ISSN 1840-3204

BOSNIAN STUDIES

Preporod

Journal for Research of Bosnian Thought and Culture

SARAJEVO

*ŠAĆIR FILANDRA, *MIRZA EMIRHAFIZOVIĆ, *ABDEL ALIBEGOVIĆ,
*NEZIR KRČALO, *ADNAN DŽAFIĆ, *ELMA HURUZ MEMOVIĆ,
*ALMIR GRABOVICA, *MUAMER DŽANANOVIĆ

BOSANSKE STUDIJE

Časopis za istraživanje bosanske misli i kulture

Vol. IX, No. 2/2025

BOSNIAN STUDIES
SARAJEVO

Volume IX
Number 2/2025

Journal for Research of Bosnian Thought and Culture

DOI 10.47999/bos.2025.9.2

PREPOROD
BOŠNJAČKA ZAJEDNICA KULTURE
Institut za bošnjačke studije
PREPOROD
BOSNIAK COMMUNITY OF CULTURE
Institute for Bosniak Studies
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ISSN 1840-3204 (print) ISSN 2712-0406 (Online)
Bosnian Studies: Journal for Research of Bosnian Though and Culture is currently indexed in CEEOL, ROAD and EuroPub - Directory of Academic and Scientific Journals
UDC Classification done by Library of the Institute for Bosniak Studies

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1

ŠAĆIR FILANDRA

My Homeland in World History – A Game of Identity. (Introduction)

UDC 821.163.43*-94: 32

DOI 10.47999/bos.2025.9.2.4-8

pages 4-8

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My Homeland in World History – A Game of Identity.[1] (Introduction)

Using a stylistic interlude situated between an Introduction and Preface, I introduce readers to the book without claiming to determine its meaning. The book's core focuses on my homeland and its prominent figures who, through their activities, shaped local, regional, and global politics. The book is dedicated to the memory of the sons of my homeland who first felt the sun on their faces in southern Herzegovina and carried the warmth of that touch without falter throughout their lives. Its text is shaped by trauma, nostalgia, and the unforgettable.

What is my homeland, what area does it encompass, and how do I define it? In a geographical, physical sense, when I climb to Gradina, the high point of the Dubrava Plateau in Donji Jasoč, in my birth village of Crnići in Stolac Municipality, everything I see with my eyes, everything I take in, is my homeland, my microcosm. From Gradina, I can see parts of the municipalities: Stolac, Ljubinje, Nevesinje, Mostar, Čitluk, Ljubuški, Čapljina, Neum, Ploče, and Metković. The Dubrava Plateau is a geographical area between the mountains Velež to the north and Žaba to the south, bordered by three ancient towns: Stolac, Počitelj, and Blagaj. On Gradina, there is a large plain where we played football with children from the neighboring hamlet, Smarlovina. It did not bother us that this plain on the top of the hill was bordered by stone heaps, Illyrian burial sites, from which we would sometimes scavenge fragments of ceramics and sometimes encounter the bones of the dead. Furthermore, there is a point from which, in clear weather, you can see the sea. That visual contact with the Adriatic Sea at the mouth of the Neretva River opened my homeland to the infinite, to the blue depths of the world, breaking its enclosure and enticing longing for travel and adventure. The people I am writing about, raised in a small place, a village, compared to the vastness of the world, built their world with courage and contributed to its history.

In a metaphysical sense, the homeland is the spiritual space of my belonging and identity, a place where I am myself, at home, where I feel warmth and closeness, where I find peace, acceptance, and recognition, the point with which I identify, from which I emerge, and into which I immerse myself. The homeland is a hug. Its experience is always, as in my case, personal and individual, although its existence is universal; every person has it. It is felt and carried with you across the world. You can go anywhere in the world, to Kuwait, Istanbul, London, Chicago, or New

1 Adapted from: Šaćir Filandra (2026) *Moj zavičaj u svjetskoj povijesti - igra identiteta*. Bošnjačka zajednica kulture, Sarajevo
Translator's note: 'Zavičaj' is a difficult word to capture in English. In German, the corollary is *Heimat*, and, in the words of historian Celia Applegate, "In its simplest sense, *Heimat* means home or homeland; […] the term Heimat carries a burden of reference and implication that is not adequately conveyed by the translation homeland or hometown." (Applegate, Celia. *A Nation of Provincials*. 1990th ed. University of California Press, 2020.3-4)

York, and I have been to these and other cities, but you are born in only one place, and a dream reminds you of that. The homeland is a barrier to forgetfulness and confusion. It is a refuge for the soul. The homeland is the space of our soul.

This book summarizes my love for my people, neighbors, contemporaries, and ancestors. It was created gradually over the years, starting with a decade of longing in Sarajevo for my home and continuing through family conversations with my children. Born and raised in Sarajevo, I desperately wanted to connect my children to Dubrave, Stolac, and southern Herzegovina. I know this is extremely selfish and unfair! So, I told them stories, often fairy-tale and imaginative, about their homeland and its successful and interesting people. Only when Zulfikar, Lemana, and Ibrahim grew up and found themselves studying, living, and working in Germany, Austria, and Italy, did I decide to write a book about the people of their homeland for them and print only three copies. And that would be the real deal.

I am truly fascinated by the biographies of the people I include in this book, and I do not hide it. I admire their achievements and the roles they played in both national and global relations. These are brave people from my homeland who boldly stepped onto a broader, often international stage, leaving a significant mark. They are the proof that such a leap is possible even today. The world was their homeland. But my region, Stolac and Herzegovina, is only the place of their birth. The book does not deal with local microhistory, although it stems from it. It simply extrapolates people from a geographic area onto the wider stage and addresses broader, more significant themes and issues. Nearly all the protagonists of this book have been marginalized from the dominant narratives of our collective memory. They were all thoroughly forgotten, undervalued, suppressed, marginalized, and overly ethnicized. As a rule of thumb, they were neither understood nor accepted in their time; they made a step forward, ahead of, and against the spirit of their time. All of them, in essence, have a note of defiance, adventure, and that something Promethean in their character. Most of the people included here were at odds with the laws of their time; many experienced persecution. At the same time, many of them became subjects of literary or artistic works. Put short, they were individuals, personalities that could not be ignored.

The focus of the book is the political biographies of selected individuals, the political aspects of their lives and work, and the social and political issues and topics they initiated, participated in, and shaped during their respective times, rather than on lifelong career biographies, which are presented only briefly. By the author's choice, the book covers the following persons and two families: Mihajilo Miloradović and Count (*grof*) Mihail Andrejević Miloradović as members of the Miloradović family from Dubrava, the Opijača family, Count (*grof*) Sava Vladislavić, Jazzar Pasha (*Ahmed-paša Džezzar*), Hadži-beg Mustafa Rizvanbegović, Ali Pasha Rizvanbegović, Fra Ravo Barišić, Mufti Sidki Efendi Karabeg, Don Ivan Musić, Mustafa Golubić, Muhamed Mehmedbašić, Asim

Behmen, Dimitrije Mitrinović, Šerif Arnautović, Salih Baljić, Šefkija Behmen, Salim Ćerić, Alija Isaković, Esad Ćimić, Gojko Đogo, Nijaz Duraković, Fra Jozo Zovko, Omer Behmen, and Rusmir Mahmutćehajić. In the excursions, there are partial discussions of Ivo Andrić and Safvet-beg Bašagić. In the main text, there is also mention of Delfa Ivanić, Mahmud Behmen, and Bećir Pasha Čengić...

The lives of all the included were interconnected, whether through collaboration, acquaintance, friendship, or even hostility, but the relationship also existed in a contextual, historical, and physical sense. The book is structured around the relationships among the included figures, with each figure's political biography also being readable separately. Sava Vladislavić and Bećir-paša Čengić participated in Russian-Ottoman battles on different sides. The battles against Napoleon connect General Miloradović, Jazzar Pasha, and Hadži-beg Rizvanbegović; Ali-paša Rizvanbegović and fra Rafo Barišić worked closely together; Don Ivan Musić and the Mostar mufti Karabeg are contemporaries of the Austro-Hungarian occupation of Bosnia; Mustafa Golubić, Asim Behmen, and Muhamed Mehmedbašić closely cooperated in the Workers' and Yugoslav movements; Dimitrije Mitrinović published Andrić's first poems; Šerif Arnautović, Salih Baljić, and Šefkija Behmen are in the same circle of interwar Bosniak politics; Salim Ćerić, Esad Ćimić, and Alija Isaković participated in the process of national affirmation of Muslims; Omer Behmen, Gojko Đogo, and fra Jozo Zovko were imprisoned at the very end of socialism for ideological reasons; Nijaz Duraković and Rusmir Mahmutćehajić expereinced late socialism and the establishment of independent Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The book includes personalities who, due to their exceptionalism and uniqueness, were subjects of artistic and literary creation. For example, Nikola Morovčanin wrote a novel titled *Grof Sava Vladislavić* (2015) about Count Sava Vladislavić. Derviš Sušić wrote a short story about Bećir Pasha Čengić, titled *Seljačka jadikovka,* included in the collection *Pobune* (*Peasant's Lament, Rebellions,* 1966). Safvet-beg Bašagić wrote a dramatic poem about the same event, titled *Pod Ozijom ili krvava nagrada* (*Under Ozija, or the Bloody Reward,* 1905). Rizabeg Kapetanović-Ljubušak authored a five-act drama called *Hadžun: Hadži Mehmedbeg Rizvanbegović* (1906). Ivo Andrić explored the last years of Alipaša Rizvanbegović in the short story *Alipaša*, included in the collection *Kuća na osami i druge pripovijetke* (*The House in a Seculaded Place and Other Stories, 1976*). Nedžad Ibrišimović wrote a novel called *Karabeg* (1971) about Mufti Mustafa Sidki ef. Karabeg. Sead Trhulj's play *Čovjek bez zavičaja: Drama u 14 slika* (*The Man with no Homeland: A Drama in 14 Vignettes)* depicts Mustafa Golubić. Vladislav Bajac wrote about Dimitrije Mitrinović in the novel *Crna kutija: Utopija o naknadnoj stvarnosti* (*The Black Box: The Utopia of the Subsequent Reality,* 1993). The drama *Politika kao sudbina,* based on Esad Ćimić's

work (*Politics as Destiny,* 1984), was performed at the Student Cultural Center in Belgrade.

The book has no guiding idea, nor does it have any moral-political or ideological intent; its sole purpose is to be. In that sense, it is useless! Quite the opposite, it emphasizes life itself—its immediacy, diversity, elusiveness, randomness, complexity, and unpredictability—over the ideological-historical formations in which it unfolded. The biographies of the included individuals vividly illustrate the complex relationships between people's lives and social reality. The book is in the spirit of a 'biographical turn' that focuses on biographical narrative as a mode of understanding history and society. It contributes to the pluralization of our collective memory culture, and in a shared, trans-ethnic way, since it presents, rather than constructs ideologically, all forms of closeness and difference among our peoples. Curiosity and skepticism guided me in its writing. I express myself in the first person, and in some of its positions, quite deliberately, I deviate from previous interpretive narratives. In this sense, it also helps reduce our culture of forgetting, which is based on varying ideological frameworks for evaluating individuals and historical events.

This is also not only a book about identity, but about the relationship between modernization and identity in the broadest sense. Given the conditions of techno-globalization, when all the prerequisites for establishing a cosmopolitan human community are in place, group identities, usually ethno-sovereignist, identify outliers and reinforce their boundaries. People from our region have always had group/ethno-religious identities and were aware of them, but never before has identity been so politicized and instrumentalized. In the past, the subjectivities of identity were more respected than today, the boundaries between them were softer and more porous, only for modernity to ideologize and ossify them...

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1

MIRZA EMIRHAFIZOVIĆ

Reflections on Structural Challenges to Intergenerational Family Solidarity in Bosnia and Herzegovina

UDC 314.1 (497.6): 316.4.051.63: 17.023.32
316.356.2

DOI 10.47999/bos.2025.9.2.10-29
Original research article

pages 10-29

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Summary

Intergenerational family solidarity in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) is deeply rooted in strong familial bonds, which form the foundation of cultural identity. The orientation towards family (familism) contrasts with the individualism characteristic of Western societies. Although family still occupies a central place in individuals' lives, it faces a range of structural challenges that could jeopardize relationships among relatives across generations. The shift in socio-economic paradigms over recent decades, known as the societal transition, has significantly undermined the long-established value system. A series of adverse trends, including demographic contraction and economic crises, spill over into the family sphere, diminishing its potential for mutual support. At the same time, attitudes towards life arrangements are being redefined, as the permanence of marriage is increasingly questioned, evidenced by rising divorce rates over the past decade. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to highlight the key structural challenges that could reduce the resilience of the extended family due to demographic undercapacity, marital instability, and economic inability to respond to them.

Keywords: family, intergenerational relations, solidarity, society, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Introducation

The tectonic disruptions caused by the Bosnian War (1992–1995) and the subsequent poly-crisis (with a brief interlude in the early post-war years) have profoundly shaken the foundation of Bosnian society—its family system. After experiencing traumatic wartime events, a multifaceted transition followed, characterized by structural unemployment and the pauperization of the employed. Nevertheless, the family remains the primary social unit expected to compensate for the ongoing weakening of institutional support, adapting to a "new" economic logic increasingly grounded in neoliberal principles, thereby reinforcing the model of "familism by default".[1]

At the same time, this group is also subject to structural and functional changes. The social constraints on maintaining marriage have loosened, as evidenced by rising divorce rates. Frequent divorces, remarriages, and even cohabitations, espe-

1 Familism by default refers to a situation where, due to the lack of institutional support or social services, the family is expected to automatically assume the role of providing care and support for its members.
Saraceno, Chiara (2016). Varieties of Familialism: Comparing Four Southern European and East Asian Welfare Regimes, *Journal of European Social Policy*, 26(4): 314–326, DOI:10.1177/0958928716657275; Keck, Wolfgang, Saraceno, Chiara (2011). Towards an Integrated Approach for the Analysis of Gender Equity in Policies Supporting Paid Work and Care Responsibilities, *Demographic Research*, 25: 371–406, DOI:10.4054/DemRes.2011.25.11.

*MIRZA EMIRHAFIZOVIĆ

cially when children are involved—regardless of age—result in a more complex kinship network. The fluidity of parents' living arrangements, given their role as intergenerational bridges, may have negative implications for a wider range of relationships. Bearing in mind marital decomposition, the erosion of value systems, persistent denatality, and highly restrictive economic circumstances, intergenerational family solidarity becomes increasingly constrained.

Crises in nearly all segments of society, critically low fertility, and permanent emigration indicate a demographic response to adverse circumstances. Although the family remains highly ranked in individuals' value systems (at least discursively), its atomization, spatial dispersion, as well as changes in reproductive behavior and the relativization of the importance of marriage, bring a new perspective in which filial and other obligations, along with transfers and mutual support, will not be a given.

Theoretical Background

Intergenerational family solidarity refers to the degree of mutual support, closeness, and reciprocal obligation among family members of different generations, encompassing emotional bonds, shared values, frequent interaction, and the exchange of practical, financial, and social assistance that helps sustain family cohesion across the life course.[2] However, intergenerational solidarity does not necessarily entail direct reciprocity; support and care can be provided unilaterally, guided by cultural norms, family or filial obligations, or altruistic motives, rather than balanced exchange.[3]

Bengtson argues that intergenerational relations are likely to become even more important in the twenty-first century for several reasons. Most notably, increased life expectancy enables the simultaneous coexistence of multiple generations.[4] In addition, the role of grandparents and extended kin in the performance of family functions has expanded, while intergenerational solidarity has demonstrated considerable strength and adaptability. At the same time, Bengtson highlights the growing heterogeneity of intergenerational relationships, resulting from changes in family structures and forms, including divorce and reconstituted families, in-

2 Silverstein, Merrill, Bengtson, Vern L. (1991). Do Close Parent–Child Relations Reduce the Mortality Risk of Older Parents?, *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 32(4): 382–395; Bengtson, Vern L., Roberts, Robert E. L. (1991). Intergenerational Solidarity in Aging Families: An Example of Formal Theory Construction, *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 53(4): 856–870.

3 Cruz Saco, María Amparo, Zelenev, Sergey (2011). *Intergenerational Solidarity: Strengthening Economic and Social Ties*, New York: United Nations Headquarters.

4 Bengtson, Vern L., and Robert E. L. Roberts (1991). *Intergenerational Solidarity in Aging Families: An Example of Formal Theory Construction*, ibid.

creased longevity among members of both the immediate and extended family, and the emergence of diverse types of intergenerational ties.

A similar perspective is advanced by Lowenstein,[5] who, drawing on earlier studies,[6] contends that intergenerational ties among adult family members may be even more significant today than in the past. This is largely attributable to the extension of the life course, which enables individuals to share experiences, resources, and support across generations over prolonged periods. However, declining fertility rates, increasing childlessness, and changing social norms surrounding divorce and marital dissolution contribute to a growing number of individuals who are likely to be deprived of family-based support in later life.[7]

Lowenstein further observes that demographic changes in developed societies, accompanied by transformations in family structures, necessitate a re-evaluation of the family's role in providing mutual support and care. Structural shifts affecting older adults include the rising prevalence of single-person households and the increased geographical and social mobility of adult children. Moreover, the smaller number of children and grandchildren, combined with the time constraints faced by employed women—traditionally positioned as primary caregivers—creates a limited caregiving capacity within the family system.[8] Van Bavel et al[9] similarly problematize the gender dimension of social policies and legal frameworks, caution against an excessive reliance on the family in the provision of care for older people.

Family composition is shaped not only by population processes but also by prevailing marital regimes. Accordingly, family structures have become increas-

5 Lowenstein, Ariela (2007). Determinants of the Complex Interchange Among Generations: Collaboration and Conflict, in: Cruz Saco, María Amparo, Zelenev, Sergey (eds.), *Intergenerational Solidarity: Strengthening Economic and Social Ties*, New York: United Nations Headquarters, p. 53–80.

6 Bengtson, Vern L., Giarrusso, Roseann, Mabry, J. Beth, Silverstein, Merrill (2002). Solidarity, Conflict, and Ambivalence: Complementary or Competing Perspectives on Intergenerational Relationships, *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 64(3): 568–576.; Bengtson, Vern L., Lowenstein, Ariela (2003). *Global Aging and Challenges to Families*, New York: Aldine de Gruyter; Connidis, Irene A., McMullin, John A. (2002). Negotiating Family Ties Over Three Generations: The Impact of Divorce, in: *Intergenerational Ambivalence: Further Steps in Theory and Research*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

7 Venn, Stella, Davidson, Kate, Arber, Sara (2011). *Gender and Ageing*, in: Settersten, Richard A. Jr., Angel, Jacqueline L. (eds.), *Handbook of Sociology of Aging*, New York: Springer, p. 71–82. Lowenstein, Ariela (2007). *Determinants of the Complex Interchange Among Generations: Collaboration and Conflict*, ibid.

8 Lowenstein, Ariela (2007). *Determinants of the Complex Interchange Among Generations: Collaboration and Conflict*, ibid.

9 Van Bavel, Jan, Dykstra, Pearl A., Wijckmans, Belinda, Liefbroer, Aart C. (2010). *Demographic Change and Family Obligations: How Demographic Changes Shape Intergenerational Solidarity, Well-Being, and Social Integration – A Multilinks Framework*, paper presented within the EU FP7 Multilinks project.

ingly complex because of rising divorce rates, remarriage, and the expansion of non-marital cohabitation.[10] Findings from the Netherlands Kinship Panel Study (NKPS) indicate that contact with adult children—and thus the potential for family solidarity—is significantly influenced by parents' marital status. The experience of divorce has a pronounced negative effect on the frequency of parent–child contact, as fathers who remain in their first marriage maintain contact with their children up to three times more often than divorced fathers living alone. Although to a lesser extent, divorced mothers also report less frequent contact with their children compared to non-divorced mothers.[11]

Marriage as an institution has not remained immune to the broader societal crisis, as evidenced by rising divorce rates in recent years. In this context, Gibson addresses how the stability of marriage reflects the development of modernity, individual freedom, and an expanded range of choices, placing particular emphasis on the "importance and desirability of individual achievement." She attributes higher divorce rates primarily to a culture of individualism and unmet expectations, which are closely linked to the pursuit of personal fulfillment in private life.[12]

A substantial contribution to the empirical examination and measurement of the adverse consequences of divorce has been made by C. Martin through his research conducted in France. By assessing the persistence of relationships with the parent who left the shared household following divorce, he arrived at the striking finding that one in three non-custodial parents—predominantly fathers—had completely ceased all forms of contact with their children.[13]

An urban way of life, which increasingly shapes the social biographies of a large share of the population, is often associated with more rationalized and calculative behavioral patterns, as well as with a pronounced consumerist mindset, both of which tend to be reflected in major life decisions and family relationships. The spread of consumerism in the neoliberal economy, along with a culture of hedonism, undermines the traditional functions of the family — such as child-rearing, the implicit understanding of filial obligations, and others — inevitably affecting the private sphere. Marital and family cohesion in consumer societies is

10 Riley, Matilda W. (1983); Wachter, Kenneth W. (1997), as cited in: Dykstra, Pearl A., van Tilburg, Liesbeth C., van Groenou, Theo (2006). *Families in an Ageing Society: Intergenerational Solidarity and Conflict*, Bristol: Policy Press, p. 26.

11 Dykstra, Pearl A. (2010). *Intergenerational Family Relationships in Ageing Societies*, Geneva / New York: United Nations.

12 Gibson, Graham (1994), paraphrased according to: Haralambos, Michael, Holborn, Martin (2002). *Sociology: Themes and Perspectives*, Zagreb: Golden Marketing.

