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# (Inter)National Reconstruction: Revising Poststructuralist Encounters with the War in Bosnia and Herzegovina

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**Abstract:** The most serious problems in Bosnia and Herzegovina today are linked to the political practices of conflicting visions of nationhood and statehood. The international intervention in the country was expected to create self-sustaining political institutions and then withdraw. However, the fact that the intervention is ongoing shows its failure to do so. Many scholars have engaged this issue, but this article shows that some of the analyses that have been most critical of the international intervention also bring problems of their own. The article focuses on the encounters between collective Subjects and the ways they have been constituted in relation to one another. It warns that without carefully identifying these Subjects we risk serious misinterpretations, such as equating Bosnian Muslims, Bosniaks, and Bosnians. This misinterpretation occurs in two major critical works in IR's 'poststructuralist canon' that purport to critically engage the situation and, particularly, the international intervention in Bosnia and Herzegovina – David Campbell's *National Deconstruction* and Lene Hansen's *Security as Practice*. Campbell and Hansen rightly criticize the International Community's ethno-cultural essentialism, but in their critique they apply Campbell's radical-idealist version of multiculturalism. Based upon the ideal of a community without essence and the principle of affirming cultural diversity without situating it, this approach is not able to identify the Subjects involved or the unwelcome radicalization of the excluded Subjects, which leads to flawed conclusions as to how to sustainably resolve their conflict. In providing an academic corrective to such a hyper-liberal bias, this article seeks to increase the room-for-manoeuve of those who seek to create self-sustaining political institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

**Keywords:** Bosnia and Herzegovina, Muslim, Croat, Serb, Bosniak, encounter, deconstruction, reconstruction

[W]e Bosniaks did not know how to find the right way and orientation in the world that has arisen around us and that has been strategically and historically oriented against us. This world has followed the ideology, strategy and policy of Christian unilateralism and anti-Islamism – in its earlier feudal version as well as in its newer national-civic version. [...] We have been in part an instrument of the Croatization of our own Bosniak nation and of Bosnia itself; we have also been the topic and object, the instrument and means of its Serbization, and then of the neutralization of our existence [...] through the communist formula of a nation that does not have its means, but has a name that stigmatizes the nation while it does not secure for it any rights (*The Meaning of Bosniakness Today*, a speech by the politician, scholar, and historian Muhamed Filipović, given at *Bošnjački sabor* at the Holiday Inn in Sarajevo, 27 September 1993, in Bošnjaci Media Agency, 2015: 1:19:25–1:21:27).

## INTRODUCTION

The war in Bosnia and Herzegovina<sup>1</sup> was the most severe conflict in post-World War II Europe, and the subsequent international intervention has been among the most extensive and intensive ever pursued. In November 1995 the international involvement in the conflict culminated with the Dayton Peace Agreement (DPA), a complex international peace treaty envisioning a set of *ad-hoc* international institutions with an extensive mandate in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Yet, two decades after the end of the war, Bosnia and Herzegovina still does not seem to function in the way expected by the majority of those who intervened, and the international intervention under the mandate of the DPA is still not formally finalized. Therefore, we can ask a practical question that is “*important in the real world*” (King et al., 1994: 15; Hansen, 2006: 5): How has it happened that, in spite of the enormous efforts invested, the international intervention in Bosnia and Herzegovina has not yet been considered successful enough in creating a self-sustaining state to be concluded?

In this respect, the main theoretical and methodological argument developed in this paper is that our knowledge on this question can be improved by learning more about how the main collective Subjects involved in the political life in Bosnia and Herzegovina developed the meaning of what they ‘are’ in the encounters of one with another. Improving our knowledge on the meaning of the main Subjects can effectively extend the room for manoeuvre in practical and political dealings with the complex situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (on this point see also Hansen, 2006: 76).

From the perspective of the international interveners the problem of the international intervention in Bosnia and Herzegovina might be – and often is – explained in a rather straightforward manner. The international intervention could not be concluded until local politicians adopted the reforms linked with the human rights standards, appropriation of state property, the functionality of the state, the rule of law, and the re-

lations with the EU (see, e.g., OHR, 2015). These 'official' international conditions for the termination of the international involvement in Bosnia and Herzegovina are well intended. However, in order to achieve these goals in political life and practice one would need to overcome, reconcile, or make compatible the conflicting visions of statehood and nationhood that are utilized in post-conflict Bosnia and Herzegovina (see, e.g., Bose, 2002; Pejanović, 2007). This is the exact problem that has consistently condemned seemingly progressive policy initiatives to failure, as it happened, for example, with the recent initiatives for the constitutional reform (Hays and Crosby, 2006; Bieber, 2010), police reform (Muehlmann, 2008) and the implementation of the European Court of Human Rights' Sejdić-Finci ruling (Bassuener and Weber, 2014: 2).

Because of the apparent lack of knowledge on how to achieve long-term political stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina one cannot rely on purportedly universal conceptions that frame international interveners as already knowing the right answers, with local actors simply needing to accept these and become socialized into the norms and knowledge preached to them by the interveners. Such a simple problem-oriented 'international' perspective is blind to the differences and complexities of everyday life. Instead, it is productive to focus on the development of the current situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina in its historicity and learn more about how the main political Subjects, in the name of which the main political actors were acting, have developed and continued to develop into what they 'are'.

The war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, from which, by way of the international intervention and its complications, the current situation stems, has been addressed in a number of political statements, scholarly works, journal articles, movies, and other items of cultural production. A highly visible exchange of arguments occurred between those who interpreted the war as a civil war between three groups (for such works see, e.g., Huntington, 1996/2002: 281–291; Mearsheimer and Van Evera, 1995; Kaplan, 1993) and those who interpreted the war as an outcome of aggression against Bosnia and Herzegovina (e.g. Rieff, 1995; Gow, 1996; Donia and Fine, 1994). However, there is also an alternative interpretation of these issues which was suggested in two books that have become basic reference texts in poststructuralist inquiries into (inter)national security: David Campbell's *National Deconstruction: Violence, Identity, and Justice in Bosnia*, published in 1998, and Lene Hansen's *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis of the Bosnian War*, published in 2006.

*National Deconstruction* and *Security as Practice* highlighted a similar argument (in some ways) to that of the present article – that the inactivity of the international community in the first years of the war, when it was already well known and documented that widespread ethnic cleansing, mass killing, concentration camps, and systematic rape had been going on in Bosnia and Herzegovina, was linked to the re-presentation<sup>2</sup> and narration of the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina as a 'civil war' among three belligerent ethnic groups (Hansen, 2006: 179–184; Campbell, 1998: 99–109). This in-

terpretation effectively excused the international community from its responsibility and the need to intervene. The fact that this international/Western position, as it was voiced by, e.g., the representatives of the US administration, Great Britain, or the United Nations, usually had more in common with the position of Bosnian Serbs than with that of the Bosnian government was noted by both authors as the main reason why the international protection of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and its civilians was so problematic (Campbell, 1998: 49, 81; Hansen, 2006: 145–147).

Both *National Deconstruction* and *Security as Practice* also argued that the decisive involvement of the international community in the second half of 1995 was based mostly on a re-interpretation of the war as a war of ‘aggression’ and, perhaps more importantly, ‘genocide’. Contra to the ‘civil’ war narrative, the ‘aggression-genocide’ narrative made the international community effectively responsible for what was going on in Bosnia and Herzegovina and induced its decisive involvement. The ‘civil war’ and ‘aggression’ interpretations were both present in the West from the early phases of the war, but the latter gained decisive prevalence among international actors only after the massacre in Srebrenica in July and the Markale bombardment on 28 August 1995 (Campbell, 1998: 99–109; Hansen, 2006: 143–144). Campbell and Hansen were not unique in making the observation that there were competing narrations of ‘civil war’ versus ‘aggression’ in regard to the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina (see, e.g., Bose, 2002: 18–22). But *National Deconstruction* and *Security as Practice* are valuable in that they show how and in which contexts the Western or international actors were voicing these narrations, and also the consequences it brought for the scope and form of the international involvement in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

If we compare the two books, Campbell’s much earlier published *National Deconstruction* was clearly more empirically ground-breaking than the other book, but Hansen’s *Security as Practice* was more methodologically transparent, systematic, and rigorous. Moreover, it is worth noting that Campbell partially situated himself in the aggression-genocide narration and offered a harsh critique of the international community’s policies due to the fact that they were underpinned by a notion of homogeneous and irreconcilable identities that were doomed to conflict, which in effect legitimized the politics of separation on the ground. Led by an idea that pre-war “‘Bosnia’ is testament to the constitution of an identity that was realized in a community without essence [and] enabled [by] the aporias abundant in a context of radical interdependence” (1998: 217) Campbell formulated two explicitly policy-relevant “guidelines that can enable political possibilities consistent with this argument” (Campbell, 1998: 208). Campbell emphasized the guidelines by putting them into two indented paragraphs with a reduced font and reduced line spacing, and argued specifically for:

A variety of political strategies which *on the one hand* requires the constant pluralization of centers of power, sources of knowledge, loci of identification,

and the spaces of community, while *on the other hand* recognizes that each deterritorialization necessitates and results in a reterritorialization, that in turn has to be disturbed (and so on).

