referendum on the secession of the Republika Srpska, today's Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina (eventually even as 'Bosnia') will become the national (that is the 'normal') state of Bosniaks/Muslims. In that case, the Croats will be reduced from a 'constitutive element', with at least some mechanisms

[59] The idea of a tripartite division was the agenda of all talks on the arrangement of internal relations, and later on the ending of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, until the end of 1993, when the USA, apparently in fear of the international Islamic terrorist network establishing roots in this area, began to get involved in the situation and relations in Bosnia-Herzegovina, but also Croatia. The first steps of the American administration, in the sense of probing the terrain and erecting new frameworks for relations - above all, providing guarantees to Croatia for preserving internationally recognized borders, as well as the essential restriction of the Islamist current on account of the nationalistic faction amongst Bosniaks/Muslims - can be clearly discerned from the messages from American officials transmitted to the then Croatian President by Croatian diplomats who participated in the work of the 'International Conference for the former Yugoslavia'. The whole picture is brilliantly outlined by the selectively published transcripts of talks involving the Croatian president – see, for example, Lucić (2005): 28, for the situation in which C. Redman sent the first of such messages at the beginning of 1994, through the intermediaries M. Akmadžić, K. Zubak and M. Žužul, and the manner in which F. Tuđman responded. When made possible, an insight into the entirety of the talks conducted with the Croatian President will certainly deepen our knowledge of the picture but will not essentially alter it.

for protection of their collective rights, to the category of a national minority without any mechanisms for protection of those same rights.

Undoubtedly a very popular and very dark projection of the future for Croatian nationalists (but not only them), such a scenario is actually only one of the very real possibilities. By taking this to its extreme consequences, it is possible to presume that, out of the four possible options which, according to Will Kymlicka, are open in these situations,[60] the Croatian political elite could decide on two – on one hand there would be massive emigration from existing Croatian enclaves (Žepče, Lašvanska dolina, Kiseljak, etc.) to Croatia and further to countries overseas, while on the other hand, the compact regions populated by Croats and bordering Croatia (Herzegovina and Posavina) would demand territorial autonomy, which, in the following phase, could end with secession and annexation by Croatia.

However, in order to gain an actual perspective of the possible directions of developments, one could outline here the seemingly improbable but actually realistic alternative scenario, in the absence of factual indicators of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian version of 'consociational democracy'. Namely, when projecting into the future one should also rely on those results of the war that have still not gained the power of official confirmation, but are clearly visible to the cautious observer. One of these is the pronounced change in demographic trends, which was once one of the most important 'background' reasons for the outbreak of war. This change in demographic trends is mirrored in the fact that the pronounced trend in growth of the Bosniak-Muslim population has been interrupted, while the real numerical indicators of the share of individual national groups in the total population have also been essentially changed. At the beginning of the war, the non-resisted,

[60] These are: a) massive emigration, especially in the case that there exists a prosperous and friendly neighbouring country; b) the acceptance of new circumstances and the attempt to integrate into the majority culture; c) the demand for territorial self-government with the aim of creating one's own economic, political and educational institutions; and d) acceptance of the permanent state of social marginalization in some sort of self-isolation, Kymlicka (2001): 22.

and later almost completely uncontrolled, violence in territories occupied by the new Serbian authorities resulted in the ethnic cleansing that, in general, directed the Bosniak-Muslim population from eastern and western Bosnia, as well as eastern Herzegovina, toward the urban settlements in the central parts of Bosnia-Herzegovina, on the one hand, and to Western European countries and the USA, on the other. The remainder of the Bosniak-Muslims from a part of Herzegovina moved in the same direction somewhat later, under the burden, this time, of Croatian violence.

This violence also set in motion the Croatian population of western Bosnia and directed it toward the territory of the Republic of Croatia and to other countries, and subsequently, from the middle of 1993, violence in the territories under the control of authorities from Sarajevo also set in motion the Croatian population from the central parts of Bosnia. A part of this wave was stopped in Herzegovina, another part overflowed into Croatia, while a part of these people ended up in other countries – the numbers involved are still a completely unknown quantity. However, in relation to projecting into the future, the results of the ethnic cleansing of Bosniak-Muslims seem to be especially important in the domain of demographic trends. Namely, on the one hand, the massive departure to Western European countries and the USA has created a relatively large diaspora in a short period, which today accepts, and provides logistical support to, the new wave of emigrants now leaving Bosnia-Herzegovina due to economic reasons. On the other hand, the transfer of the rural population from eastern, and to a lesser extent, western Bosnia, to urban settlements has radically changed cultural habits, amongst others, those tied to biological reproduction, in other words the number of children in families. While in the villages every child, even at the end of the twentieth century, was still seen as a ‘few more working hands’, in the cities each new child is viewed as ‘one more mouth to feed’, so that the number of children per family is being significantly reduced. The cumulative effect of all these changes is still not so easily determined, and this will be possible only after the results of the census performed in 2013 are entirely published.

It is indicative, however, that the resistance to conducting the census and publishing of its results came comes from the Bosniak-Muslim political elite, which is entirely clear about the fact that, even with the limited data which is at its disposal, there is no question of the eventual fast attainment of a majority (more than half) in the whole of Bosnia-Herzegovina. One should take into consideration that the Serbs were also the object of ruthless violence – perhaps not organized to the same extent as in the case of the Bosniak-Muslims and Croats, if nothing else because of the fact that the other two sides did not control territory and conditions in the same manner as the Serbs – directed at their ethnic cleansing and as a result a great number of Serbs left areas in which they had lived until then, departing for Republika Srpska, Serbia, Montenegro, as well as other countries. The final result of the migratory and demographic movements during the 1990s for the Serbian population of Bosnia-Herzegovina is nevertheless essentially different. One of the most important reasons is the fact that a great number of Serbs from Croatia found themselves in Bosnia-Herzegovina after 1995,[61] which certainly