13 Segalen, Martine (2009). *Sociologija porodice*. Beograd: Clio, p. 197.

significantly weakened by competing life priorities, which are primarily focused on improving or maintaining an achieved standard of living.[14]

Demographic Trends and Structural Features

Generational renewal through biological reproduction constitutes a key prerequisite for survival and continuity, not only of the family as a primary social group, but also of a culture.[15] The long-term decline in fertility, the shift of mortality toward later stages of the life course, and migration should be understood as socially conditioned processes. Consequently, dominant demographic trends largely determine generational relations within both narrower contexts (kinship networks) and broader social spheres.[16]

The most recent episode in a series of fertility declines has intensified since the beginning of the new millennium. At the same time, the concurrent rise in overall mortality has further widened the gap between these two components of natural population change. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2007 marked a year in which the number of deaths exceeded births. Based on this reverse trend, Bosnia and Herzegovina lost nearly 121,382 inhabitants over the ten years from 2014 to 2024.[17] The combination of negative natural change (more deaths than births) and negative net migration (more emigrants than immigrants) generates a reinforcing depopulation spiral, which, through quantitative and qualitative shifts in population — primarily in its age structure — affects all key aspects of society This biological regression, characteristic of countries confronted with low fertility and progressive population aging, underlies the phenomenon popularly known as the "demographic winter".[18]

The critically low average number of children per woman of reproductive age (with the total fertility rate—TFR—predominantly remaining below 1.3) is not a

14 Bakić, Sarina (2024). "Naslijeđe šutnje: Kultura nasilja nad ženama i potraga za promjenom." In *Naslijeđe nasilja nad ženama: Diskursi, perspektive, lekcije iz bh. povijesti*, p. 337–367. Sarajevo: Univerzitet u Sarajevu – Filozofski fakultet; Fondacija Heinrich Böll; Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung e.V.

15 Bobić, Mirjana (2007). *Demografija i sociologija: veza ili sinteza*. Beograd: Službeni glasnik.

16 Lee, Ronald D. (2003). "The Demographic Transition: Three Centuries of Fundamental Change." *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 17(4): 167–190. https://doi.org/10.1257/089533003772034943; Bongaarts, John (2009). "Human Population Growth and the Demographic Transition." *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*, 364(1532): 2985–2990. https://doi.org/10.1098/rstb.2009.0137

17 Agencija za statistiku Bosne i Hercegovine (2025). *Demografija 2024: Tematski bilten 02*. Sarajevo: Agencija za statistiku Bosne i Hercegovine.

18 Emirhafizović, Mirza (2025). "Specifičnosti posttranzicijskog demografskog režima u Bosni i Hercegovini." In *Demografske promjene u Bosni i Hercegovini od 2013. do 2024. godine*, editors Mirko Pejanović, Meliha Husić-Mehmedović, 47–68. Sarajevo: Akademija nauka i umjetnosti Bosne i Hercegovine. https://doi.org/10.5644/pi2025.219.03

transient phenomenon. Rather, the persistent endurance of such low levels clearly indicates that Bosnia and Herzegovina, like several other European countries, has fallen into the so-called *low-fertility trap.*[19]

A comparison of absolute figures—namely, the number of live births on the eve of the war (1990=66,952) and thirty-four years later (2024=26,037)—clearly illustrates the magnitude of the decline in *natality* in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In relative terms, the number of live births has decreased by approximately 60 percent.[20]

A study titled *Natality and Motherhood: Between Desires and Barriers* provides the empirical basis for this claim. Of the total 1,476 female respondents from the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH), two-fifths were childless. It is important to note the age distribution of the sample: one-third of the respondents were between 30 and 34, while the neighboring age groups (20–24 and 35–39) accounted for 25.8% and 23.7%, respectively.[21] Fertility intentions are subject to change depending on individuals' life circumstances, so deviations from initial plans regarding family expansion are not uncommon. Often, a range of disruptive factors—whether objective or subjective—negatively affects the realization of fertility aspirations in later reproductive years. In the study, as many as one-third of the respondents stated that they do not plan to have (more) children, while just under one-fifth reported having achieved their desired number of children.[22]

The key observations derived from data on women aged 40 to 75 and older, grouped into age cohorts (40–44, 45–49, 50–54, 55–59, 60–64, 65–69, 70–74, and 75 and older), together with their corresponding average number of children, are as follows:

- The average number of children per woman decreases progressively as the age cohorts increase, starting at 1.49 for women aged 40-44 and rising slightly in the highest age category, reaching 2.11 for those aged 75 and older.
- For each cohort, there is a significant gap between the average number of children born by women in each cohort and the average number of children

19 See Testa, Maria Rita, Skirbekk, Vegard, Lutz, Wolfgang (2006). "The Low Fertility Trap Hypothesis: Forces That May Lead to Further Postponement and Fewer Births in Europe." *Vienna Yearbook of Population Research*, 4(1): 167–192. DOI:10.1553/populationyearbook2006s167.

20 Data source: Republički zavod za statistiku SR Bosne i Hercegovine (1991). *Statistički godišnjak Bosne i Hercegovine 1991*. Sarajevo: Republički zavod za statistiku SR Bosne i Hercegovine; Agencija za statistiku Bosne i Hercegovine (2025). *Demografija 2024: Tematski bilten 02*.

21 Tatarević, Amila, Forić, Samir, Bosankić-Čmajčanin, Nina, Čomić, Adela, Emirhafizović, Mirza, Draganović, Selvira (2025). *Natalitet i majčinstvo između želja i prepreka: Studija o uzrocima pada nataliteta iz perspektive žena u Federaciji Bosne i Hercegovine*. Sarajevo: Udruženje Baby Steps.

22 Tatarević, Amila, Forić, Samir, Bosankić-Čmajčanin, Nina, Čomić, Adela, Emirhafizović, Mirza, Draganović, Selvira (2025). *Natalitet i majčinstvo između želja i prepreka: Studija o uzrocima pada nataliteta iz perspektive žena u Federaciji Bosne i Hercegovine*, ibid.

born by women who *participated in reproduction*. This gap highlights the childlessness of a certain proportion of the female population, which grows with age.

– The percentage of women who did not have children is also increasing. For example, in the 40-44 cohort, 13.5% of women had no children, while in the 70-74 cohort, the percentage is 11.7%[23].

These data highlight the growing proportion of women who remain childless, further signaling the polarization of society into the 'family' and 'non-family' sectors.[24] – a fact that should not be overlooked.[25] Given that the decline in fertility is not solely due to low reproductive norms but also because a certain percentage of women do not participate in reproduction, this phenomenon warrants further research attention. This gap highlights the childlessness of a certain proportion of the female population, which increases with age, and reflects the absence of conditions that enable *participation* in biological reproduction.[26]

The population of Bosnia and Herzegovina has not only undergone numerical decline, but its age structure has also been significantly altered; according to relevant indicators, before the war, the population was on the verge of aging, but destabilizing factors have already pushed it into a phase of advanced population aging.

The transformation of the age composition, shaped by the components of population dynamics (fertility, mortality, and migration), is closely related to intergenerational family solidarity, precisely because of the changing proportions of age groups within the total population. In this context, progressive population

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23 Dana source: Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina (2016). *Census: Age and Sex, Marital Status, Fertility of the Female Population*. Sarajevo: BHAS. Available at: http://www.popis.gov.ba/popis2013/knjige)

24 Keilman, Nico (2003). *Demographic and Social Implications of Low Fertility for Family Structures in Europe*. Population Studies No. 43. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

25 The former member of the Croatian Parliament and the then president of the City Council of Split, considering the record snowdrifts in early February 2012 and the vulnerability of elderly individuals due to the inability to access necessities, made the following comment in the media:
"(I)f referring to older citizens, then all elderly individuals should have either their own children, and according to the law, children are obliged to care for their parents, or, if they do not have children, they could have nieces or nephews, and throughout their lives, they should have established correct relationships with them. And if they do not have nieces or nephews, then they have neighbors, and they should have built good neighborly relations…" Bečić, Nevenka (2012). "Dnevnik 3." YouTube video, February 7, 2012.
This reckless and, at the very least, controversial statement, which has been the subject of numerous condemnations, may be the most effective way to expose the discrepancy between the socially expected presence of a kinship network and the reality in which some older adults lack support from younger relatives, either due to childlessness, being only children themselves, the loss of their child, migration, or other reasons.

26 Wertheimer-Baletić, Alica (1999). *Stanovništvo i razvoj*, Mate: Zagreb

aging, driven by declining fertility, increased life expectancy, and emigration (as observed in societies affected by these trends, such as Bosnia and Herzegovina), means that for many extended family communities the population pyramid increasingly resembles an inverted triangle, with the broadest segment at the top.

Based on the mid-2024 population estimate for the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, persons aged 65 and over accounted for approximately 18.5% of the total population (397,306 out of 2,144,748), while children aged 0–14 represented only about 13.2% (283,915), clearly indicating a pronounced age-structure imbalance in favor of the elderly population.[27] The aging index in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina stands at approximately 140, indicating that there are about 140 persons aged 65 and over for every 100 children aged 0–14.

According to the latest demographic estimates, the median age of the population in Bosnia and Herzegovina is approximately 46 years, reflecting a markedly aging population; life expectancy at birth is about 78–79 years overall, with around 75 years for men and about 81–82 years for women.[28] Since women generally outlive men, the population is experiencing a pronounced *feminization of aging*.

Data from the 2013 Census of Bosnia and Herzegovina indicate that household composition is highly heterogeneous: approximately 18.8 % of households are singlemember, 24.0 % are twomember, 20.1 % are threemember, 20.7 % are fourmember, and roughly 16.5 % consist of five or more members, with no single category clearly dominating the national distribution.[29] This diversity reflects a complex family landscape in which nuclear, extended, and other household forms coexist, highlighting the plurality of family arrangements rather than the predominance of any particular household type.

Approximately 15.8 % of families in Bosnia and Herzegovina are singleparent households, with singlemother families representing the majority, highlighting a significant presence of nonconjugal family forms with distinct socioeconomic vulnerabilities and policy implications.[30]

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27 Federalni zavod za statistiku (2025). *Federacija Bosne i Hercegovine u brojkama 2025*. Sarajevo: Federalni zavod za statistiku.

28 United Nations (2024). *World Population Prospects 2024 Revision*. New York: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division. Data for Bosnia and Herzegovina on median age and life expectancy. Available at: https://population.un.org/wpp/ (accessed January 2026).

29 Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina (2016). *2013 Census of Population, Households and Dwellings in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Book 3 – Households and Families*. Sarajevo: Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

30 Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina (2016). *2013 Census of Population, Households and Dwellings in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Book 3 – Households and Families,* ibid.; Šadić, Sanela, Ždralović, Amila, Emirhafizović, Mirza (2020). *Jednoroditeljske porodice: mapiranje prava i potreba samostalnih roditelja/ki na području općine Centar Sarajevo*. Sarajevo: Fondacija CURE.

Decades-long migration waves from Bosnia and Herzegovina have resulted in many temporary or long-term transnational families. The most recent wave of out-migration in the post-Dayton period is distinguished by its intensity, distinct patterns, and the specific reasons and motivations underlying such decisions.[31]

Contrary to common assumptions, the total number of marriages fell by about 23% between 1996 and 2024 (from 21,107 to 16,213). The data also indicate a trend toward later marriage: in 2024, nearly two-thirds of brides (64%) were in their 20s, 19.4% were in their 30s, while those in their 40s and adolescents aged 15–19 each represented roughly 6% of marriages. Age distribution of grooms in 2024 shows that most marry in their 20s (55.4%), while a notably higher proportion are in their 30s (29.2%) than among brides (19.4%), highlighting a clear shift toward later marriage for men relative to women. More than one-tenth of grooms marry in their 40s and 50s (14.4%, including those aged 50 and above), a pattern that is indicative of subsequent marriages rather than first union formation for most men in these age groups (BHAS, 2025). This pattern aligns with prevailing societal norms, as confirmed by a 2015 study, in which most respondents stated that the most suitable age for women to marry is 25, and for men, 27.1 (Flere, 2015). Given that marriage still represents the most common life arrangement, the second demographic transition has not permeated Bosnian society. Although the divorce rate remains among the lowest in Europe, the recent increase suggests it will continue its upward trend. Between 2014 and 2024, a total of 31,691 divorces were registered in Bosnia and Herzegovina.[32]

The 2015 Household Budget Survey in Bosnia and Herzegovina indicates that only 3.4% of households are multigenerational, i.e., households in which married couples with children live with their aging parents.[33] The low prevalence of this household type may largely be attributed to migration processes (both internal and international) and to the urban way of life, which, beyond shaping social norms, is also associated with constrained residential space.

Economic conditions

The socio-economic conditions in post-Dayton Bosnia and Herzegovina are difficult for a large portion of the population. Social stratification, caused by dein-

31 Čičić, Muris, Trifković, Miloš, HusićMehmedović, Melika, Efendić, Adnan, Turulja, Lejla, and Emirhafizović, Mirza (2019). *Emigration Study: Bosnia and Herzegovina.* Sarajevo: Academy of Sciences and Arts of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Editor: Muris Čičić.

32 Agencija za statistiku Bosne i Hercegovine (2025). *Demografija 2024: Tematski bilten 02*., ibid.

33 Agencija za statistiku Bosne i Hercegovine (2018). *Anketa o potrošnji domaćinstva 2015: Tematski bilten 15.* Sarajevo: Agencija za statistiku Bosne i Hercegovine.

dustrialization and structural changes in the economy, has led to the emergence of "new poverty,"[34] which also affects the employed.

According to the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) for Bosnia and Herzegovina, approximately 15.7% of the population lives in multidimensional poverty, which extends beyond income and includes deprivations in education, health, and living standards. Vulnerable groups include children, individuals with low levels of education, and people living in rural areas, where access to services is often limited. Furthermore, the elderly and unemployed are disproportionately affected, with poverty also being strongly correlated with inadequate housing conditions and limited access to basic utilities. Despite progress in certain areas, multidimensional poverty remains a significant challenge, affecting the quality of life for a substantial portion of the population.[35]

Even though roughly 18 % of the population in Bosnia and Herzegovina lives below the poverty line and up to 48 % of people are at risk of poverty or social exclusion, structural weaknesses rooted in a neoliberal transition model — characterised by limited social protection, deregulated labour markets, and insufficient public welfare measures — have reinforced socioeconomic marginalisation, resulting in widespread social exclusion affecting large segments of the population.[36]

The mismatch between wages and the (rising) cost of living most severely impacts families whose breadwinners are employed in precarious (unstable, insecure, and underpaid) jobs. In November 2025, the trade union consumer basket in Bosnia and Herzegovina is calculated at 3,355.25 KM (covering basic living expenses such as food, housing, utilities, transportation, and healthcare), while the average salary in the Federation of BiH for September 2025 is 1,603.00 KM. The average salary covers 47.78% of the basket, while the minimum wage of 1,000.00 KM accounts for 29.80%.[37]

34 Papić, Žarko (2009). "Jačanje socijalnog uključivanja i NVO-a: Uloga NVO Fondacije za socijalno uključivanje." In *Šta da se radi? Socijalna uključenost i civilno društvo – praktični koraci*, Ninković-Papić, Ranka, editor, p. 32–54. Sarajevo: Nezavisni biro za humanitarna pitanja – IBHI.

35 United Nations Development Programme (2023). *Multidimensional Poverty Index 2023: Bosnia and Herzegovina*. Human Development Report Office and Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative [HDRO & OPHI]. Available at: https://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/Country-Profiles/MPI/BIH.pdf

36 UN Bosnia and Herzegovina (2022). *Common Country Analysis 2022*. Sarajevo: UN Bosnia and Herzegovina. Available at: https://bosniaherzegovina.un.org/sites/default/files/2022-11/2022%20CCA_EXTERNAL-web.pdf

37 Savez samostalnih sindikata Bosne i Hercegovine (2025). "Sindikalna potrošačka korpa u novembru koštala 3.355,25 KM." SSSBiH.com, 15. decembar 2025. Available at: https://www.sssbih.com/sindikalna-potrosacka-korpa-u-novembru-kostala-3-35525-km/

The inability to reach a decent wage (an amount that covers basic living expenses) traps many families in a vicious cycle of poverty. In this context, the prolonged co-residence of adult children in the parental home should not be interpreted as an expression of heightened familial attachment, but rather as a coping strategy shaped by unemployment, insufficient incomes, and limited access to affordable housing. Such arrangements, while reinforcing everyday intergenerational interdependence, simultaneously alter the nature of family solidarity, shifting it from a voluntary exchange to a structurally conditioned necessity. Pensioners are undoubtedly among the most socially vulnerable groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with approximately 23% of pension beneficiaries receiving the lowest pension (as of December 2025).[38]

Bosnia and Herzegovina is ranked among the European countries with the lowest percentage of employed women.[39] The stark disparity in employment rates between men and women of working age (15–65 years) in 2024 was 25.5%, with 41% of women employed compared to 66.5% of men. This marks an increase compared to previous years. In the 15–24 age group, the employment rate gap in the last observed year (2024) was slightly smaller, standing at approximately 12%. Consequently, unemployment rates do not impact men and women equally in the working-age population: in 2024, women were on average 6.5% more affected by this negative phenomenon than men (16.7% compared to 10.2%). A particular challenge is the alarmingly high youth unemployment rate, which exceeds 30%, ranking Bosnia and Herzegovina among European countries with the highest rates. This trend is further exacerbated by the high proportion of inactive youth—individuals who are neither employed nor engaged in education or vocational training. In 2023, this group accounted for 16% of young people.[40]

International migration reflects the influence of multiple push factors that drive the outflow of people—and, consequently, human capital—from the country, while simultaneously generating an intergenerational gap due to the age selectivity of migrants. In such circumstances, multi-generational families face the challenge of spatial separation, which often limits their access to mutual support—such as caring for grandchildren or elderly parents—and reduces opportunities for in-person interactions beyond video calls. Digital technologies can only par-

38 Federalni zavod za mirovinsko i invalidsko osiguranje (2026). *Struktura ukupnih mirovina iz redovne isplate za prosinac/decembar 2025*. Mostar: Federalni zavod za mirovinsko i invalidsko osiguranje. Available at: https://www.fzmiopio.ba/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/Kopija-Mirovine-12-25.pdf

39 See European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (2016). *Life in Transition Survey III: A Decade of Measuring Transition*. London: European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

40 International Labour Organization (2025). *Share of youth not in education, employment or training, total (% of youth population)*. Labour Force Statistics Database (LFS), ILOSTAT. Accessed December 15, 2025. Available at: https://ilostat.ilo.org/data.

tially substitute for in-person interaction, which remains particularly important for retired grandparents.

On the other hand, remittances exemplify the importance of kin support, often regarded as a form of moral obligation. According to data from Trading Economics, workers' remittances and compensation of employees received in Bosnia and Herzegovina account for approximately 12.6% of the country's GDP. This underscores the significant role that remittances play in supporting the Bosnian economy.[41]

If one were to identify a common denominator among the structural problems affecting Bosnia and Herzegovina over the past several decades, it would undoubtedly be systemic corruption. This is confirmed by the 2024 Corruption Perception Index (CPI), which ranks Bosnia and Herzegovina among the most corrupt countries in Europe. As a deeply entrenched and pervasive phenomenon, corruption spreads like a malignant tumor, undermining institutional capacities and eroding their functions. It severely weakens social cohesion, affecting governance, economic activity, social relations, and public trust—the very foundations of social capital. [42]

Societal and Normative Framework

Industrialization, coupled with urbanization, has triggered multiple structural changes, among which the most striking is the disintegration of the traditional village and, consequently, of the rural way of life, which for centuries had been reproduced as an expression of specific ecological and social conditions. Deruralisation is an ongoing process leading to the disappearance of the peasantry as a distinct social category. In 2024, approximately 50.7 % of Bosnia and Herzegovina's population resided in urban areas and 49.3 % in rural areas, indicating the growing predominance of the urban population due to ongoing urbanization.[43]

The shift in value systems, reflected in the weakening of traditional norms—which, from a contemporary point of view, can also be perceived as rigid—raises numerous questions, particularly in the domain of gender roles. Nevertheless, echoes of rurality in many social aspects have predictably persisted to the present day, partly due to continuous internal migration toward major urban centers. This inevitably reflects attitudes toward the family and marriage, filial obligations, gender roles, and related norms.

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41 TradingEconomics.com (2026). *Bosnia and Herzegovina – Workers' Remittances and Compensation of Employees, Received (% of GDP)*. Accessed January 5, 2026. Available at: https://tradingeconomics.com/bosnia-and-herzegovina/workers-remittances-and-compensation-of-employees-received-percent-of-gdp-wb-data.html

42 Putnam, Robert D. (2000). *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

43 The Global Economy (2026). *Bosnia and Herzegovina: Urban population (% of total population); Rural population (% of total population), 2024 data*.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is a family-oriented society, as the family occupies a central role in individuals' lives, a pattern confirmed by numerous studies. In the European Values Study for Bosnia and Herzegovina, an overwhelming majority of respondents—approximately 97.7%—report that family is important or very important in their lives, making it the most highly valued aspect of personal life among the surveyed value domains (family, work, friends, leisure, religion, and politics).[44] This pronounced valuation of family life is further reflected in the prevalence of traditional, family-oriented attitudes toward marriage and partnership, suggesting the persistence of a broader value system in which familial ties remain central despite ongoing social and economic transformations. However, beneath this consensus, significant differentiation emerges when educational attainment is taken into account.

The findings of the European Values Study (2019) point to a clear association between individuals' educational attainment and their inclination toward traditional conceptions of the family. The proportion of respondents who "strongly agree" or "agree" with the statement that childbearing constitutes a duty to society declines with higher education.[45] In this regard, it is important to note that attitudes toward family life, marriage, and reproduction among more highly educated individuals residing in larger urban settings tend to diverge from established paradigms, potentially placing them at odds with prevailing social norms.

Marriage remains an almost universal precondition for childbearing in Bosnia and Herzegovina. When analyzing the sequencing of life events, it is observed that young people in BiH tend to marry before becoming parents, with only around 10 % of births occurring outside wedlock, reflecting conservative social norms regarding the order of entry into parenthood compared with some other European contexts.[46]

Such entrenched prioritization of family and marriage underscores the profound role of familial solidarity in Bosnian society. It offers crucial context for interpreting demographic behavior and the country's social policy challenges.

UNICEF (2025), in *Situational Analysis on the Status of Children and Adolescents in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, reports that only four out of ten children attend

44 Kolenović Đapo, Jadranka, Brkić Šmigoc, Jelena (2020). *Values in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Overview of the Main Findings of the 2019 European Values Study*. Sarajevo: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.

45 Kolenović Đapo, Jadranka, Brkić Šmigoc, Jelena (2020). *Values in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Overview of the Main Findings of the 2019 European Values Study,* ibid.

46 Emirhafizović, Mirza, Puhalić, Andrea (2022). "Socio-Economic Challenges to Family Formation in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Major Issues." In *Family Formation Among Youth in Europe: Coping with Socio-Economic Disadvantages*, Emirhafizović, Mirza, Heiman, Tali, Medgyesi, Marton, Pinhero Mota, Catarina, Tomanović, Smiljka, Vella, Sue, editors, 1–16. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.

preschool[47]. The limited availability and accessibility of preschool institutions—including constraints related to capacity, location, and affordability—suggest that employed parents often rely on their own parents for childcare, indicating that this form of intergenerational family support remains widespread.