An emancipatory ideal of multiculturalism, which *on the one hand* affirms cultural diversity without situating it, while *on the other hand* recognizes that multiculturalism can itself succumb to an enclave mentality that suppresses cultural interdependence and plurality (text and form reproduced from Campbell, 1998: 208).

Hansen, in turn, somewhat problematized Campbell's critique of the international community by pointing out that the West was far from politically united in this respect. She also highlighted the lack of empirical material to confirm that the international community did not support the government of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina because of a fear of Islam – as Campbell had claimed (Hansen, 2006: 218–220). In fact, in her book Hansen does not bring policy-relevant suggestions, but uses the case of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina “to present a series of suggestions for a future post-structuralist research agenda [and] for a more explicit intra-post-structuralist debate [concerning especially] methodological choices and their consequences” (Hansen, 2006: 211). This article can be read as a reply to this invitation to an intra-post-structuralist debate.

However, the article also asks whether Campbell and Hansen's contributions, which focus on the Western/international response to the war, can be useful in understanding how it is that the international intervention has not yet been wound up after it achieved its goals. I argue that the poststructuralist methodology and some of the concrete methodological choices Campbell and Hansen made are, after some revision, potentially useful for the practical task at hand. I demonstrate this by inquiring into the outbreak of warfare in Bosnia and Herzegovina through a methodological framework focused on the encounters of collective Subjects. This re-reading of the crucial historical events, which take on great significance in the contemporary politics of Bosnia and Herzegovina, allows for both an identification of shortcomings and a better appreciation of the utility of Campbell and Hansen's ideas. I argue that this utility extends into contemporary practical and policy engagements with the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The main argument of this paper is developed in the following way. In the first part of the paper I take a brief note of three general concepts that form the basic conceptual background of this paper: Saussure's conceptualization of language, and the poststructuralist conceptualizations of power and the Subject/Self. In this part, I also offer my interpretation of the methodological framework employed by Campbell and Hansen in their inquiries into the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Following the typology proposed by Hansen, I characterize this methodological framework

as comparative (Hansen, 2006: 74–82). However, in inquiring into the failure to successfully conclude the international intervention in Bosnia and Herzegovina, I suggest re-conceptualizing the methodological framework away from a sole ‘comparison’ and towards an inquiry focusing on the ‘encounters’ of collective Subjects. This is because the focus on the encounters of Subjects allows for the building-up of knowledge on how the Subjects have developed the meaning of what they are in relations of one with another.

In the second part of the paper I apply the methodological framework of ‘encounters’ to an analysis of the outbreak of warfare in Bosnia and Herzegovina. I first discuss the identification and interpretation of the major collective Subjects provided in *National Deconstruction* and *Security as Practice*, and then I suggest an alternative and, arguably, better empirically anchored ‘initial’ identification of Subjects. I then introduce some empirical material that points to two major changes in the constellations of Subjects as they emerged together with the dissolution of Yugoslavia and in the first one and a half years of warfare in Bosnia and Herzegovina or thereabouts.

As a whole, the interpretation of the war provided in this paper is markedly different to the ones formulated in *National Deconstruction* and *Security as Practice*. This is elaborated in some detail in the discussion section, which follows the empirical analysis of the encounters of Subjects in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Namely, this paper speaks against the application of the radical-idealist version of multiculturalism that “affirms cultural diversity without situating it,” which was suggested by Campbell (1998: 208, see above). Indeed, this ideal can be criticized for its ‘hyper-liberal bias’<sup>3</sup> because it suggests and legitimizes the adoption of difference-blind international policies towards highly complex, socially situated and internally differentiated polities. The analysis in this article points at the unwelcome consequences such a difference-blind approach has brought for Campbell and Hansen’s analysis of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as for the development of the conflict and its aftermath. Therefore, the concluding part of this paper suggests a somewhat more realist<sup>4</sup> and difference-sensitive approach to the problem at hand. This approach works actively with the fact that the meanings of the politically relevant Subjects are produced in their mutual relations and strives to avoid the twin traps of essentialization (such as in the ‘clash of civilizations’) on the one hand and the un-situated difference-blindness of the ‘community without essence’ on the other.

However, it is important to note that this article does not seek to make an argument about the causes of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina or about the ‘amount’ of guilt we may ascribe to different Subjects or their representatives. Instead, I aim to make a poststructuralist argument about how the main collective Subjects involved in the political life in Bosnia and Herzegovina developed the meaning of

what they 'are' in their encounters with each other. I argue that this kind of inquiry can expand and enable the practical and political possibilities to develop self-sustaining political institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina and thereby help to conclude the international intervention in this country.<sup>5</sup>

## **POSTSTRUCTURALIST METHODOLOGY AND THE FRAMEWORK OF ENCOUNTER**

In this section of the article, I first briefly introduce three concepts that informed the methodological approach that is developed and employed here: Saussure's conceptualization of language, and the poststructuralist conceptualizations of power and the Subject/Self. I then offer my interpretation of the comparative methodological framework employed in *National Deconstruction* and *Security as Practice*. In the final sub-section, I articulate a methodological framework for reconstructing the encounters between Subjects, which I then employ in the empirical analysis presented in the third section of the article.

### **Language, Power, and Subject**

Broadly considered, poststructuralist methodology can be understood as embedded in the observation that since anything in the human world can be communicated only through language, "*language is ontologically significant*" (Hansen, 2006: 18). This understanding is often drawn from the work of Ferdinand de Saussure, who is known for conceptualizing language as an abstract system of signs enabling signification (*langue*), and a sign as consisting of the signifier, the form of the sign, and the signified, which is the concept behind the sign. Saussure is also known for pointing out that the meaning of signs is produced through their differentiation from each other. This means that there is no essential relationship between the signifier and the signified (Saussure, 1916/1974: 67). The important lesson poststructuralist authors have taken from Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics* (1916/1974) is that the meaning of any sign or particular use of signs (*parole*) is inherently void of essence and contingent upon its relations to other signs and thereby also that any sign structure, understood as an arrangement of signs in *langue* or *parole*, is inherently unstable. This stress upon the contingency of meaning and instability of structure does not imply that objects do not exist 'out there' in the 'real' palpable world, but that the world is not simply mirrored in the words, and that in order to acquire knowledge about the world we also need to reflect upon how we make sense of it (Epstein, 2008: 6–8).

With respect to 'making sense of the world', poststructuralist authors writing about political and security issues in the field of International Relations (IR), including Campbell and Hansen, expanded the Saussurean analysis of language with at least two important methodological observations. These are, firstly, the observation that

the processes of the construction of meaning through signification are imbued with power and, secondly, the observation that the meaning of a collective Self/Subject is constituted through the double relation of identification-and-differentiation, in which the identity of the Subject is defined against that which it is not.

With respect to the first observation, the poststructuralist take on power does not concern the brute power of force usually attached to military or economic capabilities (Carr, 1939/1981: 102–131; Waltz, 1979: 129–193) or the power of persuasion, which is often implied by authors inspired by the work of Jürgen Habermas (Risse, Ropp and Sikkink, 1999; Risse, 2000). Instead, the poststructuralist notion of power is chiefly about the power of organizing signs in a certain reasoned manner that renders the meaning of the objects and Subjects under consideration and excludes other possible interpretations. Broadly considered, this understanding of power reflects upon what Said called *hegemony* (Said, 1978/2003: 6–7), Laclau and Mouffe called *hegemonic articulation* (1985), Bourdieu called *symbolic domination* (1991, quoted in Epstein, 2008: 10), and Foucault called *modes of objectification* which transform human beings into *Subjects* (1982: 777). This reasoned order of signs, a certain hierarchical-power structure that renders a specific meaning of signs, is often called ‘discourse’.