[61] A part of the complex problem of the Serb exodus from Croatia, namely the one relating to events from the summer of 1995, is explained in detail by Barić (2005): 533-67. The final result of that five year exodus is the fact that during the 1990s the number of Serbs in Croatia was practically reduced by two-thirds in relation to the situation recorded in the 1991 census (this nevertheless sounds substantially different from Barić's formulation, 'more than half'). The bare numbers are as follows: 581,663 Serbs lived in Croatia in 1991, while in 2001 there were 201,631 Serbs living in the same territory. It is thus a question of a difference of 380,000 people, and if one takes into consideration those who, within the framework of the census categories, referred to themselves as 'Yugoslavs', and later referred to themselves as Serbs, the number of Serbs who left Croatia climbs to more than 400,000 people, which is again substantially different from the figures of the Croatian authorities from 2000 that referred to 'around 300,000 Serbs' who had left the country from 1991. Any kind of realistic judgment of the number of those who 'stopped' in Bosnia-Herzegovina is still, without figures from the sources of the government of Republika Srpska, out of reach, even an 'educated guess', but there was no doubt a great number of these people. It is worth noting here: the trap of nationalistic discourse and the conceptual set of de-sensitizing the 'Other', which it produces, comes down to seeing, in such bare numbers – '400,000 Serbs' – another 400,000 replicas of the war criminals such as Mile Martić, Radovan Karadžić or Ratko Mladić (*mutatis mutandis*, this applies to all national categories which the

had an influence on the essential changes in the total ratio of the national populations. In other words, it should come as no surprise to anyone if the results of the census show a more equal numerical relationship between Bosniak-Muslims and Serbs in the whole of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The new demographic reality, as the result of the war, and the huge political capital in the shape of Republika Srpska, could bring the Serbian political elite into the completely new position of mastering the levers of power to the extent that it could even decisively control Bosnia-Herzegovina as a whole. According to this new perspective, the process of secession (with or without unification with the 'mother' country) might even show itself in a less attractive light to that same elite than preserving its acquired positions.

Herzegovina

Therefore, in such changed conditions, which open up a completely new and wide spectre of possible scenarios for the future, Croatian nationalism is increasingly influenced by the 'strategies of the weak' and defensive tactics, amongst which one should certainly include the insistence on the complete name of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the framework of these defensive tactics within narrowed possibilities of action, a more precise connection is now being made between one part of the Croatian population in Bosnia-Herzegovina and a 'Herzegovinian' identity, the significance of which substantially surpasses the regional designation. Although this linkage has not until now been shaped into an integral historical narrative, its appearance can be traced to the early 1990s and the period of appropriating the historical figure of the Herzog Stjepan Vukčić Kosača (the former Community cultural centre in the Croatian part of Mostar thus became 'Kosača's House'). In relation to this, one could also cite the appeal to the traditions of medieval 'Herzegovina'. In the period when Mostar functioned as a completely divided city, its Croatian part used, as its coat of arms, the medieval coat

nationalistic discourse produces as the 'Other'), instead of seeing living and different individuals with an endless series of personal tragedies.

of arms of the Kosača family, in other words, 'Herzegovina'. Therefore, it seems opportune here to at least briefly note the historical reality of the terms 'land of Hum' and 'Herzegovina'.

As I have already written at length about the land of Hum (*Chulmia*) and its traditions and the form of identity that developed from it,[62] I will only repeat here the most important points. As a politically separate entity, completely unconnected with contemporary Bosnia, or the Banate of Bosnia, the land of Hum functioned as a principality until 1326. In a territorial sense this term is substantially different from present-day Herzegovina – it roughly included, in a west-east direction, the area from Vrulje and the great bend of the Cetina River to the hinterland of Dubrovnik, including Stolac, with the coastal belt stretching to Pelješac; in a south-north direction, the land of Hum stretched from the Adriatic coast to the upper Neretva River and Konjic. For the period for which we have access to more complete information from the sources, which means from the mid-12th century onwards, it is known that the Prince recognized the senior rights of the Hungarian king, as well as the Serbian King for a shorter period in the 13th century. After the Bosnian *Ban* Stjepan (Stephen) IV (even though he was indeed the fourth *Ban* with that name, he has entered the literature, and remains known to this day, as Stjepan II) conquered the country in that year, it formally ceased to be an independent principality, but further retained, completely in line with medieval understandings and the way in which medieval states functioned, some form of a separate political life and all elements of the former internal organization. This relates in the first place to a type of representative body, the most important function of which was the judicial one ('the court of Hum'), which continued to act according to the formerly established traditional procedure ('the question of Hum'). To be sure, a part of the ruling elite tied itself to the new supreme ruler, but his rule lasted, at least in the western part of the country, on the right bank of the Neretva, for only around thirty years. Namely, in 1356, the Bosnian *Ban* was forced to surrender this area to the Hungarian king, under whose

[62] For everything that follows, unless otherwise noted, see Ančić (2001).

rule it remained until 1390. Throughout this period, the function of the local chief was again re-established in this area, but this time not as a (semi)independent ruler and prince, but rather as the King's representative.

From 1390 the land of Hum is again under the rule of the Bosnian king, but under the direct administration of the local noble family of Jurjević-Radivojević. But, already in 1410, the land of Hum begins to be included in the province under the rule of Sandalj Hranić Kosača, a province that, under Sandalj's nephew and successor, Herzog Stjepan, will begin to function more and more as an almost independent political organism. In a territorial sense, the Herzog's province far surpassed – in the mid-15th century when it was completely built as the administrative cradle of the future Herzegovina – the land of Hum and included, at certain moments, the territory from Omiš in the west, to the upper and middle Drina Valley, and even parts of Zeta in the east.

Nevertheless, even in the early 1450s, during a rebellion against his father, the Herzog's son Vlatko could build his base and stronghold amongst the nobles of Hum, whom he mobilized and got on his side precisely by appealing to the distinctiveness of Hum. Apart from the aforementioned traditional forms of 'collective action', which formed the institutional network through which the identity of the nobility of Hum was reproduced and thus represented one of the foundations upon which it was possible to bring about a massive political mobilization, it is certainly worth noting that, already in the 14th century, this identity had a strong foothold and support in discursive literacy. Namely, during the time when the western part of the country was under the direct rule of the Hungarian king, in other words under the administration of his representatives in the 1360s, the *Chronicle of Hum* was written (in circumstances which cannot be considered in depth here as that would far surpass the nature of this text) in the eastern part of the country; this chronicle certainly represented, in later times, a firm stronghold of the separate identity of the local ruling elite. It has not, however, been preserved in its original form, but its content, and its entire narrative, dedicated to the *lords of Hum* (*humskim gospodarima*), is recognizable in

the excerpts included by the 17th century Ragusan historian Mavro Orbini in his work, *The Kingdom of the Slavs*.[63]

Therefore, this identity, deeply anchored, on the one hand, in forms of 'collective action' and the solidarity derived from them, and the discursive literacy, through which the permanent picture of the community was produced, on the other, expanded and was protected in the depths of society and functioned as a motivational factor of real actions. The expansion into the depth of society is best attested by the fact that, during the 14th and 15th centuries, all migrants from the land of Hum in the Dalmatian cities (Split, Trogir, Šibenik, Zadar) identified themselves as such for all occasions, regardless of their status and position – by their origin they were, or they came from, the land of Hum (*Comsqua semia*). On the other hand, in only one case, recorded in Split in 1454, did an individual identify as someone coming from the 'Principality of the Herzog Stjepan [the] Bosnian'.[64] The Herzog himself did not equate his province with the land of Hum, and it is very significant that, when creating his title of Herzog, he had doubts as to what territorial content to give to that title. The detailed and reliable research of Ćirković[65] has shown that Stjepan Vukčić Kosača 'awarded' himself the title Herzog, looking, in the first instance, to the example of the 'Herzog of Split', Hrvoje Vukčić Hrvatinić, so that he even tried to obtain such a title in Venice. In the early period, however, he linked his