Caring for frail elderly parents, on the other hand, poses a particular challenge due to insufficient institutional support, as many families cannot afford commercial services such as private care homes, healthcare services, or occasional home visits. The burden of caring for dependent family members has traditionally fallen on women, the primary caregivers. The multiplication of roles through the mass employment of women, most often in industry during the socialist period, significantly reduced fertility, yet did not free women from unpaid and reproductive labor within the family.

Bašić presents an analysis of family policy in Bosnia and Herzegovina through the lens of transition and gender relations, pointing out that family policy in the post-socialist period has evolved towards a model of "new familism" — one in which the responsibility for caring for children and dependent members of society is predominantly shifted onto the family (and most often onto women within it). At the same time, institutional support remains limited or insufficient, paradoxically undermining the value of the family institution and motherhood itself.[48]

When it comes to intergenerational family solidarity, migration is relevant not only in the context of demographic changes and economic issues but also in terms of its impact on cultural identity. Intensive emigration has long-term implications for future family relationships, as the socialization of offspring in a different culture alters their perception of their parents' social norms, with education being a key factor in personality formation. Therefore, an inclination towards individualism could be interpreted as a natural progression rather than a sudden shift from one culture to another.

Concluding Remarks

Intergenerational family solidarity in Bosnia and Herzegovina must be understood within the broader context of the paradoxes inherent to its contemporary society. Public discourse often promotes romanticized narratives of the family,

47 UNICEF (2025). *Situation Analysis of Children and Adolescents in Bosnia and Herzegovina*. Sarajevo: UNICEF, November 2025. Available at: https://www.unicef.org/bih/en/reports/situation-analysis-position-children-and-adolescents-bosnia-and-herzegovina

48 Bašić, Sanela (2017). "Porodična politika u tranziciji: ka novom familijarizmu." *Sarajevski žurnal za društvena pitanja* 6, br. 1–2: p. 25–49.

which contrast with official data, including vital statistics and the persistently high number of reported cases of domestic violence.[49]

Family structures are transforming: the dominance of the nuclear family has weakened or is being reconfigured according to individual life trajectories, such as remarriage. At the same time, the share of the so-called "non-family sector" continues to grow. The sanctity of the family, particularly regarding its "traditional" functions, remains open to debate beyond ideological frameworks, especially given the increasingly complex and heterogeneous structure of households.

Populist approaches to family policy are characterized by a lack of analytical depth and empirical grounding, resulting in limited and often symbolic policy outcomes. In the absence of adequate public services, kinship networks are largely compelled to rely on their own—frequently scarce—resources. As population aging becomes increasingly costly for healthcare and social protection, many older adults struggle to meet basic needs month-to-month.

At the same time, numerous socio-economic constraints—including high unemployment, widespread precarious employment, low living standards, insecurity, high property prices, systemic corruption, and the lack of comprehensive family policies—significantly hinder the realization of fertility aspirations. For younger cohorts, migration abroad increasingly appears as a solution. Among family members who remain in the country, **especially** retired parents, remittances constitute a crucial source of financial support. Family resilience may persist only if biological reproduction, intergenerational ties, and the downward transmission of social norms and values continue. Yet, their sustainability under current demographic, economic, and institutional conditions remains highly uncertain. In this sense, intergenerational solidarity in Bosnia and Herzegovina increasingly functions less as a matter of choice and more as a necessity shaped by structural constraints.

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49 Kaminić Puce, Đenana (2025). "Više od 4.000 prijava, stotine uslovnih kazni: Sistem zaštite žrtava nasilja u BiH i dalje pun pukotina." *N1 Info* (Bosnia and Herzegovina), December 1, 2025. Available at: https://n1info.ba/vijesti/nasilje-u-porodici-bih-statistika-zastitne-mjere-sigurne-kuce/

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BOSNIAN STUDIES
SARAJEVO
1

ABDEL ALIBEGOVIĆ
A discourse on State Souvereignity Through the Lens of Biopolitics

UDC 321.01 (497.6): 342.7 (497.6)
321.64: 342.7 (497.6)

DOI 10.47999/bos.2025.9.2.30-43
Original research article

pages 30-43

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Summary

Contemplating the sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina requires overcoming the formal-legal framework and confronting complex anti-Bosnian biopolitical processes that shape the collective Bosnian Herzegovinian existence. In modern power theories, sovereignty does not solely rest on institutions and laws. It is reflected in the political community's ability to think of itself, that is, to articulate its own past, present, and possible horizons and perceptions of the future. Therefore, an analysis of Bosnian sovereignty must also examine how life and identity in Bosnia and Herzegovina are subject to long-standing biopolitical strategies of control from outside of Bosnia, surveillance, and symbolic shaping that are neither related to nor part of Bosnian forms of understanding life.

Special focus is given to uncovering sophisticated biopolitical regimes that, through normalization and discursive practices, produce forms of power that operate imperceptibly but profoundly. Such strategies often result in the reduction of political subjectivity and the suppression of authentic Bosnian discourse into a zone of silence, collective forgetting, and self-reproach. Critical analysis of these patterns points to the danger that Bosnian existence is reduced to a passive object of manipulation, thereby losing the capacity for self-understanding and resistance against the multiverse of anti-Bosnian biopolitical strategies.

Therefore, in this paper, we affirm the concept of political care/concern as an autonomous responsibility towards one's own existence and community, which goes beyond mere emotional/affective reflexes and becomes an act of political resistance. Sovereignty, in this light, appears as a process rather than a state: as a constant struggle for the right to one's own voice, naming, meaning, understanding, and self-definition. Thus, it is important to highlight the need to decolonize Bosnian political thought and to open space for authentic modalities of political subjectivation that do not reproduce the ideological matrices of foreign/anti-Bosnian discourses.

In contrast to passivization and disciplining, the affirmation of Bosnian political subjectivity involves a dual strategy: demystifying hegemonic power patterns and simultaneously establishing a foundation for a new political self-awareness. Our intention leans toward a kind of dual reflection—one that exposes the anti-Bosnian structures of symbolic violence that have long persisted, and another that charts possible paths to the liberation of Bosnian sovereignty through intellectual, cultural, and political resistance to everything that leads to the hypertrophy of the Bosnian bios.

Keywords: Bosnian bios, Anti-Bosnian political tattooing, caring for the future of all teat is Bosnian, hypertrophy of rationalism, biopolitical terror of silence, multiverse of anti-Bosnian biopolitical strategies

Introductory Remarks

It is with good reason that we begin with the assumption that the biopolitical perspective opens the deepest and most current paths of understanding of the modern Bosnian Herzegovinian reality. Intentional focus on the analysis of biopolitical processes – as a strategy of administering life, surveillance, and the distribution of power - profoundly shapes the field of research. Biopolitics here is understood as a collection of mechanisms through which different actors, such as the local, regional, and global, articulate specific forms of control over bodies, communities, and discourses, creating complex patterns of life under discipline, surveillance, and control.

The Bosnian context is paradigmatic for this research, as it contains multilateral contradictions and traumatic residues stemming from historical violence, post-war constitutional architecture, and modern institutional fragmentation. The political reality of Bosnia and Herzegovina cannot be understood outside of its biopolitical configuration. In these strategies, segregation, ethnic essentialization, institutional inertia, and supra-national tutelage shape bodies, identities, and communities. We hold that the affirmation of various models of hermeneutic research, and the opening of discourse on the state sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina through the perspectives of biopolitics and Bosnian-ness are of special priority, pointing to the complex mechanisms of *anti-Bosnian biopolitical disciplining* that, through historical and contemporary apparatuses of power, shape, reduce, and symbolically tattoo Bosnian-Herzegovinian sovereignty.[1] In the modern discourse about the sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina, it is key to question how the Bosnian *bios* – life in all its social, political, and symbolic dimensions is subjected to anti-Bosnian biopolitical forms and narrative tattooing that negatively shape the collective perception and reflection of the people, society, and state of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Biopolitics, as the disposition of power over life, manifests through the network of visible and invisible mechanisms of control and governance, and shapes individuals and communities. Forgetting the self/forgetting Bosnia is a specific symptom of epistemological colonization, and the loss of capacity for autonomy regarding the Bosnian/Bosnian Herzegovinian past, present, and future.

We focus on uncovering biopolitical strategies that aim at life itself – the Bosnian *bios* – of individuals and collectives, thereby reducing Bosnian political existence to mere objects of governance, surveillance, and control by non-Bosnian and anti-Bosnian hegemonic programs. With a deep discourse analysis, we can discover a network of consumption, or rather, *wasted* and *faded metaphors,*[2] and

1 Agamben, Giorgio, "*No to Bio-Political Tattooing*", Le Monde, 10 January 2004. https://www.ratical.org/ratville/CAH/totalControl.html

2 Derida, Žak, *Bela mitologija*. Novi Sad: Bratstvo-Jedinstvo, 1990.

recognize the tired narrative that sterilizes, victimizes, and romanticizes the Bosnian social and historical context, asking for forms of power and disciplining, but also hindering the sustainable future of everything that is Bosnian. The discourse about Bosnian sovereignty cannot be built on tired metaphors nor on sterilized narratives of false hope/immature empathy, morality, and/or patriotism. Quite the opposite, the imperative of *caring for the future of everything Bosnian*, a care that is authentically local/domestic, requires the Bosnian political subject to reject reductionist and vulgarly rational frames of mind and to dare to think for themselves, which is at the same time an act of resistance and a form of long-term and authentic political emancipation. Special mental effort should be put into Bosnian political thought to show *caring for all that is Bosnian,* as an act of sovereignty, and for the need to articulate an authentic political subject who thinks of their own order, past and future, as an act of autochthony and autonomy.

Biopolitical regimes/programs do not function through repression alone, but through refined practices of normalization, reduction, personalization, and routines of life. These practices lead to the *hypertrophy of rationality.*[3] and progressive *animalization*[4] of society, which demonizes the Bosnian *bios* and political subjectivity, is obliterated through a *biopolitical terror of silence.* Using the formulation *"anti-Bosnian political tattooing," we highlight how* institutions, discourses of power, and cultural templates code Bosnian reality, creating layers of symbolic violence that act upon the bodies and identities of the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

A space opens for contemplating alternatives—sovereignty based on conscious and responsible *caring*, not delegated to others, but shaped from within as an act of a special modality of freedom. Thus, our focus is on two synchronized actions: the persistent analysis of anti-Bosnian discursive strategies, mechanisms of power, and structures of discipline that contribute to the gradual depersonalization of Bosnian society, and the depersonalization and anesthesia of authentic Bosnian political thought and subjectivity, as the first strategic action. Secondly, there is an even more persistent pointing out and insistence on the possibilities of reappropriating, rearticulating, and reactivating political autonomy, all through the act of thinking of oneself, resistance, and creating Bosnian political self-understanding. In this sense, Bosnian sovereignty is not exhausted in the institutional-legal discourse. Still, it is revealed in the ability to recognize and articulate one's own biopolitical position/reality, to become aware of long-standing anti-Bosnian processes, and to decode anti-Bosnian practices of biopolitical tattooing of reality that trivialize, victimize, or anesthetize Bosnian existence as such.

3 Kuvačić, Ivan, *O rutinizaciji života [On Life's Routine]*. Praxis - Jugoslavensko izdanje, 4-5, 1965., p. 669.

4 Agamben, Giorgio, *Homo sacer: suverena moć i goli život*, Zagreb: Arkzin, 2006., p. 9.

We believe that the analytical potential of such an approach is also reflected in posing several key research questions that need not be answered solely in this paper. They include: How have biopolitical strategies shaped the post-war social landscape in Bosnia and Herzegovina? How do international actors, with their manifest and latent policies, participate in norming identity, trauma, and collective memory? What role do the local authorities play in the implementation (or passivization) of biopolitical regimes? How are relations of identity, culture, and everyday life transformed through biopolitical practices? By opening these questions, we move beyond mere descriptive depiction and enter the realm of visionary critique. Biopolitics here is a theoretical abstraction, but as an active matrix of power that structures the Bosnian *bios*, not only through institutional dispositifs but also through affective regimes, linguistic patterns, visual regimes of representation, and the economy of attention.

In that light, it is possible not only to chart the existing challenges but also to highlight potential avenues of resistance, recognition, and refinement of Bosnian sovereignty. It opens possibilities for Bosnian political thought to emancipate itself from the shackles of epistemological tutelage and, through the affirmation of autochthonous care, local knowledge, and historical consciousness, to initiate a political process that will not be derivative but authentically shaped from the inside.

The Dual Logic of Power: Biopolitical Regimes and the Deadly Order in the Bosnian Cataclysm

Biopolitics, as a paradigm of power that encompasses the very structure of life, is not only concerned with the physical survival of individuals and communities but also with the management of identities, collective memory, cultural patterns, and norms of everyday existence. It is a complex mechanism that operates through institutional structures, discursive regimes, legal frameworks, and narrative codes, shaping social relations and the production of subjectivities. In this context, Bosnian Herzegovinian society represents a paradigmatic case reflecting the multiple character of the biopolitical order — not only in its latent forms of control but also in its brutal practices of destruction.

In contemporary theoretical frameworks, biopolitics is not limited to the technical management of the population. Still, it signifies a fundamental mechanism by which power acquires the capacity to govern life, namely its duration, quality, reproduction, and symbolic value. This governance is not confined solely to the realm of physical existence. Still, it extends to identity constructions, memory structures, narratives that define the collective imaginary, and the control of cultural and social norms. Therefore, biopolitics is a multifaceted strategy that operates at the levels of legal regulation and institutional management, as well as through discursive mechanisms shaping consciousness and social perception.

In the context of Bosnia and Herzegovina, biopolitics does not function as an abstract theoretical figure but rather appears as a living, tangible reality that has shaped wartime, post-war, and contemporary processes. French philosopher Michel Foucault (1926–1984) warns us that modern power primarily operates not through the right to death but through the regulation of life, its normative regulation, and control. Death recedes from the public space, becoming "the most delicate, most private facet of existence,"[5] while power assumes responsibility for managing bodies, health, reproduction, and the moral framework of everyday life.

However, the reality in Bosnia and Herzegovina points to an extremely important theoretical paradox: here, there is no transition from one form of power to another; rather, we see their simultaneous intertwining. In the Bosnian catastrophe—defined by brutal violence against the state, the people, and the territory—we witness the concurrent application of a premodern form of power (the right to death) and a modern biopolitical regime (managing life). Foucault's considerations on the transformation of power are confirmed in the Bosnian case as a simultaneous regime: "disqualification of death,"[6] "condemnation of death,"[7] "pushing into death,"[8] and "leaving alive"[9] are not stages of single, linear development but coexistent instruments of the politics of death and life. Michel Foucault's insight that modern power no longer primarily operates through the right to death but through the making and leaving the living alive is paradoxically inscribed in the Bosnian reality. Namely, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, there has been a convergence of premodern and biopolitical logics of power. Death has not receded as a form of sovereignty; on the contrary, through war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and genocide, it has been reaffirmed as a radical expression of political will. At the same time, the lives of those who survived are not free from control. Still, they are subjected to complex biopolitical regimes—through the latent regulation of reproductive policies, health conditions, and, especially, interventions in education systems and the reproduction of cultural norms as the foundation of future value orientations and identities within Bosnian society. The paradoxical dynamics of condemning death and managing life are reflected in the fact that the Bosnian *bios* becomes an object of biopolitical strategy that operates both in war and in peace. It is the systematic shaping of life through normative frameworks that determines how one lives, who is allowed to live, under what conditions, and with what rights. Post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina becomes a space where biopolitics manifests as an apparatus of discipline and surveillance, but also as a mechanism of normalization and marginalization.

5 Foucault, Michel, *Istorija seksualnosti 1*: *Volja za znanjem*, Loznica: Karpos, 2006., p. 155.
6 Ibidem.
7 Ibidem.
8 Ibidem.
9 Ibidem.

During the War of Aggression against Bosnia and Herzegovina (1992-1995), the pre-modern paradigm of ruling through death was reactivated through ethnic cleansing/genocide, concentration camps, mass murder, rape, and expulsion. In that logic, death was not an incident but a systematic tool of control – a strategy of total elimination of 'the Other.' At the same time, those who were 'left alive' were not free. Their survival was subjected to surveillance, regulation, and discipline – precisely as Foucault points out: "The old power of death that symbolized sovereign power was now carefully supplanted by the administration of bodies and the calculated management of life."[10]

In the post-war period, Bosnia and Herzegovina becomes the space in which the question of life – its renewal, health, social reproduction, and value – is addressed more through the logic of biopolitics. Sovereignty no longer rests on armed power, but on the network of institutions, discourses, and norms that define the parameters of daily existence. Biopolitics becomes a mode of control exercised through schooling, healthcare, economic policies, and discursive forms of integration. Identities are not spontaneously produced, but within matrices that normalize difference, regulate memory, and set the boundaries of legitimate social behavior.

It is increasingly clear how biopolitics in the Bosnian Herzegovinian context is not a neutral concept. It is the means of structuring identities, regulating social cohesion, and controlling the community's symbolic and material resources. The biopolitical matrix of governing life does not exclude the possibility of taking life; it includes it within the logic of governance. The strategies of control move, therefore, from physical destruction to the symbolic perpetuation of inequality, from explicit violence to implicit surveillance. Biopolitics in Bosnia and Herzegovina is not just the subject of analysis; it becomes a challenge to the thinking, ethical, and political imagination that must consider itself in the context of a prolonged post-traumatic and post-genocide reality.

In that sense, the Bosnian case is not an exception but the radical example of the global biopolitical praxis, the field in which life and death are governed. This dual logic of power – destructive sovereignty and normative biopolitics – reveals the basis of contemporary reality in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Therefore, analyzing these processes is not just a theoretical necessity, but a political-ethical task for generations that seek to think about Bosnia beyond its trauma, but not beyond Bosnia itself.

10 Ibidem, p. 156.

The Reduction of Life: Genocidal Biopolitics and Hypertrophied Rationality in Bosnia and Herzegovina

In the contemporary Bosnian-Herzegovinian context, biopolitics manifests as a multi-layered apparatus of control that subsumes all dimensions of individual and collective life. In its most extreme form, biopolitics takes the shape of genocide – the final instance of political power over life. As Bosnian intellectual Rusmir Mahmutćehajić (1948-2026) stresses, "thinking about anything related to Bosnia and her people is not possible without considering the term genocide."[11] Genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina is not merely a historical event, but a last biopolitical regime. Rather, it is a disciplinary mechanism that marginalizes and erases everything Bosnian. It not only physically destroys but also carries our symbolic violence against identities, memory, and collective narratives.

We can describe this process as genocidal biopolitics, or biopolitics that uses violence and death as tools for shaping the political order. At the same time, it is also about the politics of genocide, more precisely, a political apparatus that does not cease with war, but continues to operate in peacetime through the institutionalization of divisions, control over narratives, and the architecture of exclusion. The Dayton Peace Agreement, although formally ending the war, established a system that institutionalizes ethnic differences, extending biopolitical dominance through forms that Agamben calls "biopolitical tattooing."[12] Biopolitically-tattooed and loaded anti-Bosnian identities are thus not only recognized; they are carved into constitutional structures, educational policies, and media narratives.

In post-Dayton Bosnia and Herzegovina, every sphere of social life is tattooed with ethnic codes: political parties, educational curricula, and access to public resources. This institutional tattooing hinders the development of a civic society and further sabotages it. Ethnic identities are instrumentalized, but not as a sphere of freedom, but as a tool of control and long-term destruction of Bosnian Herzegovinian society. Biopolitics, therefore, does not function merely as a repressive apparatus, but as a regime of production: it produces boundaries, belonging, wanted and unwanted forms of existence.

Understanding biopolitical dynamics in Bosnia and Herzegovina cannot be reduced to understanding local governance practices. On the contrary, it is a transnational network of power in which international organizations, diplomatic protocols, geopolitical ambitions, and the latent interests of global actors actively help shape the socio-political fabric of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The role of international institutions as administrative mediators, financial regulators, or normative arbiters often extends beyond aid, transforming into a form of biopolitical

11 Mahmutćehajić, Rusmir, *Genocidsko antibosanstvo*, Sarajevo: Dobra knjiga, 2024., p. 9

12 Agamben, Giorgio, *Protiv biopolitičke tetovaže*, Beograd: NP Vreme, 2004. Accessible at: https://vreme.com/meridijani/protiv-biopoliticke-tetovaze/

sovereignty without accountability. Actors such as international organizations, the United Nations, the European Union, and international courts are integral to this anti-Bosnian biopolitical constellation. Instead of deconstructing the mechanisms of ethnic tattooing, they often legitimize them. As Lavić, Delić, and Osmić emphasize, the international norms implemented in Bosnia and Herzegovina are not aligned with *the Bosnian space of knowledge and agency*.[13]

Power structures outside of Bosnia shape legal and political norms that do not recognize the internal dynamics of Bosnian society, which further destabilizes the process of peace-making and re-constituting the Bosnian/Bosnian Herzegovinian political identity.

One of the strongest tools in the hands of the anti-Bosnian biopolitical regimes is education. School curricula, often ethnically differentiated, strengthen the narrative of division. The youth does not learn how to interpret history together, but how to internalize difference. That transforms knowledge into a biopolitical instrument, and education into a training ground for long-term shaping of desired ethnic subjects. This is a field where, for over thirty years, highly destructive processes of denying the "Bosnian space of knowledge or Bosnian self-awareness"[14] have been taking place as an epistemological deconstruction of sovereignty. This entirely justifies Mahmutćehajić's claim that, given the historical, cultural, and political subjectivity of the Bosnian people, there is an opportunity to raise epistemological consciousness and to reconstruct sovereignty in terms of the territorial, political, and other forms of independence of the Bosnian state and society.

However, "the plan of annihilation or destruction is a key element of the ethnonational teleologies of Serbdom and Croatdom, in which Bosnia and its people are considered merely as building blocks for the ultimate achievement of ethnonational goals."[15] It is clear that anti-Bosnian biopolitical regimes are identical to what we call the ideologies of anti-Bosnianess, which can only be understood via "ethnonational teleologies of Serbdom and Croatdom,"[16] which, again, regardless of mimicry, also manifest processes of changing their forms; their "essence persists throughout the entire history of ethnonationalism."[17] It is worth considering the consequences of anti-Bosnian biopolitical expansion and assaults on the Bosnian *bios*. Namely, these consequences can be understood when we find a clear definition in *The Semiotics of Bosnia* (*Semiotika Bosne)* as "the result of anti-Bosnian Nazi spatial biopolitics is the future destruction of Bosnia and its

13 Lavić, Senadin, Zlatan Delić, Amer Osmić, *Bosanski Prostori Znanja i Obrazovanje Pojmova o Znanju: Između Neoliberalne Globalizacije i 'Postkomunističke' Tranzicije, Pregled* 57 (2), 2016. p. 233–38.