In this understanding discourse does not mean simply that what is written or said, as it is sometimes interpreted. Indeed, in the sense in which the term is used here, discourse is a structure of signs that constitutes specific power relations and a specific hierarchy among and between the signs. These hierarchical orders of signs can be observed in texts, but also in entirely non-verbal actions, such as body language (Hansen, 2006: 17–36), or in phenomena that are usually perceived as very ‘material’, such as demography or architecture. In this perspective, the fact that a certain order of signs is enacted in the course of a signification of what some Subjects or objects presumably are – or could be – can be understood as an act of power. Thus, a change in discourse is a symptom of a change in power relations among signs.

Regarding the second observation, poststructuralists understand that the meaning of a collective Self or Subject is ‘made’ in the double process of identification and differentiation, in which they develop upon the linguistic notion that any sign, including the sign of a collective Self/Subject, is being signified against that which it is not. Thus, any statement made or any action done by a representative of a Subject can be read for the identification of what the Subject is, a particular identity of the Subject, which is simultaneously produced in a juxtaposition to what the Subject is not, a particular identity of the Other (Hansen, 2006: 37–54).

Poststructuralist analyses of international security have often focused on the constitution of a radical Other, in which difference is constructed into a radically different and threatening Other, which thereby legitimates radical policies of the Subject/Self as opposed to the Other (Campbell, 1992). However, as Lene Hansen

pointed out, beyond these instances one finds numerous instances of re-presentations and policies that draw upon more ambiguous or complex constructions of difference; here she gives the example of the 'Nordic identity' (Joenniemi, 1990, quoted in Hansen, 2006: 39). Thus, according to Hansen there is no need to stick with the simple Subject-versus-radical-Other duality when opening the analysis to multiple Subject-Other relations constructed through the mutually constitutive processes of differentiation and identification is more potent. Hansen further makes the point that the identity of the Subject can be constructed in various ways or in various modes, and she specifically writes about spatial, temporal, and ethical constructions in this regard (Hansen, 2006: 46–50).

### **The Comparative Methodological Framework Employed in *National Deconstruction and Security as Practice***

Both *National Deconstruction* and *Security as Practice* use poststructuralist-inspired methodologies and methodological frameworks for their inquiries into the Western/international response to the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Hansen, 2006: 4–5; Campbell, 1998: 4). In contrast to Hansen, Campbell does not discuss his methodological framework explicitly or in a systematic manner. However, he closely explains some of the techniques he uses, such as deconstruction (1998: 17–31), interpretation of narratives (1998: 33–43), and comparison of narratives (1998: 55–57). Campbell and Hansen make quite similar methodological choices that enable them to operationalize the overall logic of their inquiry in the context of the data they collected on the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. These methodological choices are the following:

- (i) *The identification of the Subjects to be analysed.* For Hansen the choice of Subjects (in her terminology, Selves) is of foremost importance and also “a tricky problem” (2006: 76). This trickiness is present because the inclusion of “all Selves [...] will often not be practically viable [because it would require] linguistic as well as general knowledge of the Selves under study” (Hansen, 2006: 76). But Hansen argues that the question is not “whether a selection is ‘wrong’ but whether it is politically and analytically pregnant” (2006: 76) and she deliberately chooses to analytically focus on the Self of the West only. Nonetheless, she also writes quite extensively about ‘Bosnian Serbs’, ‘Bosnian Muslims’, and the ‘Bosnians’ and thereby she also re-presents these political Subjects in a particular way (Hansen, 2006: 115–147). Campbell, in turn, interprets mainly the Subjects of the international community, and then also the ‘Bosnian Serbs’, the ‘Bosnian Government’ (1998: 44–53) and the ‘Bosnians/Muslims’ (1998: 209–219).

- (ii) *The identification of the representatives of the given Subjects.* In identifying the representatives of the Subjects both authors pay attention to formal representatives of the institutions attached to the particular Subjects. However, they also pay attention to dissenting political actors, marginalized actors, and representatives of the media and academia (Campbell, 1998: 33–82; Hansen, 2006: 115–147).
- (iii) *The identification of the empirical material documenting the activities of the representatives of the given Subjects.* The core of the empirical material that both of the authors are analysing is the documents produced by the representatives of the analysed Subjects in the time under study. It should be noted, however, that Hansen also makes some excursions into older texts, namely travel books, in order to trace their intertextual influence upon Western decision makers (2006: 148–178).
- (iv) *The identification of the key events or issues.* Both Campbell and Hansen identify the main temporal, spatial, and ethical referential points against which the representatives of the analysed Subjects constructed the identity of their Subject and the other Subjects (Campbell, 1998: 55–78; Hansen, 2006: 116–123).
- (v) *Comparison of narratives.* Based on the four previous methodological steps both Campbell and Hansen compare the narratives of the key events or issues as these were narrated by the representatives of the Subjects (for more on the specific use of this method see Hansen, 2006: 74–82; Campbell, 1998: 55–57).

Comparison of different narratives is the key technique that both Campbell and Hansen use to construct their main empirical argument regarding the Western or international response to the war. However, in order to inquire into how the main collective Subjects have been constructed in time and in relation to one another I introduce and employ a different methodological framework which focuses on the *encounters* between Subjects.

### **A Methodological Framework for Reconstructing Encounters between Subjects**

As in the comparative framework, when reconstructing the encounter of Subjects one needs to identify (i) the Subjects, (ii) the representatives of the Subjects, (iii) the material to be empirically analysed and presented to the readers, and (iv) the key events or issues that have functioned as the main referential points for the con-

struction of the identities of the analysed Subjects. But in order to inquire into how the different Subjects encountered each other in time, that is, into whether and how they have changed in interaction with each other, one needs to re-focus from a sole comparison of narratives (step [v] as identified in the works of Campbell and Hansen) towards a focus on the constitutive relations between or among the Subjects. This can be achieved by making two specific methodological choices and steps. These methodological choices and steps are the following:

(A) *The identification of specific Subject constellations.* This analytical step allows for the registering of the specific constellations of mutual relations of identification-and-differentiation between the given Subjects as these emerge in the empirical material tied to specific key events or issues. The identification of specific Subject constellations can be done by focusing on how the Subjects operated as the Others of the other Subjects. This includes the possible identification of the reactions of the Subjects to the roles into which they were cast as the Others of the other Subjects. For analytical purposes, a constellation of Subjects can be imagined as a synchronic model of a system (*langue*) consisting of the Subjects and the structure of their mutual relations of identification-and-differentiation tied to a specific key event or issue. In the third part of this article I present three particular constellations of this kind and summarize them in tables.

(B) *The analytical arrangement of two or more different constellations, as these are tied to different key events or issues, next to each other and the possible identification of the reasons behind the related changes.* This methodological step gives the analysis a temporal-historical dimension and it offers us the opportunity to focus more closely on how and why the changes in Subject constellations occurred. In particular, we may inquire as to what extent the changes seem to be induced by the influences coming from outside of the observed system of Subjects and to what extent they are endogenous to the system. If we are able to identify changes that are likely to be constituted in the reaction of one Subject to the Other Subjects, then we can also ask about how precisely these changes occurred, what consequences they brought for the issues on the ground, and how they could contribute to our understanding of the current situation.

This methodological framework, consisting of steps (i), (ii), (iii), (iv), (A) and (B), which are characterized above, informed the analysis that is introduced below. The main difference between Campbell and Hansen's comparative framework and the framework of encounter and constellation, which I used in this paper, is that step (v)

was replaced by steps (A) and (B). My use of (A) and (B) does not mean that I think that narratives are not important or that they should not be compared. Rather, it means that I aspire towards a slightly more complex analysis which is not limited to the comparison of similarities and differences, but aims to look at the operation of the constitutive relations between or among the Subjects.

The contours of the methodological framework of encounter were actually suggested in Hansen's *Security as Practice* as a specific methodological choice a researcher can possibly take in a poststructuralist discourse analysis (Hansen, 2006: 76–77). I expanded this framework with the concept of constellation, which allows for an identification of a structure of relations between and among the Subjects (*langue*), as this can be read from the sources linked to a specific key event or issue. Putting two or more constellations next to each other can be thought of as akin to playing a 'short movie' of constellations which allows for identification of and reflection on the slippages of meaning between them, as these manifest themselves in the differences between the different constellations. This, in turn, opens the possibility to infer about whether and how the meaning of the Subjects and their relations changed in their mutual encounters. With some simplification, a constellation is a rather synchronic structure, and an encounter is what happens diachronically and produces new constellations.