[63] Orbini (1968): 189-93. This text is recognized by S. Ćirković as an adaptation of the lost chronicle, which he provisionally called the *History of the Lords of Hum* (*Istorija humskih gospodara*), in his commentaries on Orbini's work, cautioning that the same text was used by Orbini's contemporary, Jakov Lukarević, also a Ragusan historian – Orbini (1968): 426-27. Orbini and Lukarević otherwise supplemented each other's work and cooperated closely, and together they participated, above all through their historiographical work, in the grandiosely imagined political enterprise of liberating the Balkans from the Turks, which ended in nothing – see the excellent and most recent account of these events, Ćosić & Vekarić (2005): 20.

[64] State Archive in Zadar, Archive in Split, vol. 25/9, fol. 11'-2, 06.06.1454. A certain Vladić Ratković declared that he came from *de comitatu Duche Stephani bossinensis*.

[65] Ćirković (1964): 106-08.

new title to the land of Hum, so that in the first months he called himself the 'Herzog of Hum and the Littoral'. He quickly changed this, however, and began to further call himself the 'Herzog of St. Sabba', referring, in his communication with the outside world, to the fact that this was a 'saint who performed great miracles', and whose grave, in the monastery of Mileševo, was found in an area he ruled and administered. One cannot with certainty establish whether, by using such a title in his domestic communication, he relied on the traditions of the Nemanjić dynasty (and, if so, to what extent), and in that way tried to mobilize all those of his subjects who preserved memory of this ruling family, as interpreted by Ćirković. It is indicative, however, that his subject Vladić Ratković nevertheless referred to him as the Bosnian Duke (Herzog) in 1454, so that, seen from this angle, one should not be surprised that identification with his province did not succeed in becoming deep-rooted until the Ottoman conquests of these areas in the 1470s and 1480s.

From the preceding analysis, one can clearly discern that the identity of Hum was a typical medieval form of identity, dependent on the political formation that had developed out of the framework of an early medieval ethnic community (*Humljani*), and which, under the conditions of the Ottoman occupation, with the disappearance of the old social elite and without the support of the social reality through which it could reproduce itself, was condemned to dying off and disappearance. Its bearers, those who met at the 'Court of Hum' and appealed to the traditions of Hum, were either killed in battles or emigrated, or, in the long term, accepted the new framework of identity through the process of Islamicization. It is difficult to gain a sense of how long the latter (notorious amongst the older Muslims as *Poturi*),[66] retained the old medieval memories, but it does not seem difficult to conclude that, by the fourth or fifth generation, the identity of a distant ancestor was of little real significance to the descendant of a former 'nobleman of Hum'. Indicative in this regard is the fact that the aforementioned *Chronicle of Hum* was preserved in Dubrovnik and not in the place where it was

[66] For more on the significance and origin of this term, see Džaja (1999): 67.

created and where it was actually read and used. The emergence of Herzegovina and the shaping of a new form of regional identity no longer had, as in the case of the Lower Regions and Bosnian Krajina, any ties with the land of Hum and its traditions. Even when Vladić Ratković identified himself in 1454 as a person who comes from the Herzog's 'state', this formulation ('the Principality of Herzog Stjepan' – *comitatus duce Stephani*), which apparently fairly precisely mirrors what Vladić actually uttered, was far from any idea of the 'Herzog's land – Herzegovina'.

This completely new form of a geographical name – Herzegovina – has its roots in the system of territorial-administrative and military organization of the Ottoman Empire. Namely, in the first period after the conquest, Ottoman organization relied on the existing system of proprietary relations and concomitant administrative divisions, so that during the 1460s, the former noble estates of the Pavlović and Kovačević families, as well as those of Herzog Stjepan, functioned as administrative regions of the newly established Ottoman Bosnian *sanjak* (*sancak*), in whose titles the memory of the former 'lords' was still preserved: *vilayet Pavli* – 'the land of the Pavlovići', *vilayet Kovač* – 'the land of the Kovačevići', *vilayet Hersek* – 'the land of the Herzog'.[67]

With the strengthening of the new authorities, the territorial military and administrative divisions changed and adapted to new necessities. Since the key function of the Ottoman Empire during the period of the rise of its power – and older and younger authorities are in agreement about this[68] – was the expansion of the 'House of Islam' (*dar al-Islam*) at the expense of the 'House of War' (*dar al-Harb*), which could be achieved only by relying on military force, the territorial military organization also represented the key to the administrative organization. In this system, the most important role belonged to the large units of professional cavalrymen, who rode in military raids under

[67] For all that follows on the Ottoman administrative organization, if not otherwise noted, see the detailed explanation in Šabanović (1982), and Inalçik (1973): 104-18.
[68] See, for example, Sugar (1977): 8 and Goffman (2002): 46.

the same symbol, the banner (*sanjak*) which their commander received from the Sultan himself. For their service, these professional cavalrymen enjoyed landed property and were called *tımarlı sipahis*, while their commander bore the title of bey. The territory from which these large units were mobilized, and on which the properties of the *tımarlı sipahis* were arranged, also fell under the peacetime executive authority of the same bey; this territory was called a *sanjak* according to the symbol used for identification during the order of battle, from which the full title of the commander was derived – *sanjak-bey*. However, the affairs of civil administration, according to the principles of Islamic religious law (*sharia*), were, in reality, administered by judges (*kadı* or *qadi*). The territory under the powers of an individual *kadı* (*kadıluk*) covered the territory from which members of the smaller component parts of the large units were recruited (*arpalık – vilayet*), so that in this way the parallelism of the military and administrative territorial organization was maintained. With the expansion of the areas under the Sultan's rule came the expansion and addition of the network of territorial organization through the creation and organizing of new *sanjak*s, and within them, *arpalıks/vilayets* and *kadıluks*. Already in 1470, after the conquest of a large part of the estates of Herzog Stjepan, a new *sanjak* was organized out of the former component part of the Bosnian *sanjak* (which was first organized out of the existing Bosnian Kingdom), the *vilayet Hersek* ('the Herzog's land'). This new *sanjak* preserved, in its title, memory of the way in which it had emerged, so that it is today called 'Herzegovina' when translating from the Turkish, while the direct reliance on the tradition of the former Herzog's estates is mirrored in the reach of its territorial expansion. Namely, the new *sanjak* expanded territorially for some twenty more years until the Turkish conquests began to encompass parts of the medieval Croatian Kingdom, out of which the new *sanjak* under the name of 'Klis' (*Kilis Sancağı*) was then organized.