14 Ibidem, 237.

15 Mahmutćehajić, Rusmir, *Genocidsko antibosanstvo*, Sarajevo: Dobra knjiga, 2024., p. 239.

16 Ibidem.

17 Ibidem,

subjugation under the authority of Serbia and Croatia."[18] Therefore, the ideological foundation for the destruction of Bosnia is fully revealed as a spatial logic that uses territory as a weapon of control and destruction. Ethnoterritorialization does not happen accidentally, but is deliberately pursued to establish control over the population through the manipulation of space. Such an approach abolishes the multiethnic and multicultural character of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It leads to territorial engineering in the service of hegemony, which is clearly a form of anti-Bosnian biopolitical tattooing and an attack on the integrity of the Bosnian *bios*. In this sense, our analysis shows how spatial plans reflect not only urbanistic goals but also deeply political and ideological, as well as biopolitical, intentions, according to which Bosnia and Herzegovina is to be systematically disintegrated as a functional state, and its population reduced to biopolitical control units.

Religious institutions take on a similar function. In the post-Dayton context, they assume roles traditionally reserved for the state. They not only shape public ethics, but also the political imagination. Clericalization of society turns religious narratives into the basis of political programs, further solidifying ethnic difference as unbridgeable and ontologically given. Religion too becomes a tool of biopolitical regulation in the processes of ethnonational, anti-Bosnian biopolitical modeling, tattooing, and disciplining of the Bosnian bios. It disciplines, it directs, it shapes collective memory.

The media is another key front of anti-Bosnian biopolitical destructiveness. Their function is no longer merely informative, but ontological. They create a *new reality*. During wars, the media is an instrument of propaganda; today, they often continue that function by presenting information selectively, creating imaginary enemies, and generating fears of everything that is Bosnian. It is clear that media discourses shape our perception of the world, in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in the world we know today, and direct attention to questions that suit power centers. They use biopolitical surveillance and the disciplining of human beings, suppressing everything that could open space for democratization, empathy, and critical reflection.

Anti-Bosnian forms of biopolitics in Bosnia and Herzegovina are at work throughout everyday life. Access to healthcare, employment, and education is shaped by ethnic matrices/priorities. Resources are divided not according to the principles of justice and equity, but according to loyalty, belonging, and political position. This configuration of daily life is a subtle, but ever-present form of disciplining. It is invisible, but efficient engraving of power hierarchies into daily decision-making and possibilities.

18 Lavić, Senadin, *Semiotika Bosne: Etnofaulizam, nasilje i strah u krivotvorinama hegemonije*. Sarajevo: Fakultet političkih nauka Univerziteta. 2025, p. 362.

That very aspect of biopolitics, its ability to act from within, through everyday practices, through what is perceived as *normal*, fully explains Croatian sociologist Ivan Kuvačić's (1923-2014) analysis of the routinization of life. Kuvačić emphasizes how the *rhythm of life* occurs

> under the aegis of constant disruption and re-establishment of internal balance among opposing tendencies. The eternal urge to preserve and solidify the existing is in constant conflict with the desire for the new and the unknown.[19]

The logic of biopolitics not only controls life but also structures it – it prescribes rhythms, dynamics, permissible forms of existence; more precisely, biopolitics is the greatest and highly destructive form of dehumanization, reducing life itself. Life thus is reduced to *bare life.*[20] This does not occur in a physical sense, but in an ontological one – authenticity, freedom, unpredictability are lost. Biopolitical action turns to "twisting life into mechanics."[21] It no longer pertains just to administrative or political control, but to ontological violence that transforms the individual into a function, into a predictable unit of the system. Lavić, in his work *Semiotics of Bosnia*, emphasizes that "biopolitics classifies human groups and defines the shape of their lives according to 'principles' that do not recognize moral reasons for action. Human life itself has become the subject of biopolitical processing."[22]

Such a state produces a new form of rationality – *hypertrophied rationality*. Instead of being a means of liberation, rationality becomes a tool of enslavement. It stops being a personal trait and becomes a systemic trait. The logical step for hypertrophied rationality "grows into rationalization, that is, it no longer is an individual, but a systemic trait,"[23] to the extent that we lose all capacity for free thought and understanding of any form or forms of selfhood. In that context, intellectuals, politicians, and even artists become servants: functional agents of a system who have lost their *power of disobedience.*[24]

The deepest form of this transformation is the one Kuvačić calls the emergence of the *happy robot*, stressing that in slaveowning societies, norms of physical

19 Kuvačić, Ivan, *O rutinizaciji života [On Life's Routine]*. Praxis - Jugoslavensko izdanje, 4-5, 1965, p. 668.

20 Pogledati: Sofradžija, Halima, *Biometrija, politika i goli život*, Godišnjak FPN-a, 5–6, 2010, p. 150–160., također pogledati: Agamben, Giorgio, *Homo sacer: suverena moć i goli život*, Zagreb: Arkzin, 2006.

21 Kuvačić, Ivan, *O rutinizaciji života [On Life's Routine]*. Praxis - Jugoslavensko izdanje, 4-5, 1965, p. 668-669.

22 Lavić, Senadin, *Semiotika Bosne: Etnofaulizam, Nasilje i strah u krivotvorinama hegemonije*. Sarajevo: Fakultet političkih nauka Univerziteta. 2025, p. 362.

23 Kuvačić, Ivan, *O rutinizaciji života [On Life's Routine]*. Praxis - Jugoslavensko izdanje, 4-5, 1965., p. 669.

24 Paić, Žarko, *Moć nepokornosti: intelektualac i biopolitika*, Zagreb: Antibarbarus, 2006.

violence were established. In contrast, in modern conditions, different forms of psychological manipulation dominate. Hence Kuvačić writes

> The enslaved person was not asked to accept the loss of freedom willingly. In contrast, the modern *Gleichschaltung* begins with the idea of the happy robot, which willingly adjusts its movements to the system's demands. It is important to get people *to want* what is expected and asked of them.[25]

Biopolitical power, therefore, is not based on force, but on manufacturing desire. Surveillance is not repressive; it is productive – it creates subjects who not only obey but do so with the conviction that it is correct. Such a configuration of power deeply destabilizes the ideas of freedom, responsibility, and authenticity.

Therefore, understanding anti-Bosnian biopolitical strategies, from genocidal structures, through institutionalizing ethnic differences and a clerical hierarchization of society, to the daily disciplining via resources, media, and education, is critical for any vision of Bosnia's future. Without the deconstruction and reconstruction of the Anti-Bosnian biopolitical mechanisms, it is impossible to speak of a sovereign, democratic, sustainable, and free Bosnian state and society.

Concluding remarks

Biopolitics, as a key epistemological and operational apparatus of contemporary power, represents an unavoidable concept for analyzing the postconflict order in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Here, where historical traumas and political compromises are woven into the everyday, biopolitics acts not just as a strategy of control, but as a normative and symbolic matrix that determines the rhythm and form of existence. Moving the focus of power from the question of death to the question of life, or rather controlling life, who may live, whose life matters, marked the beginning of deep transformations in the relationship between the individual and the state, making the body, identity, and daily life into political territory that should be conquered, controlled, and surveilled.

In Bosnian-Huvacerzegovinian society, thekse anti-Bosnian biopolitical strategies are not limited to wartime, but intensify in peacetime. What is more, they become technologies of managing resources, emotions, education, religion, and belonging, bringing into question the Bosnian bios, the future of everything that is Bosnian. The post-Dayton reality of institutionalized ethnic divisions shows that biopolitical regimes do not just maintain the order, but strive for its repetition and petrification.

The concept of anti-Bosnian political tattooing offers a clear insight into how international and local forces together shape the structures of surveillance and

25 Kuvačić, Ivan, *O rutinizaciji života [On Life's Routine]*. Praxis - Jugoslavensko izdanje, 4-5, 1965, p. 671.

control that are engraved into the very tissue of Bosnian society, above all into language, memory, territory, and institutions. Biopolitics are a local and global phenomenon; its processes are not limited to the borders of Bosnia and Herzegovina but are part of a wider postcolonial and postsovereign regime of governing life/bios.

Biopolitics today is no longer repressive in the traditional sense; it does not operate solely through *force and prisons* but also through administration, curricula, language, media algorithms, and formal laws. As a result, it becomes ubiquitous and almost invisible. For this reason, analyzing biopolitics is a priority across various fields of academic reflection, a necessity for our future political and ethical orientation. In the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina, this means abandoning analyses that assume the neutrality of structures and recognizing that the politics of life requires a new normative foundation—one that is free from ethnopolitical matrices and colonial tutelage.

The combination of premodern and postmodern forms of biopolitics in Bosnia and Herzegovina—from mass violence, crime, and general destruction to sophisticated normalization of submission, anti-Bosnian technocratic contamination of Bosnian political thought—has resulted in a deeply dehumanized Bosnian society. The founding of the political system on ethnic differentiation, control of narratives through education and media, as well as religious and bureaucratic co-optation of social functions, has produced not only social fragmentation but also an anthropological disorder: the shaping of a being that renounces autonomy in exchange for loyalty, security, and belonging. This paradoxical triumph of biopolitical power can also be seen as the production of joy through obedience, the deepest form of endangering and destroying freedom/life.

Bosnian society and state must not be deprived of the opportunity for political emancipation. Therefore*, concern for the future of everything Bosnian* is the path to realizing the Bosnian *bios* in its fullness, the path to decolonizing Bosnian/Bosnian-Herzegovinian political thought in a post-genocide context. It is the path to reflective, indigenous, and autonomous Bosnian political thought. Understanding biopolitical matrices, their deconstruction, and public exposure is the first step in articulating a different and more promising society. What is necessary is not merely reforming existing institutions but transforming the very foundations of political ontology, that is, affirming the Bosnian bios, which refuses to accept reductionism, fragmentation, and anti-Bosnian biopolitical tattooing.

The future of Bosnia and Herzegovina depends on the ability to overcome the totalitarian inertia of anti-Bosnian biopolitical regimes. That future must be built on knowledge, freedom, solidarity, and the recognition of differences—not as obstacles, but as the foundation of cohesion for Bosnian and Herzegovinian society and the state. Only such a society, liberated from mechanisms of control of identi-

ties and memory, can affirm an authentic political community—a community of resistance, dignity, and the possibility of living together.

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BOSNIAN STUDIES
SARAJEVO
1

NEZIR KRČALO

The Hermeneutic Cycle of Postmodernism

UDC 141.78: 801.73

DOI 10.47999/bos.2025.9.2. 44-54
Review scientific article

pages 44-54

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Summary

Hermeneutics deals with the problem of understanding and interpreting texts, teachings, events, etc. It raises the following questions: Does the interpreter reproduce what he is interpreting, or does he participate creatively in his interpretation? Does the interpreter introduce their own assumptions when interpreting an artistic work, a philosophical text, or a historical event? Every understanding (interpretation) is always more than mere reproduction. Understanding is possible only if one introduces one's own assumptions into the process, both individual and socio-historical.

The understanding of modernity eludes hermeneutics. Modernity emerged at the end of the eighteenth century as an Enlightenment idea. The concept of social development that emerged during the modern period is based on the belief in a linear, progressive development of society according to its own laws. Postmodernism arose in the twentieth century and does not represent a break with modernity but develops alongside it as its critique. As a 'strategy of forgetfulness,' postmodernity abolishes any proper perspective for interpreting modernity, thereby preventing the so-called hermeneutic situation.

Key words: hermeneutics, dialectics, horizon, modernity, postmodernity

Introduction

Every form of understanding is influenced by preconceptions that the interpreter introduces. This forms an unavoidable hermeneutical circle. To understand the part, we must understand the whole, and to understand the whole, we must understand its parts. Therefore, the German philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900-2002) cites the learning of a foreign language to illustrate the hermeneutical circle and the preconceptions that are necessary for its existence. When we see a sentence, we first grasp its meaning, then, based on that whole, we move to its parts, which we understand in relation to the whole and correct as needed, ultimately returning to the whole. It is important to emphasize that we cannot separate the 'original' from interpretation. We cannot exclude ourselves. All humanities, as well as all the natural sciences, must consider that their understanding of a problem is always conditioned by preconceptions, which are, in turn, historically conditioned by time and culture.

1. Plato – The Skill of Interpretation

Plato's reflections on the origins, methods, and goals of interpretation are much more current than is usually assumed. According to Plato, it is impossible to reach the stated goal and be wholly sure that one's own interpretation captures what the

author intended when creating his work. This is despite all the hermeneutical effort involved, which also implies the interpreter's exceptional intellectual abilities and the very refined methodology he employs. Therefore, he suggests ceasing to focus on what the "other's voice" conveys and turning instead to the things themselves, and to one's own determination of the truth of the thing.

Plato, therefore, opposed the entire interpretive endeavor as something not worth undertaking, since it lacks both stable solutions and theoretical validity. Moreover, he believed that the written word in general, including literary works and their interpretations, cannot convey true knowledge. For him, knowledge implies the ability to articulate and defend one's views before others, which requires them to be tested in a live, oral philosophical dialogue, representing a sustained critical effort by the interlocutor in the conceptual articulation and re-examination of the validity of the proposed arguments.[1]

Plato's stance regarding the goal of the art of interpretation can also be contextualized considering modern and contemporary debates about the subject, status, and purpose of hermeneutics. Like proponents of 'subjectivist' hermeneutics, from the German philosopher Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834) to the American literary theorist E.D. Hirsch (1928-), Plato holds that the goal of correct interpretation is to understand what the author intended to say. He differs in that he is certain that such an endeavor is unfeasible, i.e., an interpreter can never know with complete certainty what the writer truly intended to express. No interpretation can be entirely correct, and at least some part of it is mistaken, because no interpretation can be established as capable of fully 'merging' with the mental state of the author while creating the work that is the subject of interpretation. With this stance, according to which it is impossible to determine the author's intention precisely, Plato adopts the position of objective hermeneutics, whose most significant representative in contemporary philosophy is Hans-Georg Gadamer.[2]

The question arises: what led Plato to such a conclusion about the meaning and value of the interpretive skill? The absence of the writer, who, therefore, is unable to explain the meaning of their words; the polysemy of the language itself; and temporal distance are most likely the reasons why Plato believed that the goal of interpretation can never be fully achieved. Moreover, this task cannot be achieved, because every interpretation starts from a subjective standpoint that the interpreter cannot fully free themselves from during the interpretative process.

The texts speak 'with someone else's voice,' and when they are interpreted through one's own personal opinions, ideas, and conceptual frameworks, those

1 Deretić I. , *Da li nam je hermeneutika uopšte potrebna: Platon o umeću tumačenja,* Beograd: Filozofski fakultet, 2011. p. 225

2 Eden, K. (1987), *Hermeneutics and the Ancient Rhetorical Tradition*, *RHETORICA*. *A Journal of the History of Rhetoric*, Vol. V, No. 1.

perspectives are introduced into the text. Plato seems, although indirectly, to have arrived at this insight. Must this then be a 'shortcoming' of every interpretation, as the interpreter is unable to transform it into their own benefit? Is he not capable of interpreting a text by examining the meaning of what is said in it, not purely for reproduction, but while also having a productive nature?

To arrive at the truth of things, however, we must do so alone, but often inspired, motivated, or discouraged by the author's words, if we are at all open and ready to hear what they are saying.

2. The Hermeneutical Meaning of Temporal Distance

Let us remember the hermeneutic rule that the whole must be understood from the part, and the part from the whole. The origin of this rule is in ancient rhetoric, and thanks to modern hermeneutics, it has been transferred from oration to the skill of understanding. The anticipation of meaning, in which one thinks of the whole, leads to explicit understanding so that the parts, determined by starting from the whole, in turn determine this whole.

Time is the fundamental basis of reality, in which lie the roots of the present. When it comes to the historical image of the world, it is quite naïve to assume that we must immerse ourselves in the spirit of a historical event to achieve historical objectivity. However, it is crucial to see time and distance as positive and productive possibilities for understanding. This temporal distance, which allows for filtering, is not a definitive measure, but is in constant movement and expansion. Along with the negative side of this filtering, which comes with the temporal distance, there is also a positive side for understanding. It contributes not only to the fading of prejudice but also to the emergence of thought processes that promote true understanding.

The real critical question of hermeneutics is distinguishing true prejudice, under which we understand text, from false ones, under which we *mis*understand. Nothing can distinguish this except temporal distance. It is necessary to uncover our own prejudices to gain understanding, so that the message, in turn, gains value. To isolate a prejudice means to suspend its validity. If some prejudice governs us, we do not know it and do not suspect it as a judgment.[3]

The first step in understanding is recognizing that something is speaking to us. That is the most important of all the hermeneutical conditions. Now we know what it serves to do: a complete suspension of our own prejudice. Every suspension of judgment, and especially prejudice, contains the structure of a question. The essence of a question is the discovery and uncovering of possibilities, i.e., how to reconcile history with what is past. The real historical object is not an

3 Gadamer, H. G., (1978), Istina *i metoda*, Sarajevo: Veselin Masleša

object, but a unity of the past and the future, and in fact, an appropriate hermeneutics should demonstrate the reality of history itself.

3. Hermeneutics and Dialectics

First, let us reflect on Mario Kalik's description of dialectics as a true philosophical method:

> What is built in conversation is the speech of things, which is simultaneously a speech about things (since they themselves manifest in conversation), a single unified speech that is dialectically connected with its ultimate determinations, individual opinions. This speech (*logos*) gathers and condenses into a unity the totality of negated and preserved assertions through which it reflects a part of its truth. This consolidating effect of logos corresponds to the well-known Heraclitean fragment: 'Therefore, men should follow what is universal. Yet, although this principle (*logos*) is universal, most people live as if they possess some special wisdom.' These special wisdoms (opinions) are compelled to acknowledge their limitations in dialogue and to submit to the guidance of the matter at hand. Therefore, the sequence of questions and answers is not disorderly, disorganized, or confused, but reflects the inner necessity of the movement of things from emptiness and abstraction in the question of 'What is something?' to fullness and concreteness, which preserve the richness of the entire journey. And that richness lies in the vitality of knowledge, whose questioning and doubt undermine the naïve certainty of initial determinations. During the conversation, the thing progresses from complete inaccessibility, revealed in the knowledge of ignorance, to complete presence and engagement that shines in the light of the idea. Dialectics, which leads to this unity, is thus the skill to perceive the connection and unity of different and opposing viewpoints, to discover their interdependence precisely in their difference. The interdependent ones belong to one, i.e., they become the possession of the concept which, as a unity, encompasses (preserves) their truth. In its initial turning, the thing is multivalent, and dialectics, testing every meaning to its extreme limits, measures its far-reachingness; it calms it, concludes it, and reveals its finality. By understanding it, it overcomes it, abolishes it, but also preserves its dignity, its necessity, and its inevitability.[4]

Dialectics depend on hermeneutics for meaning, of anything that has a subject, including its own meaning as a method. Hermeneutics, on its part, depends on dialectics in terms of its effect: because it first establishes its result as a possibility, which it believes to be reality. And dialectics is precisely concerned with possible meaning, because only it can classify it into the realm of truth or falsehood. Dialectics does not deal with intellectual truths, because these are its results, meaning it engaged with them while they were valid as *possible* truths.

4 Kalik, M., *Dijalog i dijalektika*, Beograd: Filozofski fakultet, 2001, p. 78

The complementarity of the two methods is clear in that, for hermeneutics, meaning is in being, while for dialectics, truth is in the realm of meaning. For both methods, mediation and posing questions are shared principles of operation. The difference is that hermeneutics mediates what is to provide an answer: what is it, what is, while dialectics derives mediation from the premise to establish its inherent truth. To summarize, therefore, regarding the characteristics of the methods, we can say:

1) The question: '*What is reality?'* is not dialectical, but hermeneutical. It makes no sense if something is not defined. The question of dialectics: is it (opinion, thought) true? There is no point to the question if the subject is not defined or reduced.
2) The construction of a system is not a matter of dialectics, but of hermeneutics. Therefore, no matter how much hermeneutic philosophy is against the 'vow of epistemology,' the hermeneutic method can only be included in the hope of epistemology's realization, as a necessary component of it.
3) System, theory, or attitudes are not the object of hermeneutics, but of dialectics. Dialectics poses the question: *Is this true*?
4) The principle of totality is a constitutive principle of hermeneutic consciousness, according to the principle of everything into one, as the principle of translating multiplicity into the medium of a single meaning.
5) The principle of the totality of truth is the regulatory principle of dialectical thinking, according to the principle: everything from one. Dialectics thus place meaning in the realm of truth or falsehood.

Hermeneutical and dialectical methods, aside from identity, are universally in:

a) A complementary relationship in every case of knowledge acquisition.
b) They must operate in the said relationship within any philosophy, even in those that programmatically attack hermeneutics or dialectics.
c) Considering their complementary relationships, as well as their comparatively measured characteristics, from the perspective of improving methodological self-awareness, there is no rational reason to persist in polemical confrontations between the main currents of contemporary philosophy.

We are left to stick to the relationship between their hermeneutical and selectively critical mediation. That is the only productive way to repair the damage that philosophy has suffered from the illegitimate universalist pretensions of any approach in isolation.

4. The Riddle of Modernity and Postmodernity

Modernity began in the late eighteenth century as an Enlightenment idea, and the French Revolution of 1789 was its personification. It is the historical period of Western culture defined by three characteristics:

- Valuing of the mind, instead of ignorance.
- Order over disorder.
- Science over superstition.

The concept of social development, emerging in the modern era, was founded on the belief in a linear, progressive development of society according to its own laws. Modernity is therefore full of so-called scientific ideologies, which lean on partial elements of scientific rationality and take parts of it as the legitimacy for proclaiming 'total truths.' The basic ideologies of modernity are liberalism, conservatism, and socialism, and they refer to societies, French philosopher August Comte (1798-1857) dubbed 'industrial,' German philosopher Karl Marx (1818-1883), 'capitalist,' and French philosopher Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-1859), 'democratic.'