### **RECONSTRUCTING SUBJECT ENCOUNTERS: AN INITIAL IDENTIFICATION AND THREE CONSTELLATIONS**

In this part of the paper I inquire into the encounters of Subjects in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the period preceding the outbreak of the war and in the first year and a half of warfare in Bosnia and Herzegovina, roughly from 1990 until the end of 1993. I identify three very different constellations of Subjects tied to three different key events or issues that functioned as the main referential points for the construction of the dominant identities of the given Subjects at the given time (the methodological step [A] described above). The initial constellation is tied to the period *when the statehood of Yugoslavia was not disputed*; the second one emerged together with *the dissolution of Yugoslavia*; and the third one emerged together with the *first one and a half years of intense warfare* in Bosnia and Herzegovina. These constellations are read from the primary sources, meaning the materials produced by the people and institutions representing the given Subjects at the time in question. They document important political, administrative, legal, and constitutive acts that substantially defined or redefined the relationships between or among the Subjects, and which have also had visible implications for the course of the events in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

But before the analysis of what happened in the years 1990–1993 I would like to explain how I have arrived at the first-initial identification of the Subjects to be

analysed. The identification of Subjects (i) is an important methodological choice because it strongly influences the remaining choices in the inquiry. I undertake this explanation of the rationale behind the initial identification of Subjects by way of critical engagement with the substantial findings provided in *National Deconstruction and Security as Practice*. I focus here more on *National Deconstruction* than on *Security as Practice* because the former is more explicit in the interpretation of the local Subjects. However, the overall argument applies also to the latter. Hansen did not actively interpret the local Subjects, but she nonetheless wrote about them and thereby re-presented them and, in so doing, she largely adopted Campbell's terminology concerning the local context (Hansen, 2006: 115–147).

In his interpretation of the Subjects in Bosnia and Herzegovina David Campbell drew extensively on Tone Bringa's ethnographic study *Being Muslim the Bosnian Way* (1995). This book is based on Bringa's fieldwork done in a village in central Bosnia in the pre-war period. Bringa discusses, among other things, the specificities of the 'Bosnian Muslim' and 'Bosnian' collective identities, which, as I will illustrate later, she considers as two different kinds of identities. However, in reaction to Bringa's book Campbell states:

Bringa argues that in the context of the war, Bosnians/Muslims might have been better served had they embraced the territorialisation of identity that nationalism espoused and promoted the notion of an exclusive *Bošnjak* or *Bosanac* identity (Bringa, 1995: 29). Although both [terms] translate as 'Bosnian,' *Bošnjak* proclaims a historically rooted and culturally distinctive sense of self, while *Bosanac* persists with a regional conception... (Campbell, 1998: 215).

This quote illustrates two serious problems with Campbell's identification and interpretation of the local Subjects in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The first problem is that Campbell was ready to treat the terms Muslims and Bosnians as basically identical categories so that he even crafted the term *Bosnians/Muslims*, which he used extensively in *National Deconstruction* (see especially Campbell, 1998: 209–243). The second problem is that for Campbell the culturally distinctive term *Bošnjak* and the regional term *Bosanac* both translate into English as Bosnian. These interpretations of the local terms and Subjects are, however, mistaken. In order to make this issue clearer it is useful to come back to Bringa's book *Being Muslim the Bosnian Way*.

With respect to the first problem it can be noted that at one point Bringa argued that "the collective identities 'Bosnian' and 'Muslim' [...] shared one essential characteristic in that their ethnic base related to descent and origin was contested, or not deemed relevant, or seen as multiplex". However, at the same point of the book Bringa also wrote that the terms Bosnian and Muslim "referred to different categories [and that] being Bosnian was a synthesis of the historical and cultural experiences of

*all three nacije<sup>6</sup> living on [a] common territory where the different sources of people's identities were acknowledged and even emphasized" (Bringa, 1995: 33).*

This quote illustrates that Bringa interpreted Bosnianness as a synthetic identity composed of three main and distinct elements: the Muslim, Serb, and Croat elements. Bringa's interpretation is compatible with the social, political, and constitutional arrangements in the Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (SRBH), which was one of the six republics of Yugoslavia. The Republic's constitution, adopted in 1974 and valid in its original wording until July 1990, declared that Bosnia and Herzegovina was "*a socialist democratic state and a socialist self-management democratic community of the working class and citizens, the nations of Bosnia and Herzegovina – Muslims, Serbs, and Croats, and members of other nations and nationalities that live within it*" (Article 1) and guaranteed "*proportional representation in the assemblies of social-political bodies [to] the nations of Bosnia and Herzegovina – Croats, Muslims, and Serbs and members of other nations and nationalities*" (Article 3) (Skupština SRBiH, 1974).

Thus, both Bringa's ethnography and the Constitution of the SRBH spoke about Muslimness and Bosnianness in a very different way than Campbell did, as he re-presented the categories Bosnian and Muslim as basically identical and subsumed them under the label Bosnians/Muslims.

What is important for the purpose of this paper is the fact that in the pre-war period the synthetic category of 'Bosnians (and Herzegovinians)' was actually not politically activated as a source of national mobilization or political contestation. On the other hand, the category of 'Muslims' was formally recognized and used in the national sense, denoting the Slavic population with an Islamic culture dwelling in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the whole of Yugoslavia. This highlights the crucial political distinction between the categories of 'Muslims' and 'Bosnians' before the war – whereas the former was politically activated and relevant, which makes it analytically pregnant when treating it as a Subject, the latter was politically inactive, and thus it does not make much sense to treat it as a Subject in the same way as we may treat Muslims, Serbs, and Croats as Subjects.

With respect to the second problem identified in the quote from Campbell, specifically that he was ready to state unproblematically that the local terms *Bošnjak* and *Bosanac* translate into English as Bosnian, the situation is somewhat similar to the one tied to the first problem. It is true that Bringa wrote in one place in her book that *Bošnjak* and *Bosanac* "*have been translated as 'Bosnian'*", but she linked this explicitly with the attempts "*to replace the 'regional' category Bosanac*" with the concept of *Bošnjak* as "*a national name for everybody (whether Muslim, Serb, or Croat)*". This is what Benjamin von Kallay was trying to do as the Austro-Hungarian governor of Bosnia-Herzegovina in the years 1882–1903 (Bringa, 1995: 34, emphasis in original). In this peculiar context both *Bosanac* and *Bošnjak* have been translated into English

as Bosnian. However, Bringa also wrote about the other local interpretation of the term *Bošnjak* that “equated *Bošnjak* with ‘Muslim’, in contrast to ‘Serb’ and ‘Croat’” and she noted this latter meaning is “(p)resently [1994] gaining common currency in the Sarajevo media. It is being used mainly in contrast to ‘Serb’ and ‘Croat’ and as a synonym for *Bosnian Muslim*” (Bringa, 1995: 35–36, emphasis in original). Indeed, it was with the latter meaning that the term *Bošnjak*, which now actually translates into English as *Bosniak*, entered into the important international treaties such as the Washington Treaty (1994) and the DPA (1995), and it was overwhelmingly used with this meaning since then.

In summation, there are clear and important differences between the categories of Muslims and Bosnians as well as between those of *Bosniaks* and *Bosnians*. Tone Bringa, on whose book Campbell was building his interpretation of the local Subjects, was well aware of these differences, but neither Campbell nor Hansen reflected these differences in their own analyses.

However, for the present inquiry into the encounters of Subjects in Bosnia and Herzegovina these differences should be – and are – taken seriously. They have important implications for the identification of the Subjects to be analysed and re-presented to the readers, which is an important methodological choice (i) that has further – and also important – implications for the whole analysis and the conclusions that are drawn.

### **The First-Initial Constellation: Before the Dissolution of Yugoslavia**

Based on Bringa’s ethnography, but also on the historiography of the political activities concerning the power-political positions and statuses of the different groups living in Bosnia and Herzegovina (for a survey see, e.g., Banac, 1988), and the Constitution of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a primary source (iii) (Skupština SRBiH, 1974), it can be asserted that before the democratization of Yugoslavia there have been three politically pregnant collective Subjects in Bosnia and Herzegovina – Muslims, Serbs, and Croats (i). In this Subject constellation the representatives of the Subjects differentiated themselves along the lines of the Muslim, Serb and Croat nationalities and the adjacent cultural and confessional categories. However, at the same time they also identified with the Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a multiplex political category of a state of equal citizens, Muslims, Serbs, Croats, and members of other nations, and furthermore as one of the six republics of Yugoslavia (A). In this context, the political, public and economic representation of the three groups and Subjects was made through the so-called ‘national key policy’ (see, e.g., Pearson, 2015), which was executed mainly within the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, in which the different groups were provided with proportional representation (ii). The characteristics of the initial constellation of

the mutually constitutive relations among the Subjects, specifically the characteristics of their relations of identification-and-differentiation, their representative institutions, the policies the representative institutions were practicing, and the primary sources that document this constellation, are summed up in the table below. Neither Campbell nor Hansen paid attention to these characteristics of the pre-war political life in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the following two sections I will try to show that this lack of attention to the local context and sources brought serious limitations to their interpretations of the Western/international involvement in the war, which can be seen in *National Deconstruction and Security as Practice*.