But the Ottoman *sanjaks* were far from being able to offer a realistic and firm social framework of identification, even more so because of the importance they had, above all, for the military class. Participation in raids under the command of a *sanjak-bey*, as well as

performing different tasks on his account on the territory of a *sanjak* in times of peace, created, to be sure, the mechanisms of 'collective action' through a relatively thick network of social interactions, out of which arose solidarity and mutual loyalty, but only within the framework of the military class. But, this military class, at least in the beginning, did not have at its disposal hereditary estates and was not tied to a certain territory. Besides this, the *sanjak-beys* were frequently replaced, so that they could not become the focus of loyalty and narratives that could impress a more permanent picture of the community into consciousness, as was once the case with hereditary 'lords' in the medieval period. On the other hand, as a theocratic (Islamic) state, the Ottoman Empire brought – already at the level of the *millet* organization – religious affiliation to the fore amongst its subjects.[69] Social status and the possibility of social promotion depended on religious affiliation to a great extent, so that it no doubt made the formation of any other identity more difficult.

To be sure, time and the dynamics of social fluctuations introduced changes into this world, beginning with the process of Islamicization, the establishment of permanent, hereditary estates belonging to the *tımarlı sipahis*, the full adoption of new forms of written culture, and extending to the shifting of borders and their final consolidation at the end of the 17th century. The clashes on the border of the Empire in the 17th century also finally shaped the narratives which, either in the form of oral tradition or in the form of discursive literacy, more permanently consolidated the social communities created through various forms of interaction. It is worth observing here in this context, at least briefly, that the process of forming the Ottoman *sanjak* of Herzegovina until the mid-

[69] Within the postmodern approach to history, the reliability of the historiography of the constructed picture of the *millet* organization of the Empire (*millet*=religious community) has been brought into question, but for the time being no such attempt of deconstructing that picture has provided convincing results. For the standard account, see Sugar (1977): 44, 273. The reality of this organization and the way in which it functioned in one part of the Empire throughout three centuries is examined in detail by Džaja (1999).

18th century also acquired a Christian narrative version, recorded in written form for the first time in the work *Cvit razgovora naroda i jezika iliričkoga aliti rvackoga* ('The Flower of Conversation of the Illyrian or Croatian People and Language'), printed in Venice in 1747 by the Franciscan Filip Grabovac. In an effort to outline the historical narratives, or as he himself said, the 'origins and beginning' (*izod i početak*) of various contemporary ethnic communities and political formations, Grabovac devoted one page of his work to Herzegovina. He explained that Herzegovina was the former 'Upper Dalmatia', which "*adhered to Servia*" (*se je držala Šervijom*), and was later called the "*Banate of Santo Saba*", while "*from Ban Stipan* [Stjepan] *the Herzog it is called 'Ercegovina* [Herzegovina] *today*" and still bears that name. Grabovac knew that 'ban Stipan the Herzog' belonged to the house of Kosača, but how it came to be that this 'house' ruled 'Ercegovina from 1317 is not entirely clear.[70] The erudite monk who was in fact the chaplain of Croatian units in the service of the Venetian Republic, endeavoured to pour the knowledge collected in Venetian libraries into the popular discourse and in that way create a system into which one ought to fit his Croats (*'Rvati*) and find their place within the framework of the entire human history. Therefore, if Grabovac knew about the land of Hum (which he probably did via Orbini), it was no longer important and relevant. His reflections, however, clearly shift the focus from the Ottoman *sanjak* to the traditions of the medieval Christian 'lord' thereby 'appropriating' and transmitting the 'origins and beginning' of the Ottoman territorial-administrative unit into the dimension of Christian tradition. But, religious divisions and the primary loyalty given to the *millet*, which is clearly shown in this process of 'appropriation' of memory and the traditions built upon it, disabled the complete grouping of regional identities that could surpass religious contrasts. The final result of these complex processes is manifested in the first half of the 19th century when that regional affiliation gains in weight in the framework of relations within the religious and (proto)national communities. Thus,

[70] For reflections on the history of Herzegovina see Grabovac (1951): 220-21.

within the framework of the rebellion of Husein-*kapetan* Gradaščević, the Herzegovinian beys under the leadership of Ali-paša Rizvanbegović clash with the Bosnian beys, remaining on the side of the central authorities and as a reward these authorities created a separate Herzegovinian *pashaluk* in 1833, while the Franciscans of Herzegovinian descent 'seceded' (*odiljuju i odcipljuju se*) from the Franciscan province of Bosna Argentina around 1845.

Here it is certainly worth noting – according to the versions of the past constructed during the last 150 years, during the period of Ottoman rule social communication across the boundaries of religious groups (*millets*) practically did not exist, so that, in the clash of the Bosnian and Herzegovinian begs on the one hand, and the Bosnian and Herzegovinian Franciscans on the other, one does not search for any eventual connections and mutual influences.[71] One should draw attention to the fact that, in particular, the Croatian and Serbian versions of the history of the period from the end of the fifteenth century to the mid-19th century are the result of the subsequent attempt to remove the 'Oriental strain' from one's own history, which the Slovenian anthropologist Božidar Jezernik compared with the attempt of African-Americans to remove, through washing, the colour of their skin.[72] The removal of every trace of Ottoman influence, as well as communication and interaction with the 'odious occupier', as the Ottoman Empire began to be viewed in the mid-19th century, is the consequence, as clearly demonstrated by Jezernik, of influences that came from the European West in this period. These influences came in the form of understandings carried over from the 'developed world', which, in the 19th century, completely 'Orientalized' the 'Turks' and everything 'Ottoman' and represented them in a negative light. Accordingly, the effort was made to remove as soon as possible Ottoman traces from the areas the Empire was withdrawing from. In the

[71] See, for example, the manner in which, similarly to many others before and after him, the construction of the monastery of Široki Brijeg and the concomitant setting of the foundations for the future Herzegovinian Franciscan province is shown in Nuić (1998): 19.
[72] Jezernik (2004).

same way, everything that spoke of normal relations and cooperation in circumstances which required it were removed from the collective memory through historical and (para)historical analyses and articulation. This memory, on the other hand, retained everything that spoke of oppression, injustices, heroic resistance (in reality, this was frequently ordinary outlawry and sometimes even banditry) and conflicts.[73] When, however, it appeared that the task of 'cleansing' was brought almost to an end, the discourse in the 'developed world' was, in line with wider social conditions, fundamentally changed. Now the descendants of those who spoke of 'Oriental deformity' (and thus instigated the need to remove the traces of this 'deformity' in order for the newly 'liberated' societies to adopt Western norms) began to be astonished and shocked by the fact that almost all visible traces of Ottoman civilization were removed from areas once ruled by the Sultan.