Within it, 'modernism' as a super-culture was created by the great civilizational divide between the singular, transcendental Christian worldview and the creation of autonomous institutional fields of culture (science, law, politics, and art). The term 'modernism' refers to the following models of culture:

a) 'The Modern Era,' to some, is the period ranging from the Renaissance up to our era and refers to the project of modernity as an existential atmosphere and adapting to the present spirit of the time.
b) 'Early Modernism' is closer to 'Modernity' and denotes the wide assemblage of various artistic movements that advocate for the autonomy of art (*l'art pour l'art* – Art for the sake of art)
c) 'The Avant-Garde' is the radical form of modernism – the revolutionary transformation of life, society, culture, and art.
d) 'Moderate Modernism' emerged in different forms before World War I (1914-1918), between the world wars (1918-1939), and after World War II (1939-1945), and was tied to the domination of the market and mass media.
e) 'High Modernism' emerged in the 1950s, and especially in the United States of America and New York City as the new center of world art.
f) 'Late Modernism' denotes the art of the 1960s and early 1970s, which critiqued the autonomy of art.

Postmodernity emerged in the 20th century and was not a sudden break with modernity. It is more accurate to say that it exists parallel to modernity as its critique and antithesis. Postmodernity denotes:

- Awareness about the illusory nature of the rational world order.
- The illusory nature of the mind as the universal principle for the construction of the world and man.
- Awareness about the consequences of the mental production of the world.

Postmodernity begins with the clear insight that the final remnants of nature are disappearing, that we are living in a scientific and technically produced world, and that we too are subjects of rational (techno-scientific) modeling. Based on these insights, the question of how and why this happened emerges. Doubt is increasingly cast on the absolute faith in the power of the mind, leading us to analyze the connections between rationality and power, or rather to the real role of science in our civilization, as science too has become a form of power.[5] Postmodernism points to the ideological nature of modern science. Science is rooted in the philosophy of rationalism. The belief in the power of the mind, and the correctness of the mind's (rational) construction of the world, separates mental subjectivity as a shaping force from the human's other potentials. This is best seen in the meditations of the French philosopher René Descartes (1596-1650) on the scientific method. The rationalist foundation of knowledge rests on the famous position *Ego cogito, ergo sum* (I think, therefore I am), which is antinomic. The assertion can be interpreted in two ways:

a) I think I am, therefore, I am.
b) I think I am not, therefore I am, because the very thought of non-existence is existence.

Postmodernists, therefore, push back against absolute truths, speaking of the end of ideologies and 'grand narratives,' criticizing theories of the progressive development of society according to its own laws. Instead, they advocate for the relativity of human knowledge. Postmodernism is all-encompassing and can be found in philosophy, arts, culture, and daily life. It is different from modernism in its all-encompassing nature, unsoundness, and programmatic limitlessness. Postmodernity advocates openness, individuality, criticality, responsibility, and a move away from rigid theories and social systems. All manifestations of postmodernity and social changes were marked merely by nihilism, cultural relativism, and irresponsible social experiments, with countless consequences. Hence, postmodernity has been dubbed the 'strategy of forgetting,' which does not care for the past, past systems of value, ways of thinking, and lifestyles.[6] It has warned us that life can and must be viewed from multiple theoretical angles and philosophical breadths. That man should be given the freedom of choice in terms of education, knowledge acquisition, and life's (not just professional) competencies.

5 Lyotard, J.F. (2005), *Postmoderno stanje – Izvještaj o znanju*, Zagreb: IBIS grafika
6 Beck, U. (2001), *Rizično društvo – U susret novoj moderni*, Beograd: Filip Višnjić

Postmodernity opposes conservative traditionalism, repressive social behavior, too much prescription and normativity, crude theories and hard evidence, offering free association and flexible paradigms. Communication between people is understood to be founded in tolerance, and business communication in personal responsibility, risk, and teamwork.

5. The Reach of Hermeneutics

The conflict in experiential research, which we call the conflict between qualitative and quantitative methodology, is the continuation of a philosophical debate that began with German philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey's (1833-1911) *Introduction to the Human Sciences* (1883), which we also encounter in the literature dubbed as the battle for the method. The humanities (historic sciences), according to Dilthey, cannot be founded on simple observation of the outside world, as in the natural sciences, as historical events are the product of voluntary human action. Therefore, understanding these phenomena must be based on immersing oneself in human experiences, that is, on understanding people's feelings, perceptions, and will, as well as the meaning and significance of individual human actions and social events, various symbols, etc. Historicism is woven deeply into the basic concept of the qualitative approach to studying experience, and, as such, opposes Comte and Spencer, as well as Hegel's schema of history and society, and stresses the importance of social reality.

The hermeneutical 'turn' made by German philosopher Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) with his concept of 'being there' (*Dasein*) brought one of the central terms of classical philosophy – the subject- into serious question. Heidegger denies the subject's identity, i.e., the idea that it represents a set of permanent, unchanging properties that make it the same. Instead, Dasein means constant self-determination within a social context. This seriously challenges the idea of the subject being entirely conditioned by the external world, which is otherwise fundamentally positivist.

The hermeneutical principle (H.G. Gadamer) is also a foundational tenet of qualitative methodologies. It posits that a concrete object or occurrence (e.g., a work of art) can only be understood in the whole framework to which it belongs, that is, immersed in the historical and social context of its creation. Qualitative methods take as their subject matter parts of reality that are not accessible through quantitative methods. These are phenomena for which it is difficult to isolate cause-and-effect relationships, then to control one of them and examine the other; examples of such phenomena often include love, faith, the concept of the supernatural, hatred, good and evil, courage, consciousness, morality, etc. The goals of qualitative methods are most often to provide a detailed description and typologization, as well as to understand motives, meanings, and significance. In contrast,

quantitative methods aim to explain, especially cause-and-effect relationships. Qualitative research emphasizes what is different within the same, while quantitative research seeks what is the same across different cases. Qualitative research relies on direct experience and credible descriptions of these facts, as they truly are. Quantitative research strives to establish relatively objective methods for recognizing and characterizing social facts, followed by their coding and numerical representation in a database.

But there is one social reality. Just as in nature, there is no separate physical, mathematical, chemical, or biological reality, but rather different approaches to the natural totality. So too in social phenomena, there are no separate quantitative and qualitative realities. The open question remains: what is the scope of the hermeneutic method?

Conclusion

Whenever we try to understand some historical event from a distance, we fall into a so-called hermeneutical situation. Gaining consciousness about a situation is always a difficult task. The concept of a situation is characterized by the fact that we are opposite to it, and therefore, we cannot have any objective knowledge about it. This holds for the hermeneutic situation, i.e., a situation in which we find ourselves opposite the material we need to understand. Hence, the concept of situation also subsumes the concept of the *horizon*. The horizon is the sight that subsumes and encompasses everything visible from a single point. To have a horizon means not to be limited to the nearest things, but to be able to see further away. A person with a horizon can also judge the meaning of all things within the horizon in terms of closeness and distance, size and scale. Accordingly, creating a hermeneutic situation means gaining the true horizon of the question for the questions posed to us regarding the past.

Modernism continues to evolve, and in our time, it could be metaphorically and succinctly described as a 'village illuminated at night' because it adapts to the spirit of the time. Postmodernism has a blurred horizon and a muddled hermeneutic situation regarding questions about *modernity*! On the other hand, if an imaginary hermeneutic situation were to be created, the question is how much of a 'qualitative' reach hermeneutics has.

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BOSNIAN STUDIES
SARAJEVO
1

*ADNAN DŽAFIĆ *

Transforming Education to Nurture the Spirit

UDC 159.924.7: 37

DOI 10.47999/bos.2025.9.2.56-67
Review scientific article

pages 56-67

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Summary

No matter how much excellence humans demonstrate through progress and modernization, thereby indicating that they are crowning creatures among creation, in some future, they become a witness to the falsehood of their connection with the world in which they live, as well as the creations that have arisen from that connection. Contemporary educational theories contain a 'pedagogical addition' that imprints partial provisions into the general field of education. However, the goal is for the general educational process to shape what is common to every person. The famous German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) explained the purpose of education through a dichotomy: educated individuals succeed in everything they do (others do not) and do not show their partialities. At the same time, the uneducated are characterized by their behavior not being governed by the general properties of things.

No matter how justified the demands for 'versatile knowledge' may seem, behind these demands are long-established schemas that rely on the Platonic understanding of the three dimensions of the human soul: rational (logos)*, spirited* (thymos)*, and appetitive* (eros)*, which correspond to an education with logical, ethical, and aesthetic aspects. Thus, we arrive at the question of the role of logic, ethics, and aesthetics, the claim that these three disciplines determine the content of human education, and that what should be educated in a person is the soul, but in such a way that their spirit* (heart*) is properly nurtured. Education is primarily tied to human behavior and how one interacts in the human community, and it has an intersubjective character. Education is tied to the level of knowledge and possession of knowledge about the world, in which each subject is immersed through its being. Due to its complexity and the richness of phenomena it manifests in recent times, education is the subject of a special science—pedagogy. Its role boils down to creating functional procedures that can be used in any system of socialization and upbringing, and it appears as an instrumental, pragmatically oriented ideology.*

Key words: upbringing, education, reform, ideology, modernization

Introduction

Every question about the prospects of upbringing and education, considering the historical context, first assumes that both have a future already, having affirmed themselves in the past. However, to make such a claim, we require some general agreement on a broadly acceptable regulation of upbringing and education today, as well as certainty about their future. Unfortunately, we are witnesses to the fact that it is impossible to agree on the most accurate definition of the terms, not because scientists do not know what upbringing and education are, nor because

they do not know their history or the history of traditional problem-solving. The issue is that scientists today try to think of problems, but not about upbringing and education themselves.

Concerning the second request, many will not even agree with: following the breakup of a causalistic image of the world, that dominated from Isaac Newton (1642-1727), to the first half of the 20th century, we can scarcely escape the impression that there is no future time as such. We also have too few facts to reliably and clearly form a consensus on what should follow. On the other hand, the future, which is impossible to predict and forecast, is taking revenge on us at every turn – as soon as we naively think we have 'answers' and 'solutions.' Truly, we 'see' the things, pressed into our narrow corner of perception. It is given to us with its limitations. Still, even with our nature-imposed limits, the optimism of previous ages is replaced by unjustified egocentrism, which many saw as the unjustified zeal towards the power of the Enlightenment mind. In fact, things follow their own course, guided solely by their inner meaning, completely independent to the utmost extent, both from proximity and distance, from their differences, from us and our efforts to catch them in the net of our limited, but pre-prepared, assumed meaning, to reach what they are inherently meant to be. Things serve externally imposed goals, and their meaning remains outside of them and can only be grasped through meaningful reflection. Such an indeterminate situation cannot extend indefinitely.

We are brought into life and existence, but that existence should be given foundations and purpose, and we endlessly stress that the foundation is upbringing and education. We must pose the question of how upbringing and education should function, in a radically new, non-traditional manner, keeping in mind the whole – individuals, society, and world as their horizon. Only then will we be able to see the disorder in the theory and in its application. This is primarily because of the 'measuring,' or rather the so-called neopositivist concept of the 'variable' as a fundamental concept that says. Every term that cannot be translated into the language of a variable is not acceptable to modern science. This means that if any social phenomenon cannot be expressed in thought-language, and vice versa—brought to life in practice—this reveals the inadequacy of science. In other words, if knowledge does not adhere to epistemological principles: generality, precision, reliability, objectivity, verifiability, and systematicity, then it is not considered scientific knowledge because it is not 'measurable' in practice.

The open question remains whether there is any history of pedagogy that can claim some general validity and enjoy consensus amid differing opinions. In our time, such a thing is extremely difficult to achieve, not because it is impossible to bring different concepts into dialogue and equally impossible to reach a reasonable opinion among different views, but primarily because the bearers of opinions, in this case, pedagogues, inherently carry the virus of non-acceptance of any

consensus. Modern pedagogues are far more sectarian than those from whom, given historical reasons, one might expect the most.

The Ideological Nature of Society

A community is based on the common good as a shared assumption. What is the common good, and who should determine it – individuals or communities? If we reflect on the history of 'the common good,' we will see that the idea has been reborn many times throughout human history. Not a single manifestation of human consciousness is a given; it was always conditioned and determined by the concrete historical events in which the community existed. A familiar example of that consciousness is the polyphony of ancient deities and polytheism as a historical concept, which was not determined just by human consciousness and speculation, but by all aspects of life and forms of consciousness that made one effective as a member of society. The religious polytheistic concept became part of social and state organization, and religious consciousness became part of human social and historical consciousness, and, with that, an ideological template for human action in social and state communities.

Over time, humans began to confront the limitations of social organization and the laws and norms that maintained it. Religious consciousness, in the classical sense, began to weaken, and previously established values had to be reexamined. The development of the religious concept depends on the development of society, just as it depends on speculative thought. Besides religion, speculative thought also created philosophical concepts, which are essentially the logical counterparts of religious concepts. Logic, as a law of human consciousness, contemplates and designs the system of religious concepts so that they can be applied daily in social and state communities. Philosophical and religious speculation are not only based on the same human need but are also devised using the same method. The philosopher accepts the religious idea as an ideological pattern of their own consciousness because they cannot determine what lies outside that pattern; thus, they bring religion and its idea to a logical pattern of their own consciousness, within which they must manifest. In this way, philosophy as speculation designs religion and logically shapes it into an abstract idea, just as religion gives philosophy concepts and definitions so that it can be socially engaged within the same logic and through speculation.

Ideological thinking frees us from the reality we perceive through our five senses and insists on a 'true' reality hidden behind the phenomenal world. It rules from that hidden place and demands a sixth sense to become aware of it.[1] Without ideological consciousness, there is no work or progress in the community; it is

1 Arendt, H. (1996). *Totalitarizam,* Zagreb: Politička kultura.

through ideological consciousness that a person relates to the community and to the people who make it up. Without it, neither their actions nor their deeds would have meaning, nor would achievements in philosophy, science, art, politics, or any social activity.[2] By their own being and work, a person becomes an ideological being, and the ideological concept is a law of human consciousness and action. Through progress and modernization, no matter how much excellence a person demonstrates, and thus indicates that they are the crown of creation, in some future time, they become a witness to the falsehood of their connection with the world in which they live, as well as the creations that have arisen from that connection.

Finally, ideology becomes a very powerful means of mobilizing people in the desired direction. In more recent times, ideology is commonly dubbed 'the family' of social consciousness, because it performs an 'educational function.'[3] It is an irreplaceable source of intelligent leadership and conceiving politics in its various shapes. As ideology incarnates, politics takes over all its functions, grounding them in the social system. Every political ideology contains critique, ideals, and means of action. It critiques existing society as imperfect and juxtaposes it with a vision of a 'good society' to which we should eventually arrive. Political ideology operates in a certain view of human nature, describing the potential and limitations of the human subject.[4] Skillfully incorporating other forms of social consciousness, such as science, art, law, customs, religion, etc., it opens countless possibilities for efficient control and governance.

'The Network' of the Political System

Just as a person is characterized by an awareness of their persistence over time, so too is culture composed of a series of temporal metamorphoses, and temporality is an essential component of culture, gathering all human spiritual heritage within it. This heritage cannot be maintained permanently on its own; therefore, procedures for preserving cultural products and values are necessary. A system of education is essential to enable and ensure a conscious choice of key moments of knowledge, their transmission, and their adoption. In this way, by preserving culture, education becomes inseparable from culture, just as culture is unimaginable without the ability to transmit and preserve it deep within the human spirit.[5]

2 Nikčević V. D. (1990). *Ideološka svijest i estetski kriterijumi*, Nikšić:„Univerzitetska riječ"
3 Freeden, Michael (2006). *Političke ideologije*, Zagreb: Algoritam
4 Schwarzmantel, J. (2005). *Doba ideologije: Političke ideologije od Američke revolucije do postmodernog vremena*, Zagreb: AGM
5 Uzelac, M. (2019). Nauka i stvarnost, *Filozofija, obrazovanje i smisao moderne kulture*, Sarajevo: Univerzitet u Istočnom Sarajevu

Regardless of the time we live in and the challenges we face, what is common to all times and all people is that they are marked by a system of values that serves as a guiding thread for making life decisions, and that this system of values is constantly changing. Values never decay; only their priority rankings change, and the definitions of individual values evolve. In everyday life, we understand the term 'value' differently: some see it as goods that are considered valuable, while others equate values with norms, often limited to moral norms. In philosophy, values are general qualities attributed to carriers of values or goods through evaluative concepts; in psychology and sociology, 'value' refers to character traits such as opinions, attitudes, beliefs, and perspectives toward all goods that people positively value for themselves; in pedagogy, it sometimes refers to educational goals.[6]

The sociological approach to studying values in education is primarily concerned with answering questions such as: who are the bearers of the ruling social and cultural values in society, and thus in education? How are these specific cultural and social goals and values expressed within curricula and within pedagogical theory as a scientific and general cultural framework, forming a certain worldview? This approach to education as an organized and institutionalized aspect of the cultural process requires analyzing education also in terms of its values (cultural and ideological), and posing the question of values in education as a question about official and ruling culture and its worldview.[7]

It is commonly held that a society's culture is improved by developing education. With the development of education, we generally mean its greater democratization and expansion, and the development of culture, the widest availability of cultural content and knowledge transmitted through education. The roots of this thinking, that educational availability is analogous to culture, are in the early Enlightenment. At the basis of such thinking is the idea that treats education as the main and active transmitter, even creator of culture. The quantity of knowledge, the number of educational institutions, and the level of schooling are taken as near-exclusive criteria of a people's cultural development. The theme of 'culture in education,' which includes questions such as what and whose culture institutional education contains and transmits, and what interests it serves, is often outside the everyday but also within scientific study. Questions about the development of culture are reduced to the question of education's growth and democratization, i.e., expansion, so cultural themes end up reduced to educational, and then to 'educational' politics. This reductionism of cultural themes to education is mediated and then institutionalized by the goals and methods of official educa-

6 Mrnjaus, K., Rončević, N., Ivošević, L. (2013). *(Inter)kulturalna dimenzija u obrazovanju*, Rijeka: Filozofski fakultet

7 Castells, M. (2016). A Sociology of Power: My Intellectual Journey. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 42: 1-19. Accessible at: http://www.annualreviews.org/doi/full/10.1146/annurev-soc-081715-074158

tional politics and pedagogical theory. Educational politics and pedagogical theory are defined by not questioning social postulates and values, but treating them as given, asking how to achieve them. Conversely, in studying culture, pedagogy focuses on the methodological problems of education, i.e., on the methods of transmitting and adopting cultural content. It does not question the value criteria for choosing content, because they were defined socially, that is, outside of pedagogy. Pedagogical theory, therefore, takes on an unscientific character by narrowing its scope to the execution and implementation of socially defined goals, rather than questioning and creating new ones.

Recent findings in the social sciences, such as psychology, anthropology, and sociology, which also include education and upbringing in their research, increasingly point to deficiencies and inadequacies in the pedagogical approach to educational issues. Their most significant contributions relate to highlighting the value-based (cultural and ideological) aspects of education and pedagogical theory. The subject of research concerning upbringing and education is thus shifting increasingly from its pedagogical-theoretical, methodological, and institutional level to fundamental questions. These are axiological questions that determine how the entire institutional education system is implemented, and they precede the system's constitution. The value-based postulates on which it rests are the most important because the phenomenon and institutional implementation of educational theory and practice depend on them.

The Enlightenment myth, which attributed solely scientific and cultural character to every form of education, is refuted in practice. The view that democratization and mass education automatically entail the development of scientific and rational consciousness, as well as cultural development, can no longer be accepted unconditionally. Ideological education precisely prevents the realization of both. According to the ruling elite's view, ideological education inevitably relies on political rather than scientific or cultural principles. As such, it manifests as fundamentally unscientific and anti-cultural. Since the goals of this educational model are primarily political, all its structural elements, from pedagogical theory to curricula, are subordinated to its political interests and goals, dominating educational politics and neutralizing scientific and cultural ones as incompatible. Education becomes a means of achieving the political goals of the ruling political ideology, replacing science and culture, precisely because ideology was declared to be both science and culture. Pushing science and culture out of society and education, ideological education made their development impossible. Placing political interests above the scientific and cultural, such a political system blocks all avenues of social dynamics, gradually creating a 'network' of political education. Education itself has become a means, and the question of whose interests it will serve has always been a question of the centers of political power. To reduce the possibility

of manipulating education, it is crucial that it is moved away from politics and power centers and granted autonomy as a precondition of its scientific nature.

However, adhering to these ideals favors an ideologically oriented consciousness because the fundamental transformations of a social community begin with reforms in the education and military systems. If it is necessary to destroy a certain society, weaken its identity and independence, as well as the national consciousness of the people, then the approach is to dismantle these institutions by implementing various so-called 'reforms,' all in the name of overcoming conservatism, which should give way to modernization. Conversely, if the goal is to strengthen society, stabilize it, and increase cohesion, then positive reforms of these systems are undertaken.[8]

Pragmatic Pedagogical Activities

If we look more closely at the specific role that contemporary pedagogical activity plays, we will see that it is not limited to school instruction but represents the essence of today's social reality, insofar as it spreads pedagogical tendencies into other spheres, such as economics, administration, healthcare, etc. In general, we understand modern pedagogical activity as a way of achieving certain idealized goals (education, behavior, conduct, knowledge) based on rational principles, which cannot be achieved through an immediate formative process because there are always unplanned deviations. The reason for this lies in the fact that pedagogical activity is based on an ideal that does not consider the side effects it produces. Put simply, we have some imaginary notions of what a person should look like, whom we strive for, relying on pedagogical sciences, which ensure the repeatability of that aspiration and thus legitimacy, even though they can never fully capture the very essence of a person, just as there is no absolute knowledge in the form of final knowledge about one's own conditions of action. What remains absent from the discourse on pedagogy is its blind ideological stain.[9] The process of shaping the individual as a pedagogical indicator is embedded in the very social structure, which is why it is possible to speak of 'pedagogization of society.'