**Table 1: The First-Initial Constellation**

Subjects (i)	Differentiation against (A)	Identification with/as (A)	Representative Bodies (ii)	Policy	Primary source (iii)
Muslim	National, confessional, cultural	The Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina as part of Yugoslavia	Institutions of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Yugoslavia, League of Communists of Yugoslavia	Proportional representation	Constitution (Skupština SRBiH, 1974)
Serb	National, confessional, cultural	The Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina as part of Yugoslavia	Institutions of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Yugoslavia, League of Communists of Yugoslavia	Proportional representation	Constitution (Skupština SRBiH, 1974)
Croat	National, confessional, cultural	The Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina as part of Yugoslavia	Institutions of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Yugoslavia, League of Communists of Yugoslavia	Proportional representation	Constitution (Skupština SRBiH, 1974)

### The Second Constellation: The Dissolution of Yugoslavia

In this section I will focus on how the initial constellation of Subjects described above changed to form the second constellation, a process which was closely related to the dissolution of Yugoslavia (iv). The interpretation presented here is very different to the one offered in *National Deconstruction and Security as Practice*. Namely, both Campbell and Hansen interpreted the events that led to the outbreak of the war mainly through references to the agency of the Bosnian Serbs and the Bosnian Government, and they analysed how the International/Western Subject *responded* to these events (Hansen, 2006: 115–147; Campbell, 1998: 44–53, 209–219). In contrast, this section focuses on the agency of the Muslim, Serb, and Croat Subjects' representatives, and it also shows that the representatives of the International Subject not only *responded*

to, but got directly *involved in* the local political life. In analytical terms, the second constellation is characterized by the emergence of the International Subject (i) and the formation of three new relations of identification-and-differentiation among the Subjects (A).

**The Emergence of the International Subject.** The International Subject began playing a visible role in the political life of Bosnia and Herzegovina in summer 1991. Specifically, on 27 August 1991 the Council of Ministers of the European Communities (EC) established the Peace Conference on Yugoslavia and the Arbitration Commission of the Conference on Yugoslavia (ACCY), which was commonly called the Badinter Committee and was to provide legal advice to the conference. On 29 November 1991 the Badinter Committee issued its first three opinions. In addition to many substantial arguments the committee also stated that *“the existence or disappearance of the state is a question of fact”*. Based on this presumption the committee issued the opinion that *“the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia is in the process of dissolution”* (Opinion 1). In reaction to a question put forth by the Republic of Serbia – whether the Serbian population in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, as one of the constituent peoples of Yugoslavia, have the right to self-determination – the committee considered that *“the right to self-determination must not involve changes to existing frontiers at the time of independence (uti possidetis juris) except where the states concerned agree otherwise”* (Opinion 2) (ACCY, 1991, emphasis in original).

In the second series of opinions, delivered on 11 January 1992, the committee expressed its opinion on the question of the international recognition of the Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, among others. In this respect the committee took note of activities *“(o)utside of the institutional framework of the SRBH”* when on 9 January 1992 the Assembly of the Serbian People of Bosnia and Herzegovina *“proclaimed the independence of the ‘Serbian Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina’”* (Opinion 4). In relation to these local developments the committee stated the following:

In these circumstances the Arbitration Commission is of the opinion that the will of the peoples of Bosnia-Herzegovina to constitute the SRBH as a sovereign and independent State cannot be held to have been fully established.

This assessment could be reviewed if appropriate guarantees were provided by the Republic applying for recognition, possibly by means of a referendum of all the citizens of the SRBH without distinction... (ACCY, 1992).

In this way the International Subject got directly involved in the political life of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the last paragraph quoted above the representatives of the International Subject suggested solving the political dispute over the status of Bosnia and Herzegovina through a state-wide referendum of *“all the citizens ... without dis-*

inction". However, the referendum was realized only through the agency of the representatives of the Muslim and Croat Subjects, who, on 27 January 1992, pushed the decision through the Parliament (Skupština SRBiH, 1991).

The referendum took place from 29 February to 1 March 1992, but it was boycotted by an overwhelming majority of Bosnian Serbs, who formed about 31% of the population of the country, and whose participation was an indispensable element in the functioning of the pre-war Bosnia and Herzegovina. The result was a turnout of 63.4% and a positive vote in excess of 99% (CSCE, 1992). Based on the outcomes of the referendum the Parliament formally declared independence on 3 March 1992. This was first recognized by the European Community countries on 6 April 1992, and later also by the other UN member states (Türk, 1992: 69). 6 April 1992 is also generally recognized as the beginning of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina because on that very day the Yugoslav National Army (YNA) began its large scale armed attacks in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Thus, the internationally sanctioned principle of 'all the citizens without distinction' turned into a highly differentiated political practice, in which the representatives of the Muslim, Croat, and International Subjects were standing together against the representatives of the Serb Subject. The polarization that ensued was extreme, and the subsequent international recognition of the independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina turned out to have a damning effect on the security situation in the country. In other words, in first suggesting and then recognizing a referendum of 'all the citizens without distinction' the representatives of the International Subject simply did not acknowledge the relative situatedness of the local political Subjects. Instead, Bosnia and Herzegovina was treated as an essentially liberal polity consisting of 'the citizens without distinction', which turned out to have damning security effects. The fact that the representatives of the Serb Subject entered into large-scale military operations against the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina on the same day that the EC countries formally recognized the independence of this country was not a coincidence, but a radical rejection of the steps taken by the representatives of the Muslim, Croat, and International Subjects.

I must highlight here that both *National Deconstruction* and *Security as Practice* barely take note of the above introduced actions and sources. It would seem that both Campbell and Hansen, like the representatives of the International Subject mentioned above, did not acknowledge the relative situatedness and political potency of the local political Subjects. This hyper-liberal bias thus not only influenced the international policy in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but also the ability of academics to critique these policies.

**The Muslim, Croat and International Identification with Bosnia and Herzegovina and Differentiation against Yugoslavia.** The first new relation of differentiation-

and-identification was developed through the common activities of the representatives of the Muslim, Croat, and International Subjects (introduced above), and it involved the identification with the vision of the independent Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and a simultaneous differentiation against it being a part of Yugoslavia. The representatives of these three Subjects formulated this common pattern chiefly in reaction to the events and changes in the whole of Yugoslavia and especially in reaction to the warfare in Slovenia and Croatia in the second half of 1991.

With respect to the representatives of the Croat and Muslim Subjects this double pattern of differentiation-and-identification was expressed in the political, legal, and administrative acts passed via the institutions of the SRBH. The most important acts of this kind were the Act of Reaffirmation of the Sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina adopted on 15 October 1991, which ordered the representatives of the SRBH to pull out from the federal institutions until an agreement among the Yugoslav republics was reached (Skupština SRBiH, 1991), and the already mentioned Decision on the State Referendum about the Status of Bosnia and Herzegovina made on 27 January 1992 (Skupština SRBiH, 1991). Both these acts were passed by votes of the representatives of the Muslim (*Stranka Demokratske Akcije* [SDA]) and Croat (*Hrvatska Demokratska Zajednica* [HDZ]) political parties in the Parliament of the SRBH, and both were opposed by the representatives of the Serb political parties.

**The Serb Identification with Republika Srpska as Part of Yugoslavia and Differentiation against Bosnia and Herzegovina.** The second new relation of identification-and-differentiation was developed through the activities of the representatives of the Serb Subject, who identified with being a part of Yugoslavia and differentiated against the vision of an independent Bosnia and Herzegovina pursued by the representatives of the Muslim, Croat, and International Subjects. In reaction to the legal and administrative steps towards the independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina the Serb political representatives from three different parties<sup>7</sup> undertook political, legal, and administrative acts to separate the Serb nation from the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and also from Muslims and Croats.