Rejecting, therefore, the black-and-white paradigm of historical developments, it is certainly worth noting that the construction of the monastery of Široki Brijeg, alongside the Herzegovinian Franciscan province, could not have occurred without some form of cooperation with local Muslims. It is difficult to clearly establish whether the most important role in this case was layed by money or political reasons (the *pashaluk* of Herzegovina also had to institutionally accommodate the Catholic *millet*), or seemingly by both. In any case, this form of cooperation between the elites of the two communities, surely not the first and only example, could have generated, in different circumstances, a completely different set of relations. However, the outcome was determined by the fact that precisely in this period there was a cultural revival in full swing, a revival which set the foundation for the construction of modern national communities in the wider region of Central-East and South-East Europe. For its part, the construction of modern nations relegated the regional identities of old multi-ethnic empires to the background of social communication, so that Herzegovina

[73] For an example of what the approach of a contemporary professional historian should look like, see Moačanin (1999).

too only remained a regional term of reference, which, during the course of the 20th century, has more frequently acquired a pejorative meaning. Why such an image was created – and which was most precisely outlined by the English journalist and publicist Misha Glenny, who asserted, in an otherwise fairly popular work, that Herzegovina was a region "*where the most primitive branches of the Serbian and Croatian tribes live*"[74] – is a problem that deserves much more space than permitted by this essay.

Summarizing what has been written about the land of Hum and Herzegovina in the preceding lines, it is certainly worth emphasising that an organic connection does not exist between the two terms, in other words, the creation of Ottoman Herzegovina meant the natural decline of the older identity of Hum, which, in simple terms, remained a social 'dry branch'. On the other hand, the social construction of the Ottoman *sanjak* of Herzegovina implied the ever greater role of religious affiliation, which included the intensification of differences upon the basis of which a different approach to limited available resources was employed. In the long term, this will practically disable the shaping of a collective identity which was maintained throughout the entire Middle Ages in the land of Hum. When, in the 19th century, modern nations started to be formed in this region out of the framework of religious groups, Herzegovina remained, primarily because of its religious heterogeneity, a national periphery. Alongside this, it retained, due to its preservation of a rural structure, the function of a demographic well for the more developed and already urbanized central national areas, which were thus able to be biologically renewed. With such a past and after the massive (forced) exodus of Bosniak-Muslims, Croats and Serbs from various parts of (what is today called) Herzegovina in the early 1990s, this region has now become clearly divided along national lines. In the most recent

[74] Cited in Bax (1995): xvii. He accepts Glenny's formulation about Herzegovina as the most precise description of his own observations and research. The work in question is Glenny's work *The Fall of Yugoslavia*, which was published by Penguin in 1992 and was very influential in creating the image of the conflict in the former Yugoslavia. For a commentary of Glenny's views on Herzegovina, see Žanić (1998): 91.

times, this sort of Herzegovina is becoming one of the last obstacles on the path to a simplified 'Bosnian knot'. With a small play of words, the situation could be described in the following manner: the removal of 'Herzegovina' from the official name of the state (which almost no one still takes seriously on 49% of its territory, but which also does not mean that this situation will remain the same) would simplify the image of Bosnia as the mother country of the Bosniaks (Muslims). The elimination of the Croatian national/nationalistic discourse, firmly rooted and more and more linked precisely to 'Herzegovina', would also simplify the task of 'international factors' in constructing a 'national (state) identity and loyalty' to Bosnia (without Herzegovina). In other words, the maintenance of Herzegovina in the official name of the country is felt by Croatian circles to be a guarantee of maintaining at least the already attained level of collective rights.

In this situation, therefore, the Croats have remained – through a kind of historical irony – practically the last persistent defenders of the political heritage of the Ottoman *sanjak* and the short-lived *pashaluk* of Herzegovina, 'appropriated' through an interpretation which transmits its emphasis onto the (imagined) medieval tradition. Some projections of the future have attempted to show this heritage of an incontestably regional identity as the last foothold of Croatian survival on the political map of (the still existing) Bosnia and Herzegovina. On the basis of these ideas, one could easily turn to the construction of a new historical narrative which should secure the historical legitimacy ('historical right') of the Croatian demand for Herzegovina, and which would mean that, on the level of national/nationalistic discourse, the Serbs would tie themselves to Republika Srpska, the Bosniak-Muslims to Bosnia, and the Croats to Herzegovina. With such historical interpretations and wrangling, on the trail left by Grabovac and the discourse typical for 'national activists', it would even be possible to construct some narrative that would connect the traditions of Hum and Herzegovina, and search for a way within this framework to simplify Croatian separateness within (Bosnia and) Herzegovina. This task would not, however, be differentiated in any way from the persistent re-shaping of history that needs to prove the nebulous

idea of the 'continuity of Bosnian statehood' and the 'Bosnian nation' stretching back, no more and no less, than a thousand years,[75] or the 'invention of (Serbian) traditions',[76] which has already been discussed. But these undertakings nevertheless seem to be a useless waste of personal and social energy. In fact, if we return for a moment to the already cited Schöpflin it is worth conveying one of his warnings tied to the discussion on the social functions of national historical narratives (myths), and which precisely here finds its full application. Namely, observing that these narratives (myths) narrow the cognitive field and reduce complex realities to more simple and easily understood concepts and forms, the author draws attention to the possibility that this simplification can alienate the discourse from reality. In this way, the produced 'knowledge' no longer corresponds to reality and thus becomes 'very harmful'.[77] Translated into the language of practical activity this means: if the Croatian political elite wishes to achieve some kind of territorial self-administration, then it has no need of an historical narrative, but rather a well worked out plan with precise aims, upon the basis of which one can then achieve massive political mobilization necessary in democratic procedures. In connection with this, it is worth immediately cautioning: the protection of collective rights in post-communist Europe is directly connected with the right to (territorial) self-administration and autonomy,[78] so that there is no reason to seek additional historical arguments for a demand that is also politically legitimate *per se* in Bosnia and Herzegovina (an integral part, as one likes to say, of post-communist Europe). Alongside all that has been said, one needs, however, to add something more. The construction of a discourse directed to the demonstration of 'historical rights', which are always at someone's disposal and always disputed by others, and which

[75] See, for example, Ančić (2001a): 229-60, or Kværne (2003).
[76] The 'invention of tradition' is one of the strategies of constructing a national (nationalist) discourse, as was shown long ago by Hobsbawm (1983).
[77] Schöpflin (1997): 23. What the expression 'very harmful' can imply is illustrated by the discussion in Ančić (2001a): 236-41.
[78] For more on this see Rady (1993): 720 and Kymlicka & Opalski (2001).

are realistically equally unprovable and indisputable, creates an optical illusion in which one no longer speaks of reality (either historical or actual) but rather about 'which side are you on, ours or theirs' (let us recall the request directed to Iso Kršnjavi from the editorship of *Obzor*). The emotional engagement that demands such a (circular) discourse clouds one's view and also enables incompetence and corruption to be concealed by the acceptance and involvement of individuals within the discursive framework. And this is what Bosnia and Herzegovina, in this moment, needs the least of, along with the 'overheated' and completely useless debate on what the country should be called.