Since society is shaped by an ideological framework, when we form opinions, we are simultaneously expressing our stance on education, and vice versa. If the core of our opinions is embedded in formal education, the fantasy of everyday educational practice is formed through the practical integration of individual curriculum contents, plans, strategies, and techniques in the classroom, as well as the time and space for implementing these strategies and techniques, and the goals and methods of evaluation. The concept of a knowledge society marks such ac-

8 Uzelac, M. (2019). Nauka i stvarnost, *Filozofija, obrazovanje i smisao moderne kulture*, Sarajevo: Univerzitet u Istočnom Sarajevu

9 Pobežin Roš, V. (2017). *Pedagoška ideologija ali kdo zdaj tu uživa?,* Ljubljana: Zbirka Analecta

tive, emancipatory efforts to acquire new knowledge in everyday discourse. In it, every individual's knowledge is open to revision and enhancement because modern society is structured to allow universal, equal, and inclusive access to knowledge. This is evident from the availability of data and information, yet despite unlimited possibilities, we usually access only familiar, known, and ideologically reproduced information. It is also assumed that during the transfer of knowledge, misunderstandings about the value and meaning of information do not arise, along with related factors such as the flourishing of certain positions, the dominance of current learning theories, and methods that ensure the most unobstructed access to information.[10] This matrix is based on existing knowledge in a particular field and requires only a tailored strategy.

The traditional function of teaching is to impart fundamental knowledge, as reflected in the word's original meaning. In Latin, the activity of teaching, lecturing, is called *tradere*, *traditio* – transmission or tradition. The difference between the traditional and modern educational processes lies in their perspectives and starting points, or divergences regarding the way authority is subordinated. While traditional education is characterized by generality, which is external to the individual (authority of position), modern education is primarily characterized by immediacy and individualization, where authority is internalized (the qualities of the individual). Contemporary educational theories are based on the idea of reform in the form of democratization of education: from the idea of students as obedient listeners to the idea of students as 'critical interlocutors in dialogue with teachers,' thereby not only becoming equal participants but also concretizing 'critical consciousness' in this way.[11]

Modern theories of education contain a 'pedagogical addition' that imprints partial provisions onto the general field of education. But it ought to be the opposite! The goal is for the general educational process to shape what is common to every person. The famous German philosopher G.W.F. Hegel explained the purpose of education through a dichotomy: educated individuals succeed in everything, and others do not, and they do not reveal their partialities, while the uneducated are characterized by their inability to grasp the general properties of things.[12]

10 Davies. B., Bansel, P. (2007). Neoliberalism and education. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, vol. 20, no.3, p. (247-259)

11 Giroux, H. (2013). Ideologija i ljudsko djelovanje u procesu obrazovanja, u: Ivana Perica (ed.), *Političkopedagoško: Janusova lica pedagogije*, Zagreb, p. 11-35.

12 Vranešević G. (2021). Formalna strana obrazovanja, *Filozofska istraživanja,* vol. 41, no. 4., p. 781–792

"Self-Fulfillment" of Arbitrariness

Modern pedagogy discusses education for freedom, which we can achieve only through our own minds. The principle of freedom in contemporary discourse is examined in terms of immediate (co)decision-making in the educational process. In this context, the teacher rejects the authority of the bearer of truth and establishes a collaborative relationship with students during the critical evaluation of knowledge, which, in educational discourse, is reflected as an imperative of personal self-fulfillment, free self-realization, and the acquisition of new knowledge. Pedagogical guidelines, such as 'education for life, self-fulfillment, enlightenment,' and similar views, are based on an ideological trap or deception, as they aim to establish themselves as measures to stimulate the inherent creative potential of individuals, who are considered the anchor of free expression, which is arbitrariness.

Historically, the paradigm of cultivating freedom takes a different form, as reflected in the question posed by German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804): how do we cultivate freedom through coercion? Entering culture itself, as Kant warns us, is inaugurated by discipline. It is a fundamentally simple idea: those who are not disciplined are wild.[13] The individual is not an independent and self-aware subject capable of shaping their own destiny, but rather a subject who places faith in things they do not yet understand, because they conclude that the teacher knows, which is why they are willing to endure certain effort and discipline without prior questioning of the method or material.

Education is what distinguishes a human from an animal, which instinctively 'substitutes' for what a person must learn. Discipline prevents a person from deviating from humanity through instinct and remaining in savagery. It is crucial in developing and practicing spiritual strength and is a prerequisite for morality.[14] Through guidance (*paidagogos*), we cultivate the individual, removing cruelty and suppressing narrow-mindedness.

Conclusion

Today, no matter how justified the demands for 'versatile knowledge' may seem, behind these demands lie long-established schemes based on Plato's understanding of the three dimensions of the human soul: rational, passionate, and heartfelt, which correspond to an education with logical, ethical, and aesthetic aspects. Thus, we arrive at the question of the role of logic, ethics, and aesthetics, and the claim that these three disciplines determine the content of human education,

13 Vranešević G. (2021). Formalna strana obrazovanja, *Filozofska istraživanja,* vol. 41, no. 4., p. 781–792

14 Kant, I. (1991). *Vaspitanje dece*, Beograd: BATA

and that what should be educated in a person is the soul, but in such a way that their spirit (heart) is properly nurtured. Education is primarily related to human behavior and the way one interacts within the human community and has an intersubjective character. Education is connected to the level of knowledge and possession of knowledge about the world within the world in which each subject is immersed. Due to its complexity and the richness of phenomena it manifests in recent times, education is the subject of a special science—pedagogy. Its role boils down to creating functional procedures that can be used in any system of socialization and upbringing, and it appears as an instrumental, pragmatically oriented ideology.

The question now is: can education be de-ideologized, be stripped of all philosophical, social, political, moral, religious, and similar ideas inherent to the period to which it belongs, or the culture that is part of it and is confirmed within it, and remain education? If education is defined even generally as a process of humanization, the answer to this question is negative. Because no person would not, in one way or another, recognize themselves as human precisely through some element of culture or through some forms of general ideas and concepts, in that case, de-ideologization of education is only possible through ideological tolerance of mutually different approaches to education. Ultimately, only a creative mind can surpass the ideological horizon of the world to which we belong in time with new, epochal ideas, opening a new era, a new ideological period, or a period of a new ideology, but not a period without general ideas and concepts: a period without culture.

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BOSNIAN STUDIES
SARAJEVO
1

ELMA HURUZ MEMOVIĆ

The Pluralization and Democratization of Bosnia and Herzegovina: The Significance and Role of Alija Izetbegović

UDC 32 (497.6): 329 SDA (497.6) „1990“
32 Izetbegović, A.

DOI 10.47999/bos.2025.9.2.68-81
Review scientific article

pages 68-81

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Summary

The paper analyzes the political pluralization and democratization of Bosnia and Herzegovina at the end of the 20th century, with a particular focus on Alija Izetbegović's (1925-2003) role in transforming the state from a single-party socialist system into a democratic one. Political pluralization, understood as the introduction of multiple political parties and free political competition, was a key element of the democratic transition. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, however, it was strongly marked by ethnic divisions and the breakup of Yugoslavia.

The founding of the Party of Democratic Action (Stranka demokratske akcije, SDA) *in 1990, along with the first multi-party elections, began the institutional transition towards democracy. Izetbegović argued for a sovereign, multiethnic and civic state based on dialogue, compromise and tolerance, striving to harmonize Bosniak national interests with the idea of communal life of all the peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina.*

The signing of the Dayton Peace Accords in 1995 ended the Bosnian War, but it established a complex system of administration founded on an ethnic division of power. Even though the Agreement guaranteed peace, it also limited the state's functioning and complicated further democratization. It therefore affirmed the paradox of post-conflict societies in which stability rests on the institutionalization of divisions. The paper argues that democratization in Bosnia and Herzegovina was a non-linear and incomplete process shaped by war, ethnic conflicts, and complex institutional arrangements.

Keywords: Alija Izetbegović, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Pluralization, democratization, Party of Democratic Action (SDA)

Introductory remarks

A democratic transition is a term used to describe the period during which changes occur on the path from an authoritarian (usually socialist) regime to a democratic system, encompassing the implementation of principles such as liberalization, equality, freedom, and civil rights. The changes can range from intense to insignificant, meaning that transitioning societies undergo these processes unevenly, with varying degrees of advancement, even though regression is possible in certain cases.[1] American political scientist Samuel Huntington (1927-2008) describes the process through three phases: "(1) the end of an authoritarian regime; (2) the installation of a democratic regime; and (3) the consolidation of the demo-

1 Hague, Rod; Harrop, Martin, *Uporedna vladavina i politika: uvod*, Beograd: Fakultet političkih nauka Univerziteta u Beogradu, 2014.

*ELMA HURUZ MEMOVIĆ

cratic regime."[2] In this process, the party system, which is usually single-party, after the re/affirmation of full civic political rights, becomes a multi-party system with defined election laws and other democratic institutions and procedures.

Political pluralization is one of the pillars of democracy and a key element in the transition from authoritarian to democratic systems. Political pluralization denotes the process of introducing and strengthening multiple political parties and ideologies that freely participate in political life.[3] It opposes the monopolization of power and the single-party system, and it represents the condition for legitimate rule, increasing the responsibility of political actors to the electorate. On the other hand, political pluralism enables political forces to negotiate and find compromise solutions, which contributes to stability and the building of consensus around key questions in a state. Finally, pluralism ensures that diverse social and minority groups can organize politically and represent their interests, thereby contributing to wider social cohesion and conflict resolution. In that sense, American political scientist Robert Dahl (1915-2014) stresses two connotations of the term pluralism: "conflictive pluralism," which maintains long-lasting social divisions, and "organizational pluralism," which refers to the multiplicity and independence of organizations that should be considered to characterize conflicts within a society.[4] Pluralism is institutionalized when there is consensus among all relevant social groups on the need to institutionalize the right of difference, which grounds democracy as a space in which different groups or individuals gain legitimacy to compete within a legally regulated race and earn the electorate's trust.

Nearly an entire decade before the so-called pluralistic revolution in Eastern Europe, requests for political pluralization emerged in the former Yugoslavia. So, in the early 1980s, the process of establishing civil society began, especially in the larger cities such as Belgrade, Zagreb, Ljubljana, and Sarajevo.

> Of note was Slovenia, where the concept of civil society as a form of widespread social opposition and basis for the renewal of political pluralism emerged. Unfortunately, in the other republics of the second Yugoslavia, there was little understanding of the importance of this idea. That was perhaps the final chance for more serious democratic political reforms of the Yugoslav society.[5]

Pavlović cites the role of Yugoslav leader Josip Broz Tito (1892-1980) as the major reason for the failure of comprehensive democratic reforms, despite the fa-

2 Huntington, Samuel P., *The Third Wave – Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991, p. 35

3 Dahl, Robert A., Pluralism *Revisited*, Comparative Politics, Vol. 10. No. 2, 1978, 191-203.; Schmitter, Philippe C., Karl, Terry Lynn, *What democracy is...and is not*, Journal of Democracy, Vol. 2, Issue 3, 1991, 75-88

4 Dahl, Robert A., Pluralism *Revisited*, Comparative Politics, Vol. 10. No. 2, 1978, p. 191-192.

5 Pavlović, Vukašin, *Država i društvo: studija iz političke sociologije*, Beograd: Čigoja štampa, 2011., p. 367-368

vorable international and domestic conditions. Tito lived a long life, and at every step halted every idea of political pluralization.

> That was seen clearly in the examples of the 'roads affair' (*cestna/cestovna afera*) in Slovenia, the suppression of the Croatian Spring (*hrvatsko proljeće/masovni pokret/MASPOK*), and the removal of philosophers and liberals in Serbia. As there was no possibility of introducing a multi-party system, political pluralization occurred perversely through the federalization and fragmentation of the Communist Party (*Savez komunista Jugoslavije*, SKJ) along republican lines.[6]

The author highlights that had democratic political reform been completed ten years before, the tragic Wars of Yugoslav Succession (1991-2001) could have been avoided.

This paper will use case studies, comparative analysis, and discourse analysis, with a focus on Alija Izetbegović's authentic positions. The goal of the paper is to explain how the processes of pluralization and democratization in Bosnia unfolded, what the politics of Alija Izetbegović were, and how his conservative, Islamic worldview determined his relationship to the state and society.

Political Pluralization and Democratization in Bosnia and Herzegovina

The process of pluralization and democratization in Bosnia and Herzegovina at the end of the 20th century was one of the most significant and challenging periods in the country's modern history. For the Muslims/Bosniaks of Bosnia, the 1990s were the years of the third Bosniak-Muslim Renaissance. The first renaissance, in the early 20th century, was led by intellectuals Safvet-beg Bašagić and Edhem Mulabdić, and the second, in the 1970s, was led by the Muslim communist intelligentsia and both were primarily top-down.

> Both earlier renaissances were mostly, if not exclusively, in the realms of culture, while the third moved from culture and nation into politics, i.e., from the intelligentsia to the people. It was forceful, dynamic, and public. With it, the Bosniaks emerged onto the modern stage of history with demands for their freedom, freedom for their people, faith, and state. Alija Izetbegović led it.[7]

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6 Ibidem.
The 'Road Affair' was a financial conflict in 1969 over the construction of roads in SR Slovenia, the building of roads towards Western nations, or investing the funds in the development of less developed republics, and the highway of Brotherhood and Unity. Tito's intervention halted the westward road construction. The Croatian Spring was a reform movement in Croatia in the late 1960s and early 1970s that aimed to decentralize the Yugoslav federation, with a focus on Croatia's position, as well as on economic reform. It too was suppressed with Tito's personal intervention.

7 Filandra, Šaćir, *Bošnjačka politika u XX stoljeću*, Sarajevo: Bošnjačka zajednica kulture "Preporod", 2023., p. 430-431

An important characteristic of democratization is the creation or reaffirmation of new or repressed collective identities, especially political or national identities. The manifestation of this dimension of democratization in Bosnia was most evident in the freeing of ethno-national identification.

The role of Alija Izetbegović in transforming BiH from a single-party socialist society into a pluralistic, democratic, and internationally recognized country was multi-layered and historically significant. Izetbegović, as the first president of the Presidency of the independent Bosnia and Herzegovina and a noted intellectual, left a deep mark on the country's political and social life. His approach to addressing complex ethnic and cultural questions in Bosnia and Herzegovina was founded on ideas of tolerance, compromise, dialogue, and respect for multiculturalism. He stressed how "tolerance is the basic measure of civilization […]."[8] These values were precisely key for maintaining peace and building a stable society in which different people and religious communities could co-exist. Even though Izetbegović was a conservative, both in politics and in Islamic ethics, he advocated pluralism, clearly rejecting exclusivity and narrow-mindedness. Bosnia and Herzegovina has always been a place of encounter of multiple cultures, religious and ethnic identities. Izetbegović knew this theoretically, and he practiced it politically. In that complex mosaic, Alija Izetbegović recognized not just the challenges but also the vast benefits that diversity brings, connecting him to Islamic culture and tradition.

> In Islamic culture, 'the national' (*nacionalno,* noun) is taken as a natural fact of belonging to a people, thus neither as a handicap nor as an advantage. As it is known, Islam ensured the rich and layered life of different cultures and nationalities.[9]

Following the death of Josip Broz Tito, amid the deepening political and economic crisis in Yugoslavia, demands for multi-party politics and democratization emerged. Alija Izetbegović, known for his work *The Islamic Declaration (Islamska deklaracija,* 1970) and for his earlier political persecution, stepped onto the political scene as the founder and leader of the Party of Democratic Action (SDA). In 1990, the party became a political platform for the Bosniak people, but it also publicly advocated for a democratic multiethnic Bosnia, in which all peoples would have equal rights. Izetbegović clearly favored democracy, the rule of the people, and the republican model, as reflected in the SDA's program orientation. Speaking for the *Oslobodjenje* (*The Liberation*) newspapers in 1990, Izetbegović claimed firmly, "Nothing can connect us better than a civic republic, because we cannot make Bosnia into a nation-state."[10]

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8 Izetbegović, Alija, *Doba znanja i strpljenja: intervjui 1996.-2003*.; knjiga 006, Sarajevo: OKO, 2005b, p. 92

9 Izetbegović, Alija, *Bosna je velika tajna: intervjui 1989.-1995*, knjiga 005, Sarajevo: OKO, 2005a, p. 75.

10 Ibidem, p. 60.

The founding of the SDA and the first multi-party elections in November 1990 marked the beginning of real political pluralism in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Along the SDA, other national parties entered political life, namely the Serb Democratic Party (SDS, *Srpska demokratska stranka*), and the Croatian Democratic Community (HDZ BiH, *Hrvatska demokratska zajednica*). The specificity of political parties forming in Bosnia and Herzegovina lies in the fact that their founders are former dissidents, or 'victims' of the former socialist regime. Those who were once persecuted have now become an important factor in all political and social events. We can say that it was precisely these dissidents who initiated and drove the democratic processes that brought about political pluralism and the development of civil society.

In the first multi-party elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1990, Alija Izetbegović was elected president of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, making him the country's highest political representative. From entering the political arena, Izetbegović demonstrated political moderation, seeking to reach a compromise and respect political opponents. At the same time, the values of Islamic concepts of governance, such as social justice, equality, and solidarity, shaped his attitude toward citizens.[11] These elections marked the formal end of the one-party system in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the beginning of democratic pluralism, although political tensions among ethnic groups remained pronounced. Despite the growing tensions, Izetbegović clearly indicated immediately after the elections that only through democratic and reasoned dialogue can an agreement be

> sought and achieved on all essential issues of common life and on a new, more appropriate organization of the Yugoslav community. Therefore, I also said that living together in the Yugoslav space is not only possible but necessary and inevitable.[12]

Political pluralism in Bosnia and Herzegovina had a broad base from the outset. Already in 1990, there were 41 registered political parties, while the first multi-party elections, held on November 18, 1990, for the Assembly of the SR BiH, had 15 parties, 11 of which became parliamentary. More than 85% of voters supported the national parties (SDA, SDS, HDZ), and voting patterns matched national identities. Seeing as no party won a clear majority, the winning national parties established a form of cohabitation and partnership. However, because the parties' programs on various important matters of state were so different, if not contradictory, the relationship was not harmonious; it further destabilized the political situation.

11 Fejzić, Elvis*, Ideološka i politička misao Alije Izetbegovića*, DHS 2 (28), 2025., p. 6 and p.28

12 Izetbegović, Alija, *Bosna je velika tajna: intervjui 1989.-1995*, knjiga 005, Sarajevo: OKO, 2005a, p. 101

The existence of numerous political parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is even more pronounced than in 1990, and the fact that the number of registered political entities now runs into the hundreds, are not in themselves guarantees of stability and the development of civil society. Political 'hyper pluralism' often slows the development of democracy and a free civil society, while frequently generating pathological phenomena, such as corruption, nepotism, the general control of all public enterprises, and the appointment of 'suitable' rather than qualified individuals to responsible positions. The party pluralism that was supposed to ensure the expansion of democracy in Bosnia and Herzegovina ultimately gave rise to a form of party rule characterized by control and dominance of political parties over all spheres of social life and the free existence of individuals as citizens.

The Founding of the Party of Democratic Action (SDA)

At the end of the 1980s and into the 1990s, the socio-political situation in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was exceptionally turbulent, yet also trending towards liberalization and democratization, as early 1990 saw multi-party elections in Slovenia and Croatia. The elections saw the victory of democratic powers, marking the end of communist rule. The Party of Democratic Action (SDA) was founded on May 26, 1990, at a time when the communist single-party system in BiH (and Yugoslavia) was weakening, and the SDA was one of the first national parties in Bosnia, playing a key role in facilitating multipartyism. Alija Izetbegović founded the SDA with his colleagues as a political party that represented the interests of the Bosniaks (then officially dubbed Muslims). Still, it also declared itself as a democratic party. In a 1996 interview, Izetbegović explained the specificity and program of the party:

> According to its membership composition, the SDA is a national party, but according to its program, i.e., what it teaches its membership, the SDA is a real democratic party. It is devoted to the freedom of the human, human rights, political freedoms in society, freedom of the media, and opposition to censorship, dictatorships, cults of personality, etc. I think the SDA has proven that to be the case in every instance, of course, with the limitations of war and broader historical conditions. Can a national party be a democratic party? Let us leave that for a future academic discussion. I think it can.[13]

What was new in the context of reaffirming multi-party politics was the national party as a model of political organization representing the interests of a single nation. Although at the very beginning of political organization in Bosnia and Herzegovina under Austro-Hungarian rule, the dominant model of political rep-

13 Izetbegović, Alija, *Doba znanja i strpljenja: intervjui 1996.-2003.*; knjiga 006, Sarajevo: OKO, 2005b, p. 61

resentation was confessional, the emerging national movements began to represent the interests of confessions/nations. Italian Political Scientist Giovanni Sartori (1924-2017) believes that, in a party system with a larger number of parties belonging to the same political 'milieu,' and assuming the existing political system is legitimate and operates according to its rules, we cannot say that it is fragmented along ideological lines. Usually, such party systems are the product of a segmented, multi-ethnic, or multi-confessional society.[14] The political system of Bosnia and Herzegovina, defined by the Dayton Peace Agreement, and the existing consociational model of democracy, have conditioned the further strengthening of ethnic division as the dominant social division and the hardened institutionalization of segmented pluralism.

An important component of the Party of Democratic Action was Islam as an expression of the spiritual content of the national identity of Muslims (Bosniaks) and as a source of morality and ethics. In a monolithic, officially atheist political and public environment, this focus on religious principles and ethos was often perceived as a threat to the existing set of values and the political order based on 'brotherhood and unity.' Throughout his career, the fundamental political principles of Izetbegović as a politician have been respect for, and promotion of democracy and freedom of expression. In his written work, these principles have been viewed as prerequisites for a stable social order. At the same time, they have also been a stumbling block in discussions of Izetbegović's concrete impact on democratizing society and fostering freedoms in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In other words, his opponents' public discourse imposed a dilemma regarding Izetbegović's pan-Islamic habitus. This 'political' Islam, allegedly, had threatening connotations for non-Muslims and represented an antithesis to democracy. Essentially, their idea was to highlight the incommensurability of Islam and democracy, which is a dubious and biased reading of this relationship.[15] However, Izetbegović answered the criticisms and institutions clearly:

> The Party's program only mentions religion as a human right, and we will insist on that right. We will also demand the return of confiscated properties to the religious communities, not just the Islamic, but for the other ones as well. We have repeatedly and expressly highlighted that we are in favor of a civic republic and that such a republic should be built together with our fellow Serb and Croat citizens.[16]

According to Izetbegović, the idea of democracy and republicanism was not in contradiction with the idea and practice of basic human rights, even the rights of national belonging and religious affiliation. This novel approach was received

14 Sartori, Giovanni, *Stranke i stranački sustavi*, Zagreb: Politička kultura, 2002., p. 164.

15 Mulaosmanović, Admir, *Iskušenje opstanka: Izetbegovićevih deset godina: 1990.-2000.;* Sarajevo: autor, 2017, p. 212.

16 Izetbegović, Alija, Bosna *je velika tajna: intervjui 1989.-1995*, knjiga 005, Sarajevo: OKO, 2005a, p. 75.

with reservation by some segments of the public because it represented a radical departure from the inherited socialist ideology and socialization.