Namely, the Serb representatives boycotted the Act of Reaffirmation of Sovereignty,<sup>8</sup> walked out of the Parliament of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and formed their own assembly – the Assembly of the Serb People in Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>9</sup> At its first meeting – held in Sarajevo on 24 October 1991 – the Assembly adopted the *Declaration on the Serb Nation's Staying in the Common State of Yugoslavia* (SSNBH, 1991). On 9 January 1992 the Assembly proclaimed the independence of the 'Serbian Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina' (SSNBH, 1992), and on 28 February 1992, a day before the referendum on the independence of Bosnia

and Herzegovina, the Assembly adopted a constitution for a Serbian state, which they called *Republika Srpska*.

The constitution pronounced that "*Republika Srpska is a state of the Serbian nation*" (Paragraph 1), which "*exists in the structure of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia*" (Paragraph 3). Moreover, Paragraph 2 announced that "*the territory of the Republic is made up of the areas of the Serb ethnic units, including also the areas where there was a genocide carried out against the Serbian people [earlier]*."<sup>10</sup> Paragraph 2 further stated that "*(t)he boundaries of the Republic are confirmed and changed in a plebiscite by a majority of the overall number of the registered voters*" (Skupština Republike Srpske, 1992a). It is clear that this document formulated a clear vision of a mono-national state formation – *Republika Srpska*.

**The Croat Identification with Herzeg-Bosna and Differentiation against Bosnia and Herzegovina.** The third new relation of identification-and-differentiation was developed through the activities of the representatives of the Croat Subject. It involved differentiation against the existing state institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina and identification with the newly established Croatian Community of Herzeg-Bosna (Hrvatska zajednica Herzeg-Bosna [HZHB]) as the defender of the Croat interests in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is true that the representatives of the Croat Subject at the same time differentiated against Bosnia and Herzegovina being a part of Yugoslavia and identified with the vision of an independent Bosnia and Herzegovina, but they also began disputing the abilities of the existing authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina to protect the interests of the Croat nation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

This differentiation against the 'weak' Bosnia and Herzegovina came especially in reaction to the formation of the Serb Autonomous Regions and the operations of the YNA on the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Specifically, these operations involved movements of troops and equipment and several armed operations against the Croat-inhabited areas, which the existing institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina did not counter. Thus, on 18 November 1991 the political representatives of the Croatian Subject (HDZ) decided to establish the Croatian Community of Herzeg-Bosna as a "*political, cultural, economic, and territorial unit*" (Paragraph 1) consisting of 30 municipalities and its parts (Paragraph 2). The Community was declared to "*respect the democratically elected government of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina until it remains independent of the former or any future Yugoslavia*" (Paragraph 5). Meanwhile, the "*(h)ighest institution of the Community*" was pronounced to be the "*Presidency made up of the representatives of the Croat nation at the municipal level*" (HZHB, 1991). Thus, also the representatives of the Croat Subject articulated a vision of a mono-national formation of Herzeg-Bosna, but they situated it as a part of Bosnia and Herzegovina as long as it remained independent.

**Table 2: The second constellation**

Subjects (i)	Differentiation against (A)	Identification with/as (A)	Representative Bodies (ii)	Policy	Primary sources (iii)
Muslim	Bosnia and Herzegovina as a part of Yugoslavia	An independent Bosnia and Herzegovina	Institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina, SDA	Steps towards the independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina	Skupština SRBiH, 1991, Skupština SRBiH, 1992
Serb	An independent Bosnia and Herzegovina, Muslims, Croats	Republika Srpska as a state of the Serb nation and a part of Yugoslavia	SDS, institutions of Republika Srpska, YNA	A political and administrative separation of Republika Srpska from Bosnia and Herzegovina	SSNBH, 1991, SSNBH, 1992, Skupština RS, 1992
Croat	Bosnia and Herzegovina as a part of Yugoslavia, Serbs, a weak Bosnia and Herzegovina	An independent Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Croatian Community of Herzeg-Bosna	Institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Presidency of the HZHB, HDZ	Steps towards the independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina, steps towards the autonomy of the HZHB	Skupština SRBiH, 1991, Skupština SRBiH, 1992, HZHB, 1991
International	The existence of Yugoslavia, change of frontiers by force, death and destruction	An independent Bosnia and Herzegovina	Badinter Committee, EC, UN member states	International recognition of Bosnia and Herzegovina	ACCY, 1991, ACCY, 1992, the acts of recognition made by the UN member states

### The Third Constellation: Warfare in Bosnia and Herzegovina

In this section I will focus on how the second constellation of Subjects that was tied to the dissolution of Yugoslavia changed to the third constellation that emerged together with the first one and a half years of warfare (iv). My interpretation of this historical period acknowledges the radicalizations of the Serb and Croat Subjects, the change in the patterns of identification-and-differentiation of the International Subject, and the importance of the political and national transformation of the Muslim Subject into the Bosniak Subject. The last phenomenon is clearly linked to the methodological step of the identification of the Subjects (i) that is outlined above. Moreover, this section also highlights that in the third constellation, the representatives of all four main Subjects, meaning the International, Bosniak, Croat, and Serb Subjects, shared a clear pattern of differentiation against the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a state of equal citizens, Muslims, Serbs, Croats, and members of other nations, with which they had all identified at earlier stages of the encounter of their Subjects (A). Whereas the role the international representatives played in this

period was covered rather extensively by both Campbell and Hansen, the transformation of Muslims into Bosniaks and the common pattern of differentiation against the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina shared by the representatives of all four Subjects were given no attention in both *National Deconstruction and Security as Practice*.

**The Serb Radicalization.** The representatives of the **Serb Subject** did not change their overall pattern of identification-and-differentiation as it was expressed in the legal and constitutive acts establishing Republika Srpska that were introduced above, but they radically strengthened this pattern by changing their policy from a political to a military one. In this radicalization they were aided by the YNA, which started its large-scale armed attacks in Bosnia and Herzegovina right after the country received international recognition by the EC countries on 6 April 1992. Due to international pressure the YNA officially withdrew from the country in May 1992, but it was replaced by the Army of Republika Srpska, which was formed by the Assembly of RS on 12 May 1992 (Skupština Republike Srpske, 1992b), and which took over the possession of the YNA arms and equipment and absorbed a lot of former YNA personnel. In the first few months of warfare the much better equipped YNA/Army of RS quickly took control of more than 70% of the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, from where the non-Serb inhabitants were being expelled en masse – if they were not killed or held in camps – and where the religious and cultural markers of non-Serb Subjects were destroyed.

**The Croat Radicalization.** The representatives of the **Croat Subject**, similarly to the representatives of the Serb Subject, did not engage in a new pattern of identification-and-differentiation. In reaction to the outbreak of warfare and the quick territorial expansion of Republika Srpska they substantially strengthened their differentiation against the inability of the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina to protect the Croat nation, which they practiced even earlier, and they simultaneously substantially weakened their identification with the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Instead, they identified much more strongly with their own autonomous and nationally defined institutions of Herzeg-Bosna. This shift in the Croats' identification-and-differentiation was apparent already on 8 April 1992, when the Presidency of the HZHB established its own military arm, the Croatian Defence Council (*Hrvatsko vijeće obrane* [HVO]), and then on 10 April it forbade its troops to operate within the structures of the territorial defence organized under the auspices of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Boban, 1992).

In January 1993, the tensions that ensued between the representatives of the Croat Subject, who were acting through the institutions of the Croatian Community of Herzeg-Bosna, and the representatives of the Muslim Subject, who were acting

through the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina, spilled over into an open military conflict between the HVO and the Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which was accompanied by a large amount of destruction, killing, and expulsion of the members of the opposing groups and Subjects. The Croat representatives' differentiation against the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and identification with the separate Croat institution were even strengthened on 28 August 1993. On this date, partly in response to the Owen-Stoltenberg Peace Proposal – a proposal of a loose union of three national republics – the representatives of the Croat Subject transformed the Croatian Community into the Croatian Republic of Herzeg-Bosna (*Hrvatska Republika Herceg-Bosna* [HRHB]). According to the document that declared the transformation, this Republic was intended to be the *“united and indivisible democratic state of the Croatian nation in Bosnia and Herzegovina”*.