Appendix: Are 'Foreigners' always objective?

The war that was fought between 1990 and 1995 in the area of the former Yugoslavia, and which really should be described, with the most precise expression, as 'the War of Yugoslav Succession'. The war in Kosovo in 1998/99 and the NATO intervention, as well as the conflict in Macedonia after 2000 can no longer be considered a part of the first conflict, but rather a separate conflict. One of the important questions which this war presented is the following: how is the image of events in a region that is physically very close, 'in Europe', but symbolically so far, 'in the Balkans', created and formed. The problem appears on the level of both daily reporting and scholarly discourse, whereby one of the initial premises is the one according to which 'foreigners', in these situations, are significantly more objective than 'local players', who unfailingly, according to this same logic, seek to push through their agendas and their viewpoints. But, although this logic operates seductively, life is more complex than simplified set rules, so that very frequently ignorance and a lack of information goes along with the position of a 'foreign' observer and this very easily transforms such an observer into the prey of 'local players' who, in this way, succeed in securing a name for their agendas and viewpoints as 'objective'. On the other hand, where the level of knowledge of conditions is significantly higher, such as in the scholarly discourse, the formal position of a 'foreigner' is very frequently transformed, with time and owing to the establishment of firm

connections, into the real position of a 'local player', who is better acquainted, and is even connected with one of the sides, but endeavours to create the semblance of a retained 'objectivity'. I will attempt to briefly illustrate all these problems with a few examples which show that 'outside' observers do not *a priori* have a more advantageous position than *insiders*.

I am firstly turning to a personal experience that is, at least in part, corroborated by the record of an 'outside' observer. At the beginning of the War of Yugoslav Succession I lived and worked in Sarajevo, in which I spent an entire year of the war, before leaving, or migrating, from that city in 1993. Sometime in mid-summer 1992, after three or four months of the war spent in an apartment on the front line in one of the urban settlements on the outskirts of the city, an English journalist and his (locally leased) cameraman appeared in the building. They were seeking 'stories' and the situation in which they found me presumably seemed attractive to them, while it was probably not without significance that there were not many people in the building with whom the English journalist would be able to converse in his own language. Essentially, they found me at the moment when I took my young daughter, a seven years old child who happily departed the hell of war with her older sister a few days later, out of the cellar for a rare walk in the fresh air. One had to exit the building through the cellar window because the entry door, facing the small square of estates completed four years before the beginning of the war, was closed with a chain in case someone tried to exit at this side – namely, the square faced toward the suburbs of family homes that were occupied by the Serbian army, taking advantage of the fact that a large barracks of the 'Yugoslav People's Army' (JNA) was located in this settlement. The war began in this micro-world a few days prior than in the remainder of the city – around midday one day an armoured vehicle appeared on the square, stopped in the middle of it, and then the machine gun on the top of the vehicle began to fire at random at the buildings. After the withdrawal of the vehicle, the gunfire continued from the first houses of the neighbouring settlement and it did not cease. I only saw my former building for the first time from the 'front' side

when the war ended and I visited Sarajevo in 1996.

The English journalist (years later I discovered via the internet that he was called Sean Maguire) visited my apartment, which was then considerably demolished by missiles of various types fired from the neighbouring settlement, stayed for a conversation for about half an hour and then decided to film a 'story'. He filmed my study, a short conversation, and then my daughter and I 'enacted' a scene in which we exited through the cellar window. The journalist and cameraman left, while I quickly, under the burden of surviving the war, forgot about the whole episode. Some months later, when winter began to pinch, I met, on the street, a pre-war acquaintance who stopped me and told me an almost unbelievable story – this acquaintance was a Serb and, whenever he could, he regularly watched the Serbian television program. Sometime before the end of summer, he watched a news report on the war in Sarajevo on Serbian state television in Belgrade, and, at one point, saw a sequence in which my daughter and I came out of the cellar window, along with the explanation that we were unprotected Serbs, who were not being permitted to lead a normal life by 'savage Muslim hordes'. It did not take me long to understand that the journalist was a free-lancer who had placed his material on the market. It remains a mystery as to why a snapshot of the exiting of a long-haired man with a ponytail and small child through a cellar window was appealing to Serbian television. The only trace of the whole story in which I was transformed, thanks to an 'objective foreigner', into a Serb being maltreated by 'savage Muslim hordes' remains the text of the diary record of Sean Maguire published in the *London Review of Books* and today available on the internet.[79]

The illusion of a realistic picture of reality captured by the objective camera is therefore more favourable for various forms of manipulation than words written and printed on paper, or left for viewing in the virtual world of the internet. It is possible to respond to the written word and attempt to draw attention to the existence of the 'other side of

[79] Maguire (1992). Although I cannot recall the conversation, I doubt that it was limited only to what Maguire reproduced in one sentence.

the medal' or even lies, but there is really no possibility of reaction to, and eventual correction of, a report in the form of a picture broadcast in the news that disappears at the moment it is seen. During the war years, I repeatedly heard from people who had the opportunity to watch television that, in their news reports, various television stations used the same film material that shows the victims of the war in opposite contexts, so that the same dead people 'played' the roles of Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs. Indeed, national affiliation is not written on the bodies of the dead nor can it be recognized. The relatively well-known journalist Sylvia Poggioli took one such case into consideration in an article which has appeared as an argument in the later discussions of scholars who have grappled with the War of Yugoslav succession in their research and work. Namely, Poggioli gives an account of a television program on the crime committed in Gospić in 1991 in which two murdered Serbs were shown as Croats who had been killed by Serb rebels.[80]

There is no reason not to believe the story told in 1993 and which began on the occasion of Poggioli receiving the 'George Foster Peabody' award for her reports on the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, but here it seems to me to be important to draw attention to something that is only revealed incidentally in her text and something that the author herself would have surely attempted to conceal if she had been conscious of the meaning of her words. Describing in dramatic words her journey in 'northern Bosnia' in the summer of 1992, Poggioli wishes to highlight that she found herself in a situation in which the battlefield of war was a *terra incognita*, in both a literal and metaphorical sense. Manifestly alluding to her own experience, she asserts:

> "*Covering the disintegration of Yugoslavia has often forced reporters to act as scouts without compasses in a completely unknown terrain … Reporters have had to wade through the complex cultural, historical and*

[80] The text, '1993: Scouts without Compass' is available at: http://niemanreports.org/articles/1993-scouts-without-compasses/ (last access 4/3/2016).