The Vision of a Civic State and Democratic Challenges

Izetbegović's political philosophy was rooted in the idea that Bosnia and Herzegovina should be a single, multiethnic state in which the rights of all people and citizens would be respected. He strongly advocated for an independent and sovereign Bosnia in which all nations would have equal rights. He highlighted in his rhetoric the need for communal life and cooperation of all the people of BiH. He also geopolitically situated Bosnia as a confluence of East and West, with the belief and request that its identitarian specifics can be articulated democratically,

> Bosnia is a European country. I am a Muslim, but also European. I feel good to be both. I am much like Bosnia. She belongs to the East and the West. She is an interesting country, one on the so-called Great Boundary. The line that runs between the two worlds, the East and West, wandered across Bosnia for many hundreds of years, creating what we call the Bosnian Spirit. The basic characteristic of that spirit is tolerance, the ability to live with someone different from you.[17]

Along those lines, Sartori unpacks the term pluralism through three levels of meaning: cultural, social, and political.

> At the first level, we can speak of a *pluralistic culture* in the same sense that includes the concepts of secularized and homogeneous culture. A pluralistic culture emphasizes a worldview that, essentially, holds that a good life is made up of diversity rather than similarity, opposition rather than unanimity, and change rather than immutability.[18]

Despite all attempts to achieve a compromise, Izetbegović's vision of an independent Bosnia and Herzegovina was often critiqued by Serb and Croat political elites, who preferred either a rump Yugoslavia, national autonomies, or secession of parts of Bosnia. At a time when nationalism in neighboring Yugoslav republics was on the rise, Izetbegović balanced his people's national interests with a commitment to civic principles. However, he always expressed his preference for a democratically profiled civic state, stating how

> BiH is the state of its citizens and sovereign peoples – Muslims, Serbs, and Croats. This new form of Bosnia and Herzegovina is, at the same time, a step towards a civic definition of it while preserving its national character. Therefore, it is a dual definition that affirms the citizen without neglecting the nation. In Bosnia, both are needed.[19]

17 Ibidem, p. 281.

18 Sartori, Giovanni, *Stranke i stranački sustavi*, Zagreb: Politička kultura, 2002., p. 26.

19 Izetbegović, Alija, Bosna *je velika tajna: intervjui 1989.-1995*, knjiga 005, Sarajevo: OKO, 2005a, p. 37.

On the international stage, Izetbegović was the leader of all of BiH, advocating for its sovereignty and democratic makeup.

However, the process of democratization was seriously damaged by ethnic tensions and mounting pressures to divide the state along the lines of surrounding nationalisms. It was, above all, Serb nationalism that, in the end, and with arms, seriously opposed Izetbegović's vision of state and society. The Independence Referendum, held on February 29 and March 1, 1992, saw 2,067,969 million voters out of 3,253,847, or 64,14%. It was a democratic act that resulted in the international recognition of BiH, but also the start of the war, as the Serb political representatives boycotted the referendum.

> Following the successful referendum and the recognition of Bosnia and Herzegovina by the European Community, the Serb Democratic Party (SDS) responded by beginning the war, which had all the elements of an aggression by the joint forces of the Milosevic regime, the inherited Yugoslav People's Army, and paramilitary formations organized by the Serb Democratic Party.[20]

Izetbegović was a key figure leading the referendum for the independence of BiH in March 1992.

> The referendum on the sovereignty and independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina on March 1, 1992, marks the culmination of Izetbegović's politics. Statehood, independence, and sovereignty of a Bosnian state were confirmed as the goal of his and the entirety of Bosniak politics.[21]

During the 1992-1995 war, democratic processes were suspended, but the institutions remained in place. Izetbegović remained the head of state and sought to preserve international support for Bosnia and Herzegovina's integrity. During the wartime events, he remained the head of the Presidency and represented BiH in peace talks. Even though it was formally preserved, the functioning of the democratic order was complicated by wartime circumstances. Still, Izetbegović continued to promote the idea of BiH as a democratic state for all its citizens, despite war crimes, ethnic divisions, and political pressures inside and outside the country. With that in mind, the Platform of the Presidency of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina for Action in Conditions of War, which reads,[22]

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20 Pejanović, Mirko, *Država Bosna i Hercegovina i demokratija*, Sarajevo: University Press, 2015., p. 91.

21 Filandra, Šaćir, *Bošnjačka politika u XX stoljeću*, Sarajevo: Bošnjačka zajednica kulture "Preporod", 2023., p. 440.

22 The Platform was a product of the oppositional, civic block of parties (SK-SDP, MBO, SRS, LS, and DSS) to fill the Presidency of RBiH with opposition party candidates and to define a political program document with which the Presidency of RBiH could express its position on the question: "For what state of Bosnia and Herzegovina is the Presidency of RBiH fighting for; on what bases is the people's defense front built on; how can engaging the international community bring a peaceful political resolution to the war; how to strengthen and maintain multiethnic trust

> Bosnia and Herzegovina is a sovereign and independent state of citizens of constituent and equal nations – Muslims, Serbs, Croats, and other nations who live there. The Republic is constituted on principles of a civic parliamentary democracy, which means a market economy, party pluralism, and human rights and freedoms.[23]

The platform also states that

> The three constitutive peoples in BiH, Muslims, Serbs, and Croats, have national interests, but also interests rooted in a centuries-long tradition of living together. Political life in BiH is based on the equality of the Muslims, Serbs, and Croats, and the members of other nations and nationalities in the affairs of state.[24]

Bosnian Academic Mirko Pejanović, member of the wartime Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, believes that the meaning of the Platform of the Presidency of RBiH in a wider historical context

> marked the founding goals of the general, civic and multiethnic front for defending the idea of the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which in April and May of 1992, based on the result of the Independence referendum, got international recognition of the European Community, USA, and many countries around the world, and was soon after inducted into the OUN (May 22, 1992). The international recognition of Bosnia and Herzegovina by the European Union and leading world powers marked a new historical age in the state's existence.[25]

The Dayton Accords: End of the War and Start of a New Political Order

The postwar period, marked by the signing of the Dayton Peace Accords, opened a new phase, with the institutionalization of peace alongside the limitation of the state's democratic functioning. The Dayton Constitutional Order established a complex system of dividing power based on the ethnic principle, which, in theory, can be seen as a compromise between stability and efficiency. The model, even though it stopped the violence, froze the conflict and made it more difficult to develop an integrated political community, affirming the paradox of post-conflict democracies – peace is often achieved by institutionalizing divisions that

and intercommunal life; how to prevent ethnic division of Bosnia and Herzegovina. (Pejanović, Mirko, *Država Bosna i Hercegovina i demokratija*, Sarajevo: University Press, 2015., p. 49.)

23 Platforma za djelovanje Predsjedništva Republike Bosne i Hercegovine u ratnim uslovima, available at: https://www.alijaizetbegovic.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Platforma-za-djelovanje-Predsjednistva-Republike-Bosne-i-Hercegovine-u-ratnim-uslovima_26_06_1992-FINAL.pdf

24 Ibidem.

25 Pejanović, Mirko, Država *Bosna i Hercegovina i demokratija*, Sarajevo: University Press, 2015., p. 50-51

make democratization more difficult in the long term. Izetbegović was one of three signatories of the Dayton Peace Agreement in 1995, which brought peace, but also established a complex internal structure based on the ethnic division of power. Even though the Dayton Accords ended the conflict, many viewed it as a limitation on the development of true democracy, as it formalized divisions among nations and entities.

Izetbegović signed the Dayton Agreement as the representative of BiH, bringing peace but also institutionalizing the ethnic division of power. Izetbegović was aware of this and highlighted that the Dayton Agreement was

> A delicate balancing act between the positive and negative, acceptable and hard-to-accept elements for each of the signatories. It was a colossal compromise, in which nothing can change without everything going back to the start. (Izetbegović, 2005b:227).

Even though Dayton stabilized BiH, many believe it limited further democratization because of the complex constitutional system. However, Izetbegović believed that Bosnia and Herzegovina could improve its internal cohesion and integrate more effectively if it energetically embarked on European integration.

> Gradual inclusion of BiH into the European Union would strongly boost internal integration in BiH, as it would discourage the powers that hope to divide it, both within BiH and outside it. Internal and external integration of BiH are mutually conditioned processes that should be seen as such.[26]

Izetbegović saw Euro-Atlantic integration as the only possible and desirable direction and goal of Bosnian Herzegovinian state policy, as it situates Bosnia and Herzegovina and its citizens within the European civilizational space to which they belong, given their history and values.

Concluding Remarks

The process of pluralization and democratization in Bosnia and Herzegovina at the end of the 20th century exemplifies a complex transition from an authoritarian single-party system to a formally democratic order amid ethnic tensions, the breakup of Yugoslavia, and armed conflict. From the perspective of theories of transitional democracies, democratization in BiH did not follow a linear model of consolidation; rather, it was marked by simultaneous processes of liberalization, state collapse, and war mobilization. In that context, Alija Izetbegović's political action can be interpreted as an attempt to establish a normative democratic state grounded in political pluralism, civic legitimacy, and multiethnic coexistence. His engagement confirms the thesis that democratization in post-conflict and multieth-

26 Izetbegović Alija, *Dani hladnog i gorkog mira: govori 1996.-2003*., knjiga 008, Sarajevo: OKO, 2005c, p. 180.

nic societies does not depend solely on institutional reforms, but also on political elites' ability to articulate an inclusive identitarian framework for the state.

A particularly significant element of Izetbegović's political discourse is the insistence on dialogue and compromise as the fundamental mechanisms for managing conflict. In a theoretical sense, this aligns with deliberative approaches to democracy that emphasize rational communication and negotiation as key to the legitimacy of political decisions. However, the empirical context of Bosnia and Herzegovina, characterized by ethno-national mobilization and violence, limited the possibility of implementing such a model, demonstrating that democratic norms cannot be sustainable without a minimal consensus about the state itself.

The period from 1992 to 1995 represented a radical discontinuity in the democratization process, but it was also a test of the political idea of a multi-ethnic state for Izetbegović. Despite the suspension of regular democratic procedures, the institutional continuity of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina was formally preserved, and the political narrative of a sovereign and pluralistic state was maintained as a legitimizing framework of resistance. This suggests that in times of crisis, the legitimacy of authority often relies on normative goals and symbolic values rather than procedural democratic standards.

The political legacy of Alija Izetbegović can be understood as a normative project aimed at preserving a state based on pluralism and equality, under extremely unfavorable historical circumstances. His politics did not lead to complete democratic consolidation. Still, it laid the foundational ideological and institutional frameworks for modern Bosnia and Herzegovina, leading to the conclusion that the stability of multi-ethnic states does not stem from homogenization, but from the ability to institutionalize differences and transform them into mechanisms of political cooperation. The success of this process depends on further development of political culture, strengthening institutions, and building trust among social groups. The ideas of dialogue, compromise, and mutual respect remain a relevant theoretical and practical framework for understanding not only the past but also the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

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BOSNIAN STUDIES
SARAJEVO
1

ALMIR GRABOVICA

The Role of the Serb Democratic Party in Preparing the Aggression Against and Occupation of Rogatica

UDC 32 (497.6): 329 SDS (497.6 Rogatica) "1992"

DOI 10.47999/bos.2025.9.2.82-94
Review scientific article

pages 82-94

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Summary

From its founding on July 12, 1990, the Serb Democratic Party of Bosnia and Herzegovina (SDS BiH) held positions against the concept of a sovereign and independent Bosnia and Herzegovina amid the rapid dissolution of Yugoslavia. Through its program, other documents, and its work in institutions, it argued exclusively for keeping Bosnia within the rump Yugoslavia. It had the support of a few other minor Serb-oriented parties, all of which held only a few seats in the Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the first multi-party elections in November 1990, the SDS won near-unanimous support among the Serb people in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Remaining in the rump Yugoslavia was the political option that the SDS represented in the Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina during discussions on the future status of the state, given that Yugoslavia's dissolution was underway. From its very beginning, the SDS embraced the strategy of explicit opposition, and even the prevention of any ideation and activities relating to the independent development of the statehood of Bosnia and Herzegovina. When it became clear that they could not stop the legal and legitimate steps toward an independent and sovereign Bosnia and Herzegovina, starting with the decision to hold an independence referendum, Serb political representatives in the Assembly, led by the SDS, left the Assembly and openly began creating parallel institutions. Even though before, they started certain steps to create Serb regions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, leaving state institutions accelerated the process. With the help of the JNA (Jugoslovenska narodna armija – *Yugoslav People's Army), the SDS began arming the Serb population and creating military formations. With this, they transitioned from political activism and carrying out political violence to carrying out military activity to break up Bosnia and Herzegovina from the inside. The fundamental goal of this paper, based on relevant sources and documentation, is to present the role of the municipal board of the SDS in Rogatica in the political and military preparation for the War of Aggression, and especially in the occupation of the town of Rogatica in 1992. The results demonstrate that the SDS in Rogatica was committed to carrying out political and military activities aiming at the occupation of the city, which resulted in mass and individual crimes against the Drina Basin* (Podrinje) *town's Bosniak population. The research utilizes all the key methods of scientific research. The hypothetical-deductive and comparative general scientific methods were applied inevitably. At the same time, data were obtained through content analysis of relevant documentation from various sources and through the case study method, in the specific example of the city of Rogatica in eastern Bosnia.*

Keywords: Politics, crimes, Bosnia and Herzegovina, The Serb Democratic Party of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Rogatica

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The Role of the Serb Democratic Party in Preparing the Aggression Against and Occupation of Rogatica

Introduction

Rogatica is a town and municipality in southeastern Bosnia and Herzegovina. Its neighboring municipalities are: Goražde, Rudo, Višegrad, Srebrenica, Vlasenica, Han Pijesak, Sokolac, and Pale. Until the Bosnian War (1992-1995), the municipality's area covered 664,37 km^2. With the War of Aggression waged against the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (1992-1995), the Greater Serbian project claimed the Drina Basin region to realize its project of slaughter, murder, and expulsion of the non-Serb population to realize an ethnically pure, Serb-inhabited area.

According to the 1991 census, the municipality of Rogatica has 21,978 inhabitants, of which 13,209 were Muslim (Bosniak), 8,391 were Serb, 19 were Croat, 186 were Yugoslav, and 173 people of other or unknown nationality.[1] Hence, Bonsniaks comprised most of the town's population. Before the first multiparty elections in November 1990, interethnic relations between the Bosniaks and Serbs were relatively good. However, as the dissolution of Yugoslavia progressed, especially with the declarations of independence by Croatia and Slovenia and the JNA's military intervention to prevent them, the situation in Bosnia and in Rogatica became more tense.[2] The awakened Greater Serbian rhetoric largely contributed to this through its media campaign, which aimed to mobilize the Serb people to achieve the Greater Serbian state unification project.[3] The mobilization meant activating the JNA reserves, which reached largely the Serb population, and a smaller number of Bosniaks. The SDS, formed on July 12, 1990, was central to this project. It actively participated in the mobilization and formation of military units and, later, in the arming of the Serb population, with the JNA's help. The disintegration of Yugoslavia was especially important, as November

1 *Nacionalni sastav stanovništva-Rezultati za Republiku po opštinama i naseljenim mjestima, Statistički bilten* broj 234, Državni zavod za statistiku Republike Bosne i Hercegovine, Sarajevo, p. 87.

2 The former commander of the Territorial Defense (*Teritoriajlna odbrana*, TO – gendermerie and military reserve forces of the Yugoslav Army, analogous to US National Guard) Mehmed Agić testified to the "strained relations" in Rogatica. He claimed: "One day in 1990, the Orthodox Church held a ceremony, after which it gained the status of a monastery. I attended the ceremony, which seemed normal at the time, and this was a big event for a small community like Rogatica. I was surprised to hear fiery sermons with a Serb-nationalist note. The sermons were held by Rogatica Serbs, as well as a group of Serbs from Belgrade. My Serb friends told me this group was a key part of the Chetnik movement in the Second World War. They spoke of Serb unity and a Greater Serbia. Their rhetoric about division was incomprehensible, as we were an integrated community." (International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), *Predmet Momčilo Krajišnik*, broj IT-00-39, Izjava svjedoka, Mehmed Agić, strp 2, 23. 01. 1999)

3 The first incident relating to the stated rhetoric from 1990 occurred in May 1991, when the representatives of the JNA, using force, stormed the municipal building and seized the military documentation from the Secretariat for People's Defense (*Sekretarijat za narodnu odbranu*). During the seizure, "in the ensuing ruckus, police officer Asim Alagic was wounded." (Agić, Nusret (1995). *Živi štitovi, Hronika desetog genocida nad Bošnjacima i počeci otpora naroda općine Rogatica*. Sarajevo: Hod, p. 25).

1990 saw the first multi-party elections in the Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Results of the First Multi-Party Elections and Constituting a Government in Rogatica

In 1990, Bosnia and Herzegovina was caught in a wave of pluralization amid exceptionally unfavorable socio-political conditions. The process, among other things, led to the formation of political parties. Political pluralization was made possible by the Assembly's amendments to the Constitution of the SR BiH. Preceding the formation of the political parties, discussions on "whether to allow the formation of parties on the ethnic principle. An interpretation of the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina followed."[4] It allowed for the formation of political parties along ethnic lines.

At the time, Bosnia was split into 109 territorial-administrative units. This internal organization was already formed "during the period of Socialist development from 1945 to 1990."[5] Rogatica was one of the 109 municipalities.

The first multiparty elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina, including Rogatica, were held on November 18, 1990. Three ethnic parties won an absolute majority (84% of the vote). These were the Party of Democratic Action (SDA – *Stranka demokratske akcije*), the Serb Democratic Party (SDS – *Srpska demokratska stranka*), and the Croatian Democratic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina (HDZ BiH – *Hrvatska demokratska zajednica Bosne i Hercegovine*).[6]

The main slogan of the SDS was "Serbs, you are allowed to be Serbs." The slogan echoed the party's main election platform that the Serbs in Bosnia and Herzegovina were endangered, without national and civil rights. Hence, the Serb Democratic Party presented itself as the party to enable the Serbs to become "authentic" Serbs. According to the logic, an "authentic" Serb was only one who was politically aligned with the SDS, which resulted in a fascist organization based on the principle of *one people, one party, one leader*.[7]

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4 Fink Hafner, Danica, and Mirko Pejanović (ed.) (2006). *Razvoj političkog pluralizma u Sloveniji i Bosni i Hercegovini*. Sarajevo/Ljubljana: Promocult, p. 47.

5 Kuka, Ermin (2021). *Uloga Srpske demokratske stranke u okupaciji Višegrada 1992. godine i počinjenju zločina nad Bošnjacima*, in "Prilozi," no. 50, p. 315-340.

6 Ibid, p. 315-340.

7 Arnautović, Suad (1996). *Izbori u Bosni i Hercegovini 1990. – analiza izbornog* procesa. Sarajevo: Promocult, p. 100.
SDS based its platform on preserving Yugoslavia, which meant preserving the domination and ensuring the assistance of the Serb people. Its program also underlined the preservation of the Yugoslav People's Army and cooperation with the Serbian Orthodox Church. Its main idea was keeping Bosnia within Yugoslavia, and if not the entirety of Bosnia, then a part that would be declared the territory of a Republic of the Serb People […] The Serb Democratic Party's program

U Vijeće općina Skupštine SR Bosne i Hercegovine iz Rogatice izabran je Senit Selimbegović, ispred Stranke demokratske akcije (SDA) (izborna jedinica Rogatica – 070).

The results of the municipal elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina were nearly identical to the republican election.

> In most municipalities, three ethnic political parties held an absolute or relative majority. Thus, already at the start of pluralization in Bosnia and Herzegovina, political pluralism was replaced by ethnic pluralism.[8]

Party affiliation of the Rogatica Municipal Assembly was as follows:[9]

		Parties that won seats in the Rogatica Municipal Assembly											
	Total	Union of Democratic Socialists	Croatian Democratic Community	Muslim Bosniak Organization	Party of Democratic Action	Serb Democratic Party	SK BiH – Socialist Democratic Party	Union of Reform Forces of Yugoslavia for BiH	SSO – Democratic Union BiH	Serb Renewal Movement	SK – SDP and DSS	Left Bloc Coalition	Rest
Rogatica	50	2	-	-	22	15	9	2	-	-	-	-	-

Table 1. Rogatica Municipal Assembly, divided by party.

The Rogatica Municipal Assembly had 50 seats. Five political parties won seats, including the Union of Democratic Socialists, the Party of Democratic Action, the Serb Democratic Party, the SK BiH (*Savez komunista BiH* – the League of

did not recognize Bosnia's statehood as a historical fact and social reality. This fact will become the basis of conflict between ethnic parties in 1991. In 1992, the basis of a war of aggression waged against Bosnia and Herzegovina by the Milosevic regime and the inherited JNA, along with elements of the Bosnian state (municipal police and militias) that the SDS annexed. (Pejanović, Mirko (2010). *Ogledi o državnosti i političkom razvoju Bosne i Hercegovine*. Sarajevo: TKD Šahinpašić, p. 87).

8 Kuka, Ermin (2021). *Uloga Srpske demokratske stranke u okupaciji Višegrada 1992. godine i počinjenju zločina nad Bošnjacima*, in "Prilozi", no. 50, p. 315-340.

9 Arnautović, Suad (1996). *Izbori u Bosni i Hercegovini 1990. – analiza izbornog* procesa. Sarajevo: Promocult, p. 118-120; Republički zavod za statistiku, *Statistički bilten*, br. 223, Sarajevo, juli 1991.

Communists of Bosnia and Herzegovina), and the Union of Reformist Forces of Yugoslavia for Bosnia and Herzegovina. Two ethnic political parties (SDA and SDS) won 74% of the seats, with 37 out of 50 municipal seats between them. With the results, in Rogatica, like in much of Bosnia, political pluralism was *de facto* supplanted by ethnic pluralism. Immediately following the two, surprisingly, was the SK BiH – Socialist Democratic Party with 9 seats.