In the same document, the Presidency of the HZHB decided to establish the House of Representatives as *“the highest representative body and bearer of the legislative power in the Croatian Republic of Herzeg-Bosna”* (Predsjedništvo HZHB, 1993). On the same day, 28 August 1993, the House of Representatives adopted a decision on the establishment and proclamation of the HRHB. This decision foresaw the Government of the Republic as the highest executive body, an independent foreign policy of the Republic and the adoption of a constitution in the future. In its eleventh paragraph, the decision stated that until the adoption of the constitution the regulations of the Croatian Community of Herzeg-Bosna, *“as well as the regulations of the former Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, when they do not conflict with the regulations of the Croatian Republic of Herzeg-Bosna”*, would apply in the Republic (Zastupnički dom Hrvatske Republike Herceg-Bosne, 1993). In this way, the status of Herzeg-Bosna was put clearly above the status of the ‘former’ Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

**The International Identification with Peace and Differentiation against Warfare.** In reaction to the changed situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina the representatives of the International Subject engaged in a new pattern of identification-and-differentiation. They now differentiated the **International Subject** against the conflict and warfare among the three warring factions in Bosnia and Herzegovina – the Muslims, Croats, and Serbs – and they identified with the vision of peace among these belligerent groups. Peace was to have been reached through an agreement that would have established a division of Bosnia and Herzegovina into three blocks, each dominated by one of the groups. This pattern of identification-and-differentiation was formulated mainly through the work of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia (ICFY) that was formed by the representatives of the EC and the UN on 26 August 1992 in London (Ramcharan, 1997).

In all the related peace proposals that were formulated with the help of the ICFY the representatives of the International Community identified with the possibility of a substantial transformation of the internal organization of the state institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina in a way that would formalize the divisions between Muslims, Croats, and Serbs, if this would aid in halting the violence. This differentiation against the internal political structure of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina was the strongest in the so-called Owen-Stoltenberg plan from August-September 1993, which envisioned a transformation of the country into a loose union of three constitutive republics of three constitutive nations (Owen and Stoltenberg, 1993).

**The Muslims' Transformation into Bosniaks.** Finally, the representatives of the **Muslim Subject** reacted to the emergent situation by the transformation of Bosnian Muslims into 'Bosniaks'. The representatives of the Muslim Subject transformed their political and national identity in reaction to the armed conflicts with Republika Srpska and Herzeg-Bosna, but also in reaction to the proposal to transform the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina into a union of three republics and nations, which was backed by the representatives of the International Subject.

The crucial event in this respect was the organization and holding of the so-called *Bošnjački sabor* (Bosniak Gathering) in the building of the Holiday Inn in the besieged Sarajevo on 27 September 1993. The single point about which this gathering formally decided was whether to accept or not accept the Owen-Stoltenberg peace proposal that envisioned the loose union of three nationally defined republics. The *Bošnjački sabor* gathered together 377<sup>11</sup> representatives of Bosnian Muslims from all over the country. These representatives eventually rejected the Owen-Stoltenberg peace proposal (Vijeće kongresa Bošnjačkih intelektualaca, 2015). But the key point is that in the course of the preparation, organization, and realization of the event its initiators and organizers<sup>12</sup> consciously used the term *Bošnjaci* (Bosniaks) when referring to the Bosnian Muslims.

To my knowledge, there are no official textual documents produced at this gathering that are publicly available. But one can take note that soon after the *Bošnjački sabor* the readers of the Sarajevo newspaper *Oslobođenje* could read commentaries and articles about the proceedings – for example, a commentary titled “*Bosniaks Were Given Back Their Historical Name*” (Hadžiefendić, 1993) or an article titled “*Just War or Unjust Peace?*” (Oslobođenje, 1993). Importantly, however, a recording of the event (over seven hours long, as it was when broadcast live by the state television service<sup>13</sup>) is publicly available from the *Bošnjaci Media Agency* (2015). The key contribution that explains the reasons for the change from Muslims to Bosniaks was the fourth speech at the event, delivered by Muhamed Filipović.

Filipović titled this contribution *The Meaning of Bosniakness Today*, and a part of this speech is quoted at the beginning of this paper. This quote shows how Filipović

defined the term *Bošnjaci* via its differentiation against the Other of this Subject. Specifically, Filipović defined the Bosniak Other as the Christian unilateral and anti-Islamic world, Croatization, and Serbization, but also as neutralization through the “communist formula” that did not give the Bosniak nation its means – the institutions of a state. Instead, this communist formula gave the nation a name – Muslims – that stigmatized it. Thus, in this interpretation the national name ‘Muslims’ and the Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in which Muslims operated as a national group, were differentiated against and rendered as a part of the Bosniak Other. In his speech, however, Filipović also positively identified what it is to be Bosniak, and he actually rendered the Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats as “parts of the original Bosniak nation”. Specifically, Filipović said the following:

We Bosniaks [Bošnjaci] are that part of the original Bosnian nation [bosanskog naroda] that continues the character of the national being of this country, and that realizes inside of this being the historical meaning and content of this country and bears its historical and state rights. We are, thus, the successors of that which Bosnia as a country, as a state, and as a historical subject was and is. This, our character, does not exclude anyone from cooperation in this heritage and perpetualization of its content, which is rich, but it will not be a victim of partial decisions of parts of the original Bosniak nation to identify and bind themselves with a national idea, interests and state rights of some other states and nations (Filipović, 1993, in *Bošnjaci* Media Agency, 2015: 1:22:15–1:23:02).

In this way Bosniaks are re-presented as the true heirs of the original Bosnian nation, and Croats and Serbs as break-away factions of the original nation. This interpretation of Bosniaks as the original and true people of Bosnia, who have a natural right to this country, was not completely new. In fact, it only reproduced the structure of meaning which has been often applied by some Croat and Serb intellectuals and politicians when they were speaking and writing about the Bosnian Muslims being a part of the original Croat or Serb nation, respectively (e.g. Bringa, 1995: 12–14). Among the Bosnian Muslims, a ‘return’ to the ‘true’ national name was openly promoted by several Bosnian Muslim intellectuals and politicians since 1990. In addition to Filipović, the other prominent and influential figures bearing this program were the Bosnian Muslim political leaders Alija Izetbegović and Adil Zulfikarpašić (Bringa, 1995: 35).

However, it was only with the *Bošnjački sabor* that the self-identification of Bosnian Muslims as Bosniaks gained prevalence among the media and the wider public. With this meaning, the term *Bošnjak* (Bosniak) also entered into important acts and documents, such as the Washington Agreement (1994) and the Dayton Peace Agreement (1995), which were instrumental in ending the war. Since then they func-

tion, together with the constitution of RS, as the basic constitutive documents on which the post-war political life in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been based.

**Table 3: The Third Constellation**

Subjects (i)	Differentiation against (A)	Identification with/as (A)	Representative Bodies (ii)	Policy	Primary sources (iii)
Bosniak	Croatization, Serbization, "Muslims" as a national name, anti-Islamism	Bosnia as a historical entity <i>sui generis</i> and Bosniaks as its true defenders	The institutions of the RBH, the ARBH, the SDA, <i>Bošnjački sabor</i>	Fighting in the war for Bosnia under the name Bosniak	Hadžiefendić, 1993, Oslobođenje, 1993, Filipović, 1993, <i>Bošnjački sabor</i> (Bošnjaci Media Agency, 2015)
Serb	An independent R BiH	Republika Srpska as a state of the Serb nation and as a part of Yugoslavia	The institutions of RS, SDS, the Army of RS	Military control over the Serb territory	SSNBH, 1991, SSNBH, 1992, Skupština RS, 1992a, Skupština RS, 1992b
Croat	RS, R BiH	The Croatian Republic of Herzeg-Bosna as a state of the Croatian nation in Bosnia and Herzegovina	The institutions of the CRHB, HDZ, HVO	Autonomy from the R BiH, military control over the Croat territory	Boban, 1992, Predsjedništvo HZHB, 1993, Zastupnički dom Hrvatske Republike Herceg-Bosne, 1993
International	Warfare, violence, death and destruction	Peace among Muslims, Croats, and Serbs	EC, UN, ICFY	Peace negotiations with three warring factions	The Owen-Stoltenberg peace plan (Owen and Stoltenberg, 1993)

## DISCUSSION: CHANGING CONSTELLATIONS THROUGH ENCOUNTERS OF POLITICAL SUBJECTS

The three constellations of Subjects identified in this paper provide an opportunity to reflect on the differences between them and to consider how the changes that took place in these constellations (B) were constituted through the encounters of the various Subjects discussed above. The International Subject emerged together with the dissolution of Yugoslavia, which can be understood as exogenous to the observed system of Subjects. However, the radically separated Serb Subject emerged

in reaction to the International-Muslim-Croat coalition for independence. Similarly, the radical transformation of the Muslim Subject into the Bosniak Subject occurred in reaction to the International-Serb-Croat coalition for a loose union of three constitutive-national republics. Thus, both the Serb separation and the Muslim-Bosniak transformation can be understood as, to a large extent, the effects of the encounter of the observed Subjects, *including* the International Subject. This observation suggests that the poststructuralist readings of the international *response* to the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as these were presented in *National Deconstruction* and *Security as Practice*, are in need of revision in regard to the international *involvement* in the war.