> *political geography of these conflicts. And very few had the necessary instruments.*"

The argument appears convincing until the point in the text when it is revealed that Poggioli did not 'fall from the skies' in 'northern Bosnia' in the summer of 1992. She began her work in the former Yugoslavia *four years earlier*, when she arrived "*in Belgrade in October 1988 for my first assignment in Yugoslavia*." At first glance it seems that in those *four years* she did not learn anything about the state from which she was reporting, even though the same state was literally disintegrating before her own eyes during that entire period. Her great 'discovery' about the difference between 'cosmopolitan Sarajevo' and 'rural Bosnia', which she made 'just before the outbreak of the conflict' (she obviously 'did not know' even then that the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina already began on 1st of October 1991 when the Serbian army destroyed the village of Ravno and its surrounding hamlets) stands true, but is in complete contrast with the beginning of her text and her narration about the journey to 'northern Bosnia', which is presented as a *terra incognita*. And not only that – Poggioli cites a whole series of examples of manipulation of information (part of which indeed appear to be credible), from which it is clearly discernible that she followed the war closely and obviously knew who was fighting and why. But, curiously enough, the negative heroes of all her stories are the Slovenes, Croats and Bosnians, so that the following sentences are not surprising in the least:

> "*The best known examples of vast exaggeration were reports of the massive damage inflicted on Dubrovnik, the magnificent medieval fortress city on the Adriatic. For months, Croatian media reported that the monuments in the old quarter had been devastated by Yugoslav Army shells and mortars. Western journalists who visited the walled city after the campaign ended reported seeing only superficial damage.*"

To these words I can only add that in October 1993, when I came to Dubrovnik for the first time after the beginning of the war (and it was

then already considerably restored), the city certainly did not look like Vukovar or Mostar, but at least 30% of houses in the old town were still without roofs; individual buildings on the main street, the Stradun, were still only bare walls that created the semblance of buildings; the hotel 'Imperijal' and the 'Inter-university centre' were completely destroyed, etc. The words of Poggioli, written in 1993, suddenly begin to sound as an echo of the well-known statement of the then Lieutenant-Colonel of the Serbian army, Milan Gvero, who, on 4 December 1991, stated, without blinking: "*The JNA did not bombard Dubrovnik and not one particle of dust fell on that city from the side of the JNA*", while Belgrade television broadcast, as confirmation of that lie, film footage of the city in flames alongside commentary that the Croats were burning car tyres in order to 'deceive the world'.[81] After all of this, Poggioli's opinion that the Serbs really only have themselves to blame because their self-isolation led to a bad image in the eyes of the world, and not at all the fact that the Serbian political leadership initiated and led the War of Yugoslav succession with the massive support of its population, should no longer surprise anyone.

This is not a question of establishing moral responsibility for spoken and written words (this remains the personal problem of Poggioli), nor is it a question of why and how a sojourn in Belgrade made a Serbian spokeswoman out of an American journalist of Italian origin – and that is exclusively her personal matter. Rather it is a question of noting that Poggioli was not the only one who acted in this way and defended one of the sides in the war and that taking such a position was a completely natural and expected thing, especially in the situation in which reality fundamentally differed from ideas acquired from literary models (historical, literary or orally transmitted impressions) that prepared foreign observers for the world they were entering. Both Maguire and Poggioli speak of the 'excess of history', and this phrase

[81] The statement of Lieutenant-Colonel Milan Gvero can be found in Ćirić (2005). The segment from the news of Serbian television which mentions 'the burning of car tyres' is available today on Youtube: *https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HPJ3O4ffW3Q* (last access 4/3/2016).

about ‘excess’ relates to the fact that the picture and ideas acquired within the framework of preparing for the task (and they generally reproduced the views of the authorities of socialist Yugoslavia on the state they administered) were shown to be insufficient for understanding the complex reality. Socialist Yugoslavia was not (only) a state that had emerged in the anti-Fascist struggle against the Axis powers, and which had unexpectedly resisted Stalin and sought its place in the sun within the framework of the project of modernizing society as part of the ‘Non-Aligned Movement’; it was at the same time a (fairly) brutal totalitarian dictatorship, founded on an extreme terror that terrified its own subjects in the late 1940s, as well as a society marked by deep injustices on both a personal and collective level, which was all maintained mainly thanks to a diversified and pronounced system of supervision and control. In such circumstances the spectre of possible reactions when coming face to face with the complex and disorderly reality full of contradictions was fairly limited – forced to produce daily news, the journalist did not have the opportunity to nuance his views, cautiously weigh all information and present it in a faithful account of the context(s). The vast majority decided in favour of the least demanding solution – to simplify reality, take sides and stick to established parameters with regard to who is ‘good’ and who is ‘bad’, which automatically meant the loss of the position of an ‘uninterested foreign observer’.

And while such an exit is somewhat understandable for a journalistic position, it is presumed that those who dissected the war from the position of a scholar were in a much better position with regard to the possibility of maintaining a neutral point of observation. Within that population of scholars, the greatest interest for the war, in the sense of its causes, motives and manner in which it was conducted, was certainly and understandably shown by those from the areas of history, sociology/political science and anthropology. But it is worth observing something else: the causes of the disintegration of Yugoslavia drew the attention of a fairly limited circle of scholars, mainly those from the Anglo-American and Serbian milieu (with rare exceptions such as Sabrina P. Ramet), amongst all of whom, more or less, there is the

feeling of a pronounced note of missing everything that that state represented.[82] On the Croatian side, until the early 1990s the question of the causes of the collapse and disintegration of the Yugoslav state did not represent an agenda worthy of attention – it seems that on this side the disintegration of the state was experienced as a self-explanatory and natural thing, and those who express regret in any way represent a pronounced minority. Even when scholars connected to the Croatian side by origin and socialized in Anglo-American circles have dealt with analyses tied to Yugoslavia, the basic questions have been asked from the opposite end: not how and why the state disintegrated, but how did that state emerge and how did it succeed in maintaining itself at all (such an approach in itself says a lot about the general perception of Yugoslavia on the Croatian side).[83]

Apart from this biased stance very specific marketing tone is clearly discernible in the titles of the huge number of texts that emerged and were published in the 1990s, which, in this or that way, exploited the wartime tragedy of Bosnia-Herzegovina. One of the most obvious and ugliest examples of this marketing abuse is the work of the Dutch

[82] The literature that emerged in this circle and dedicated to the problem of the collapse of the Yugoslav state and the war for Yugoslav succession is enormous and it simply does not pay to cite even the titles, but the 'balance of power', which has been discussed, is clearly visible from the exhaustive review of various viewpoints that can be found in Dragović-Soso (2008).