As mentioned in the introduction, one of the main findings presented in the books of Campbell and Hansen is that the West/International Community was not able to respond to the destruction of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina mainly because the re-presentations of the conflict invoked by the international representatives were usually ones of a conflict between three essentially hostile and belligerent groups. According to *National Deconstruction* and *Security as Practice*, this narration of the conflict as a 'civil war' had much in common with the position of the Bosnian Serbs and it relieved the international actors of the responsibility for an intervention on behalf of the Bosnian Government. This paper, however, argues that the war progressed the way it did also because the representatives of the International Subject first suggested the referendum on independence (in the Badinter Committee) and then recognized it (through the EC and then the UN member states) as a referendum of all citizens without national distinction. In this way the liberal concept of a civic state of equal individuals was forced upon a country with an established practice of a multiplex coexistence and proportional political representation of the Muslim, Serb, and Croat political Subjects.

This difference-blind policy ignored important political disputes between the representatives of the constitutionally recognized nations and Subjects in Bosnia and Herzegovina at that time, and it definitely had more in common with the position of the representatives of the Muslim and Croat Subjects than with that of the representatives of the Serb Subject. The related coalition of the International, Muslim, and Croat Subjects helped to put the representatives of the Serb Subject into a radically opposed and excluded role, to which they reacted with an armed campaign against the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Thus, the representatives of the International Subject not only did not respond to the aggression because they re-presented Bosnia and Herzegovina as caught in a conflict of three like groups, but they also, in an earlier moment of the encounter, helped in the initiation of warfare by re-presenting Bosnia and Herzegovina as a civic state of equal individuals.

In this respect, I would like to point out that the findings presented in this paper in no way oppose the warning given in both *National Deconstruction* and *Security*

as *Practice*: that the re-presentation of the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina as a 'natural' conflict of three essentially different groups leads towards the legitimization of the politics of division and separation. Campbell and Hansen are right to criticize this essentialist and ethno-determinist reading of the conflict and the inappropriate and ineffective solutions that stem from it.

On the other hand, however, the findings presented here also warn against a different danger – which Campbell and Hansen both succumb to. This danger is connected to the hyper-liberal bias that emerges in Campbell and Hansen's rejection of essentialist readings of the conflict combined with their blindness towards the qualities of the 'local' Subjects. This leads Campbell in particular to prefer – and adopt – an unproblematized, radical multiculturalism defined by the ideal of a community without essence that affirms cultural diversity without situating it. Hansen does not actively join Campbell in his radical multiculturalist campaign, but she is, nonetheless, unable to spot his misreading of the local Subjects and she largely perpetuates his mistakes. Indeed, in a poststructuralist perspective any identity is essentially without essence because it is expressed in and through language. However, in order to better understand – and engage with – the identities at hand we need to pay attention to how the Subjects which generate these identities have been situated in their relations to each other and to the world in which they 'live' and which they help to constitute. Failing to adequately situate such diversity can obscure the meaning of particular differences between important political Subjects – as happened to the representatives of the International Subject at the outbreak of war and also to Campbell and Hansen in their analyses. Indeed, if one treats the categories of Bosnians, Bosniaks, and Bosnian Muslims as basically identical, then it may seem feasible to promote the ideal of a community without essence that affirms cultural diversity without situating it. However, as the analysis of the outbreak of war in Bosnia and Herzegovina showed, such an approach legitimizes practically difference-blind liberal policies which overlook the salience of political conflicts between Subjects and thus have significant potential to back-fire.

## CONCLUSION

How then, in practical terms, can this analysis of a limited yet crucial period of time help us in dealing with the current situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina? In light of the findings presented in this article it seems quite obvious that before the outbreak of the war it would have been much better to recognize the differences between the salient collective Subjects in Bosnia and Herzegovina without fearing to situate them meaningfully in their respective traditions. This lesson can be applied by anyone who wishes to conclude the international intervention through creating self-sustaining political institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and who thereby needs to deal with the current situation in this country, which is characterized by the competing visions

of nationhood and statehood practiced by the representatives of the Bosniak, Croat, Serb, and International Subjects.

On the one hand, all the actors wishing to contribute to the conclusion of the international intervention in Bosnia and Herzegovina should be aware that the re-presentation of Bosnia and Herzegovina as defined by an inevitable clash of three opposing groups, nationalities, or civilizations legitimizes the very politics of separation and division which the intervention is supposedly designed to overcome. Even today, as two decades ago, this kind of essentialist re-presentation suggests that Bosnia and Herzegovina is not a viable option and that the consociationalist power-sharing institutions' only use is for the establishment, maintenance, and fortification of ethno-nationalist chiefdoms in the country, which is doomed to fail. On the other hand, however, these actors should also ascertain that the successful conclusion of the international intervention could not be achieved through an idealist leap towards diversity, as if there are no salient cultural and political differences that need to be recognized or situated. This is the difference-blind, hyper-liberal bias that fails to recognize how the various political Subjects make meaning in relation to themselves and their significant Others. In this perspective, political stability and the conclusion of the international intervention can be achieved only through a meaningful combination of the existing differences in the synthetic category of Bosnia and Herzegovina. That the intervention has yet to achieve its goals and be successfully concluded is unsurprising given the tension between these readings of the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the relative situatedness of the key political Subjects involved. Essentialist readings that necessitate separation and reinforce it in practice exist alongside hyper-liberal dreams of overcoming these differences. Both are misreadings that have had damaging consequences for the study and practice of the international intervention in Bosnia and Herzegovina and which need to be addressed if the intervention is to be made to work for the Subjects involved so as to create self-sustaining political structures.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> The term "Bosnia and Herzegovina" is used throughout the text to denote a 'general category' of Bosnia and Herzegovina because commonly used acronyms do not suffice in this regard. BiH is overwhelmingly used to denote Bosnia and Herzegovina after Dayton, RBiH for the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which was internationally recognized in 1992, and SRBH for the Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina before the war and in the Yugoslav times. I want to talk about this geographic entity in a general sense which encompasses all of the aforementioned forms and their abbreviations; therefore I use the term **Bosnia and Herzegovina**. I also avoid using simply the term "Bosnia" because it excludes Herzegovina – a point that was made by several individuals that I encountered in the course of my fieldwork.

<sup>2</sup> I use the term *re-presentation* to denote acts of speaking about – *darstellen* in German – as opposed to the term *representation*, which denotes acts of speaking for – *vertreten* in German; see Spivak, 1988: 276–279.

<sup>3</sup> This term was helpfully suggested by an anonymous reviewer of this paper.

<sup>4</sup> Here I use the term “realist” in the Hegelian dialectic way introduced by E.H. Carr (1939).

<sup>5</sup> A weak point of this framework, though, may be that it leads towards a focus on the most visible representatives of the politically important collective Subjects, which lowers the analytical sensitivity to the multiplicity of voices that exist within, across, and beyond the collective Subjects in question.

<sup>6</sup> Here *nacije* means ethnoreligious identities and communities; see Bringa, 1995: 22.

<sup>7</sup> *Srpska demokratska stranka* [SDS], *Srpski pokret obnove* [SPO], and *Savez reformskih snaga Jugoslavije* [SRSJ] – SRSJ was originally a pro-Yugoslavian multi-national party.

<sup>8</sup> Passed on 15 October 1991.

<sup>9</sup> *Skupština srpskog naroda u Bosni i Hercegovini* [SSNBH].

<sup>10</sup> This was a reference to events during World War II.

<sup>11</sup> On 8 October 1993 the newspaper *Oslobođenje* reported that about 349 representatives attended the event (Oslobođenje, 1993). But the Council of the Congress of Bosniak Intellectuals stated that it was about 377 representatives (Vijeće kongresa Bošnjackih intelektualaca, 2015).

<sup>12</sup> Preporod, the Council of the Congress of Bosniak Intellectuals, the Islamic Community, and Merhamet.

<sup>13</sup> *Radio-Televizija Bosne i Hercegovine – RTVBiH*.

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