[83] Excellent examples of agendas and the manner of posing questions in scholarly analyses on the Croatian side include Banac (1984), and Drapac (2010). For a typical Croatian approach to the problem of the disintegration of the state, in which one practically only sees Croatian-Serbian relations in the simplified scheme of 'Greater Serbian ideology' which resulted in the 'armed aggression' of 1990, see the work of Anzulović (1999). Standing completely outside of the matrix of views of Croatian scholars with regard to Yugoslavia and its end is the work of Vjekoslav Perica (2002), an author who, apart from his origin and the formal position which he currently occupies (professor at the Faculty of Philosophy in Rijeka), belongs to the Anglo-American and Serbian circle of scholars who are emotionally engaged because of the fate of the state that existed for almost seventy years, but what is indicative is the absence of any reaction to this work in Croatian scholarly circles. A more nuanced picture of the views of Croatian scholars regarding Yugoslavia, which would require a separate discussion, would show a more precise arrangement of positions, but still within the roughly established framework presented here.

anthropologist (and amateur historian) Mart Bax, who, in order to draw attention to his work on the saturated bookselling market, located Međugorje (a settlement in the *centre* of Herzegovina) in 'rural Bosnia' in the very title of his book.[84] But, nevertheless, due to his impudent inventions and unparalleled constructions, which even the 'yellow press' would avoid (e.g. the completely invented war between two family clans in Međugorje in 1991, which took, no more and no less, than 150 victims) and the important and crucial contribution of the imagining and construction of Ruritania (the name of a fictitious land that exists only as a discursive construction, which was introduced into the literature by Vesna Goldsworthy),[85] Bax deserved a separate and longer review. However in the end (in 2013, when he had already entered retirement long ago), Bax's improprieties were addressed by the body of his university (Vrie University, Amsterdam), which resulted in the elaboration of a study, which was written by his colleagues Michiel Baud, Susan Legêne and Peter Pels.[86] The authors of this study, however reluctantly, nevertheless had to acknowledge that, in writing about Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bax invented 'facts', cited non-existent sources, presented his interpretations as facts and many other such things. In the introduction to the study,[87] the three authors express their concern for the consequences of the extremely dishonourable conduct of their 'respected colleague' and consider the possible harm of such actions to the entire academic community, which I will illustrate here with one practical example. Namely, Bax's entirely invented story about the 'small war' (with more than 150 people allegedly dead) that was conducted in the Catholic centre of pilgrimage, Međugorje, in Herzegovina in 1992, was accepted verbatim and with full confidence by Michael Mann, who imbedded it as an important argument in his reflections on the phenomenon of 'ethnic cleansing' in the variant that relates to the former

[84] Bax (1995).
[85] Goldsworthy (1998).
[86] Baud, Legêne & Pels (2013). See in English about this academic scandal in Jolić 2013.
[87] Baud, Legêne & Pels (2013): 4-9.

Yugoslavia.[88] As his theoretical analysis of the phenomenon of 'ethnic cleansing' rests on a huge number of practical examples taken from the literature, and without real verification (practically impossible because of the almost immense number of such small *case studies*), it is natural to ask the question, after the fabrications of Bax have been formally verified, as to how many such cases are to be found in the material that the author used. Bax's example is malevolent for the whole academic community inasmuch he is *a priori* granted, as a 'foreign observer', full confidence because it is assumed that he does not 'represent' any side, but it has been highlighted that to be an *outsider* does not automatically mean to be impartial, because partiality is possible due to the personal benefit of the author himself: the need to say something 'new', to achieve material gains, to gain symbolic capital in the academic community, etc.

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[88] Mann (2005): 386, 426.

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Sažetak

Autor razmatra pozadinu čestoga običaja kraćenja naziva Bosne i Hercegovine na prvi dio njezina složenog imena - Bosnu. Zaključuje da se s jedne strane radi o benignoj mentalnoj inerciji, ali da to kraćenje može s druge strane biti i iskaz određenih političkih stajališta. Razvijajući tu ideju, autor raščlanjuje razvojnu putanju nacionalne integracije Bošnjaka-muslimana i upozorava na činjenicu da je tek nedavno potpuno oblikovan nacionalistički diskurs i unutar njega 'središnji narativ' bošnjačko-muslimanske nacionalne povijesti. Razlažući značenje, funkcije i razvoj takvoga 'središnjeg narativa nacionalne povijesti', autor upozorava kako je već razvijeni srpski narativ bio od krucijalne važnosti za brzo ukorjenjivanje zemljopisnoga naziva 'Srpska' za dio Bosne i Hercegovine pod srpskim nadzorom. Iz toga onda proizlazi i prepoznavanje povezanosti oblikovanja bošnjačko-muslimanskoga 'središnjeg narativa nacionalne povijesti' s učestalim zahtjevima da se i službeno mijenja ime Bosne i Hercegovine u Bosna. Tu evoluciju autor pripisuje promjenama u ukupnom društvenom i političkom kontekstu, koje su dovele do toga da je bošnjačko-muslimanska politička i intelektualna elita napustila 'strategije slabih' i u svojim zahtjevima postala znatno otvorenija i agresivnija no što je bila do početka devedesetih godina 20. stoljeća, tražeći da Bosna i Hercegovina promjenom imena i na simboličan način postane bošnjačko-muslimanska nacionalna država. Razmatrajući povijesne korijene zemljopisnoga i političko-upravnoga naziva Hercegovina, autor pokazuje da on pripada otomanskome povijesnome sloju i nema izravne i organske veze sa srednjovjekovnim tradicijama Humske zemlje, koje su ugasle nakon otomanskoga osvajanja. U zaključnim razmatranjima autor pokazuje da je obrana punoga naziva Bosne i Hercegovine u hrvatskoj političkoj i intelektualnoj eliti zapravo posljedica nesvjesnoga prihvaćanja 'strategije slabih' i da je dobila simbolično značenje očuvanja kakve takve nacionalne ravnopravnosti.