According to data from the municipal council elections, the SDA won 6,023 votes in Rogatica, or 67.43%.[10]

Forming the local government based on the election results, with national parties securing convincing majorities, set in motion political fragmentation along ethnic lines. The process, which occurred in other municipalities across Bosnia, had long-lasting consequences for interethnic relations and was one of the first steps towards the dissolution of an integrated society.

Activities of the Rogatica SDS and its Role in Occupying the Town and in Crimes Against the Bosniaks

The heads of the municipal board of the Rogatica SDS were Sveto Veselinović, Predrag Malović, and Rajko Kušić.[11] According to a survey by the Municipal Board of the Rogatica SDS, the party's membership in the municipality numbered 1,500, with 520 having paid membership dues at the July 12, 1991, assembly. Furthermore, the Rogatica SDS had 10 local boards: Borike, Rogatica 1 and 2, Seljani, Kozići, Mesići, Berkovići, Osovo, Stjenice, and Gučevo. According to the survey, the Municipal Board of the Rogatica SDS received 45,000.00 Yugoslav Dinars from the municipal budget, 20,000.00 Dinars from donations, and 35,000.00 Dinars from memberships, and it also possessed a Niva 1600 car. Its main bodies were the Supervisory Board and Crisis HQ.[12]

Following the first multiparty elections in SR Bosnia, a government was formed in the Rogatica Municipality. In the division of power after the elections, the Municipal Committee of the Rogatica SDS controlled the following positions:[13]

- Revenue Management (Director)
- President of the Executive Committee of the Municipal Assembly
- Commandant of the SJB (*Stanica javne bezbjednosti* – Public Safety Unit)
- Commander of the Territorial Defense
- Public Prosecutor

10 *Službeni list SR BiH*, broj 42/90, od 19.12.1990. godine, p. 1245-1263.
11 *Arhiv Instituta za istraživanje zločina protiv čovječnosti i međunarodnog prava* (AIIZ), Inv. br. 03-1029/1.
12 AIIZ, Inv. br. 03-1029/2.
13 Ibid.

– Misdemeanor Judge

In the fall of 1991, in

> The Borike hotel, in the presence of noted officials, representatives of the JNA, and 'most reputable' SDS leaders from Pale and Sarajevo, Rajko (Milorad) Kušić was promoted to a Chetnik Voivode of the Rogatica region in a familiar Chetnik-Komitadji ceremony."[14]

Rajko Kušić was a famous member of the SDS and of the municipal assembly in Rogatica, confirmed in the cited documents.

> Motivated by the rank of voivode, he formed an armed unit in early 1992. It comprised 45-50 of the most extreme domestic Serbs, who completed courses in anti-commando operations at JNA training centers in Pazarić, Pančevo, and Han Pijesak, as specified by patriotically inclined JNA officers.[15]

The so-called Serb Autonomous Region of Romanija (SAO - *Srpska autonomna oblast Romanija*) was proclaimed in October 1991, centered in Sarajevo.

> During the session of the Assembly of the Serb Autonomous Region Romanija, held on October 22, 1991, in Sokolac, 'Decisions of the assembly of citizens of local communities and populated places from the areas of the municipalities of Rogatica, Olovo, Stari Grad, and Trnovo regarding the annexation to SAO Romanija have been accepted,' the 'Government of SAO Romanija' was established, and a 'temporary statute' was adopted, which defined that area as 'a democratic and autonomous unit within the framework of Serbian Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.'[16]

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14 Agić, Nusret (1995). *Živi štitovi, Hronika desetog genocida nad Bošnjacima i počeci otpora naroda općine Rogatica*. Sarajevo: Hod.

15 Komanda Prve Podrinjske lake pješadijske brigade Rogatica, *Analiza borbene gotovosti jedinice u periodu od izbijanja rata do 31.12.1992. godine,* p. pov. br. 01-382-1/93, od 25.02.1993; Grabovica, Almir (2023). *Ratni zločini nad rogatičkim Bošnjacima 1992-1995*, in: Zbornik radova: Zločini nad Bošnjacima tokom agresije 1992-1995. i memorijalizacija zločina: Sarajevo: El-Kalem, p. 49-64.

16 The first session of the "SAO Romanija's government" was held on December 23, 1991, in the hotel Bistrica on Jahorina, which "supported the positions of the Serb Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina on declaring a Serb Bosnia." At the same time, the "government" congratulated and supported the "proclamation of the Serb Republic of Krajina with Knin as its capital." The public statement from the session expressed a "conviction that recognizing an independent Bosnia and Herzegovina would be a death blow to her statehood – with immediate or postponed effect." (Čekić, Smail (2004). *Agresija na Republiku Bosnu i Hercegovinu – planiranje, priprema, izvođenje*. Sarajevo: Institut za istraživanje zločina protiv čovkečnosti i međunarodnog prava Univerziteta u Sarajevu/KultB, p. 499-500; *Javnost*, 28. decembar 1991. godine, 2; Kuka, Ermin (2019). *Genocid nad Bošnjacima u Višegradu 1992-1995.* Sarajevo: Institut za istraživanje zločina protiv čovječnosti i međunarodnog prava Univerziteta u Sarajevu, p. 44). Opširnije o formiranju SAO: ICTY, Predmet br. IT-95-5/18-T, Pred Pretresnim vijećem, Tužilac protiv Radovana Karadžića, *Javna redigovana verzija Presude od 24. marta 2016*., Tom I od IV, 24. mart 2016. godine; Kuka, Ermin (2021). *Uloga Srpske demokratske stranke u okupaciji Višegrada 1992. godine i počinjenju zločina nad Bošnjacima*, in "Prilozi," no. 50, p. 315-340.

Because the SDS BiH was already working on the creation of para-state political institutions and their integration into so-called Serb Autonomous Regions, the deputies of the SDS and SPO in the Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in a separate session on October 24, 1991, proclaimed the Decision on the founding of the so-called Assembly of the Serb People in Bosnia and Herzegovina.[17] At the same session, a decision was adopted to hold a referendum among the Serb people in Bosnia and Herzegovina to confirm their decision to remain in a common Yugoslav state. The plebiscite asked the following question:

> Do you agree with the Decision of the Assembly of the Serb People in Bosnia and Herzegovina from October 24, 1991, that the Serb people remain in a common Yugoslav state, with Serbia, Montenegro, SAO Krajina, Baranja, and Zapadni Srem (Western Syrmia), and others that opt to remain?[18]

The referendum was carried out on November 9 and 10, 1991. However, the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina made the referendum illegal and illegitimate. Namely, "according to the Constitution, the right to hold a referendum on the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina fell under the purview of the Assembly of the SR BiH,"[19] and never under the jurisdiction of the parastate Assembly of the Serb People in Bosnia and Herzegovina.[20]

The Municipal Board of the Rogatica SDS was fully involved in all illegality and illegitimacy, as well as in parastate activities, in its full capacity, by following and implementing all the SDS BiH Board's anti-state directives. Of special importance was the Instruction *on organizing and running bodies of the Serb People in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the given circumstances,*[21] published in Sarajevo by

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17 AIIZ, Inv. br. 03-490/4, *Odluka o osnivanju Skupštine srpskog naroda u Bosni i Hercegovini*, mr. Momčilo Krajišnik, predsjednik Skupštine, 24. 10. 1991. godine.

18 Ibrahimagić, Omer (2018). *Politika secesije bosanskih* Srba. Gračanica: Monos, p. 23.
"At the end of its October 24, 1991, session, the Assembly of the Serb People in Bosnia and Herzegovina adopted a declaration outlining the reasons for its being constituted. First, they argued that the existing legal-constitutional order in Yugoslavia and Bosnia was greatly upset. Second, that the rights and key interests of the Serb people in Bosnia and Herzegovina were violated, third, that there was a conspiracy to reduce the constituent Serb people of Bosnia and Herzegovina to a national minority. Fourth, the Serb people, informed by their historical suffering, faced a new danger from new and similar tragic events." (Ibid, p. 25).

19 Ibid, p. 23.

20 Kuka, Ermin (2021). *Uloga Srpske demokratske stranke u okupaciji Višegrada 1992. godine i počinjenju zločina nad Bošnjacima*, in "Prilozi," no. 50, no. 315-340.

21 The instruction begins with the following points:
1. This instruction is issued, elaborating on unified tasks, measures, and other activities to be carried out within the national community of the Serbian people in Bosnia and Herzegovina to implement the plebiscitary decision by which the Serbian people in Bosnia and Herzegovina have chosen to live in a united state, both under current conditions and in all possible future circumstances, considering the overall political and security situation, due to justified suspicion that certain forces are persistently, thoroughly, and organizedly acting to remove Bosnia and Herzegovina from Yugoslavia forcibly, and thus the Serbian people

the Chief Board of the SDS on December 19, 1991. The essence of the Instruction was to secure the formation of crisis committes by the SDS municipal boards, and the cration of "a network that will ocver all Serbs in municipalities" (summoning Serb assemblies in municipalities, forming municipal and executive committees, mobilizing and subordinating all Serb militias in collaboration with the JNA, implementing the order to mobilize the JNA reserves and TO units, forming Serb municipalieis."

The Chetnik voivode, Rajko Kušić, requested the segregation of the municipality, police, and TO into Serb and Muslim units, seconded by high-ranking functionaries of the SDS, along with Sveto Veselinović, president of the Rogatica SDS Municipal Board. In a meeting between Bosniak and Serb representatives, on March 30, 1992, in the teacher's room of the local high school, somewhere after 22:00, the SDS representatives declared how: "The Police must be divided, as the Serbs have lost all trust in the Muslims, and it must be done peacefully or by force." On the same day, SDS representatives named Mladena Vasiljević as the chief of the Serb Public Security Service, and the Chetnik voivode Rajko Kušić as the commander of their police station.[22]

Their activities make it clear that the officials and representatives of the Rogatica SDS had the base goal to first ethnically segregate, and then completely "ethnically cleanse" and create ethnically pure Serb territories in the area. It was possible only through numerous crimes against the Bosniaks, who were the majority population in the city.

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2. The tasks, measures, and other activities outlined in this Instruction will be undertaken to increase mobility and readiness to defend the interests of the Serbian people.

3. The tasks, measures, and other activities from this instruction are to be implemented across the entire territory of the Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, specifically in all municipalities where the Serbian people live, namely: - entirely, in municipalities where the Serbian people constitute the majority (variant "A") and - partially, in municipalities where the Serbian people are not in the majority (variant "B").

4. To ensure unified and timely implementation, the determination of tasks, measures, and other activities is to be carried out according to variants "A" and "B," in two stages. ... expressed loyalty to the federal state of Yugoslavia."

Most of the Serb Crisis HQs were founded in the first months of 1992. The exceptions were those in Bratunac and Bosanski Petrovac, founded already in October 1991, as mentioned, and those in Foča, Brčko, Sokolac, Bosanski Novi, and ARK (Army War Command, *Armijska ratna komanda*), which formed only in April/May of 1992." (ICTY, Predmet br. IT-00-39-T, Pred Pretresnim vijećem I, Tužilac protiv Momčila Krajišnika, *Presuda*, 27. septembar 2006. godine).

22 Agić, Nusret (1995). *Živi štitovi, Hronika desetog genocida nad Bošnjacima i počeci otpora naroda općine Rogatica*. Sarajevo: Hod, p. 32; Grabovica, Almir (2023). *Ratni zločini nad rogatičkim Bošnjacima 1992-1995*, u: Zbornik radova: Zločini nad Bošnjacima tokom agresije 1992-1995. i memorijalizacija zločina: Sarajevo: El-Kalem, p. 49-64, „Kako na republičkom, tako i na opštinskom nivou dolazi do faktičke podele policije na nacionalnoj osnovi" (Kušić, Rajko (2012). *Za čast i slobodu*. Beograd: Izdavački grafički atelje "M," p. 15).

Already in April 1992, we see against Bosniaks, committed at the behest of Rajko Kušić and his reservists, firstly in Gučevo, and later in Borike (March 3, 1992).[23] Kušić himself confirms this, stating how "We are still in Borike, from where we are carefully monitoring the general negotiations that our political representatives are holding with the Muslim and Croat leadership in BiH."[24]

On March 4, 1992, in the village of Gučevo, near Roagatica, the Rogatica Battalion no. 216 was formed, comprising exclusively of Serbs. A review of the unit was also held. The commander of the battalion "answered the summons of the President of the Serb Municipality of Rogatica, coupled with his associates, and in the presence of SDS leadership, provided the appropriate information."[25]

In the first half of April 1992, the Municipal Board of the Rogatica SDS formed the Crisis HQ (*Krizni štab*).[26] The HQ, among others, decided that all Bosniaks in the municipality should be fired from their jobs and that their movement should be limited. Before the commencement of combat in the center of the city, the SDS ordered that all Serb women, older people, and children should be moved out of the municipality.[27]

Simultaneously, Rogatica SDS officials, including members of the Municipal Board, Tomislav Batinić and Milorad Sokolović (President of the Crisis HQ), negotiated with the Bosniaks over control of the municipality's territory. Although the Bosniaks accepted the first two requests regarding the division of police structures and the division of the territory to avoid conflict, the third request to assume control over the entire municipality was not met. Serb representatives insisted on this request, explaining that the Chief Board of the SDS and military command in Han Pijesak were pressuring them.[28] *The Report on the work of the Crisis*

23 Grabovica, Almir (2023). *Ratni zločini nad rogatičkim Bošnjacima 1992-1995*, u: Zbornik radova: Zločini nad Bošnjacima tokom agresije 1992-1995. i memorijalizacija zločina. Sarajevo: El-Kalem, p. 49-64; Kušić, Rajko (2012). *Za čast i slobodu*. Beograd: Izdavački grafički atelje "M," p. 15-16.

24 Kušić, Rajko (2012). *Za čast i slobodu*. Beograd: Izdavački grafički atelje "M," p. 15.

25 ICTY, br. 02049539.

26 The Crisis HQ of the Rogatica Serb Municipality was comprised of *Sokolović*, President; *Sveto Veselinović*, member; *Tomislav Batinić*, member; *Mile Ujić*, member; *Rajko Kušić*, member; *Mladen Vasiljević*, member; *Predrag Malović*, member; *Slavko Lubarda*, member; *Vlastimir Lelek*, member; *Slobodan Stojanović*, member; *Momir Ikonić*, member; *Branislav Borovčanin*, member; *Jovan Đerić*, member; *Dragan Spajić*, member; *Dušan Planojević*, member; *Veljko Bojović*, member; *Milorad Janković*, member; *Ljupko Đerić*, member; *Milovan Bojat*, member; *Miodrag Ivanović*, member; *Mileta Limić*, member; *Mile Čerkić*, sekretar Štaba; koji je imenovan na sjednici od 24. aprila 1992. godine, Izvještaj o radu Kriznog štaba opštine Rogatica za period april-juni 1992., od 25.06.1992.

27 Grabovica, Almir (2023). *Ratni zločini nad rogatičkim Bošnjacima 1992-1995*, u: Zbornik radova: Zločini nad Bošnjacima tokom agresije 1992-1995. i memorijalizacija zločina: Sarajevo: El-Kalem, p. 49-64.

28 Ibid, p. 49-64.

Staff of the Serbian Municipality of Rogatica for the period of April-June 1992 states, among other things, that by the Decision on the division of the Rogatica municipality into the area of the Serbian Micipality and the area of the Muslim municipality, which was verified at the joint session of the Rogatica Municipal Assembly on May 2, 1992, "the area of the town of Rogatica was not included, but was left to be carried out later, which did not happen, given that the events that unfolded put all agreements behind us, because the situation we are famiilar with has arisen."[29]

After failed negotiations, in early May 1992, Serbian military formations led by Chetnik voivode Rajko Kušić began armed attacks and committing crimes against Bosniaks, first in Bosniak villages around the city, and later in the city itself.

The Serb military units, established by the SDS, with the help of the JNA, completely occupied Rogatica and took control of it. On May 20, 1992, the so-called Presidency of the Serbian Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina issued the *Decision on the General Mobilization of all Citizens of Serbian Nationality* in the so-called Serbian Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Based on this Decision, the commander of the Sarajevo-Romanija Corps, Colonel Tomislav Šipčić, issued an *Order for the General Mobilization of the Army of the Serbian Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina*, which, among other things, called for "contact with municipal and military-territorial authorities in the field to provide professional and material assistance in the mobilization process."[30] As early as June 10, 1992, the so-called Presidency of the Serbian Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina made a *Decision on the Formation of War Commissions in Municipalities During Immediate Wartime Danger or State*, which also included Rogatica.[31]

Conclusion

Based on a content analysis of documentation fundamental to the topic, it is undeniable that the SDS, from its foundation and early days, acting within the pluralizing Bosnian society, directed all its activities towards internal disintegration of political institutions and social structures of Bosnia and Herzegovina. At a time of intensifying dissolution of Yugoslavia, the SDS set itself as the initiator and supporter, primarily of political activities, and later, military activities, aimed at creating ethnically pure Serbian territories in Bosnia and Herzegovina, i.e., west of the Drina River. The actions of the SDS municipal authorities in numer-

29 ICTY, br. 04654759, *Izvještaju o radu Kriznog štaba Srpske opštine Rogatica za period april-juni 1992. godine*, Rogatica, 25.06.1992. godine.

30 *Naređenje – Opšta mobilizacija vojske Srpske Republike BiH*, Komanda Sarajevsko-romanijskog korupusa, p. pov. br. 155-1, od 21.05.1992. godine.

31 *Odluka o obrazovanju ratnih povjereništava u opštinama za vrijeme neposredne ratne opasnosti ili ratnog stanja*, Predsjedništvo Srpske Republike Bosne i Hercegovine, br. 01-33/92, od 10.06.1992. godine.

ous municipalities, especially in the Podrinje region, confirm that these activities were synchronized, carefully planned, and prepared. The regional SDS Board in Rogatica, in accordance with the directives and instructions from the Main SDS Board of Bosnia and Herzegovina, meticulously implemented the Serb ethnonationalist and Greater Serbian policies on the ground. The Rogatica SDS Municipal Committee was central to arming the Serbian population and executing the military occupation of Rogatica. Not only did they prepare the political terrain, but the leadership and members of the Rogatica SDS Municipal Committee also directly participated in forming Serbian military units, served as the main coordinators of activities with the JNA, and engaged in arming the Serb population. The example of SDS activities in Rogatica was not significantly different from their actions in other municipalities in Podrinje or across other cities in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The consequence was the complete occupation of Rogatica and its transformation from a multiethnic town into an exclusively monoethnic (Serb) town. This was accompanied by numerous crimes against the Bosniak population of Rogatica, including mass and individual executions, expulsions, torture, imprisonment and abuse in camps, and plundering of property. The criminal actions of the Rogatica SDS Municipal Committee are only part of a broader picture of the overall intentions and activities of the Main SDS Board of Bosnia and Herzegovina, aimed at dismantling the Bosnian state and society through political pressure, later supplemented by military violence and crimes against Bosniaks.

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BOSNIAN STUDIES
SARAJEVO
1

MUAMER DŽANANOVIĆ

An Organizational Mechanism of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia for Concealing Aggression Against the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina

UDC 355.1 (497.1): 341.31 (497.6) "1992/1995"

DOI 10.47999/bos.2025.9.2.96-111
Review scientific article

pages 96-111

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Summary

This article examines the formation and functioning of the 30th Personnel Center (30th PC) of the Yugoslav Army, established in 1993 as a key organizational mechanism of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) for concealing its own role in the War Against the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (1992–1995). Based on archival materials of the General Staff of the Yugoslav Army, transcripts of the Supreme Defence Council, military acts, as well as judicially facts and evidentiary materials of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), the article demonstrates that the 30th PC was not merely an administrative or social solution for regulating the status of former members of the Yugoslav People's Army or the Yugoslav Army. Rather, it functioned as an institutionalized "interface" through which Yugoslavia maintained personnel, command, and financial links with the Army of 'Republika Srpska' (RS) in Bosnia and Herzegovina. At the same time, they deliberately produced a formal–legal distance from the armed conflict on the territory of the internationally recognized state of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Particular attention is devoted to documents from October and November 1993, which explicitly refer to the "lack of a firm legal basis" for deploying active military personnel outside Yugoslavia without their consent, as well as to the need for a "high level of data protection" vis-à-vis the domestic and international public, constituting evidence of a conscious strategy of plausible deniability.

Keywords: Federal Republic of Yugoslavia; Yugoslav Army; Thirtieth Personnel Center; Army of Republika Srpska; aggression; Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina; plausible deniability.

Introduction

The war in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (1992–1995) is, in parts of the scholarly literature and public narratives, often portrayed as an "internal" or "civil" conflict, thereby shifting primary attention away from state mechanisms of intervention toward local political and military structures. Such a framework is methodologically problematic, as it overlooks the fact that the parastate structures of the Bosnian Serb Republic (Republika Srpska)[1] on the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina did not possess autonomous capacities to wage a prolonged

1 On 9 January 1992, the "Serb Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina" was proclaimed in Sarajevo, later in the same year changing its name to the "Republika Srpska" (RS). For more on this, see: Muamer Džananović, Jasmin Medić, Hikmet Karčić (2023), *Nastanak Republike srpske: Od regionalizacije do strateških ciljeva (1991-1992)* [*The formation of Republika Srpska: From regionalization to strategic objectives (1991–1992)*], Univerzitet u Sarajevu – Institut za istraživanje zločina protiv čovječnosti i međunarodnog prava i Univerzitet u Sarajevu – Institut za historiju, Sarajevo.

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war. This is especially clear when considering the resources required by a military organization: professional personnel, systems of rank and service, logistics, operational planning, financing, and the institutional management of the manpower. This study is based on the premise that the character of the conflict and the degree of state involvement can be most reliably reconstructed through the analysis of organizational arrangements (personnel regimes, payrolls, records, command links, secret directives), rather than through public political claims or retrospective interpretations.

The paper's theoretical framework draws on the concepts of proxy warfare and 'plausible deniability.' A state may retain decisive levers of control over military force on the ground while simultaneously producing formal-legal and administrative constructs intended to create an appearance of distance. In this sense, the paper does not seek to prove 'participation' through abstract assertions but rather examines whether elements of state control are present in practice: who assigns and maintains personnel records, who pays salaries and benefits, who issues promotion decrees, who plans and directs operations, and who manages secrecy and documentation. The central object of analysis is the 30th PC of the Yugoslav Army, established in 1993, precisely because this mechanism links status law, financing, and personnel records with continuity of command. Methodologically, the paper is based on qualitative document analysis and the reconstruction of decision-making processes: it examines draft documents and formal acts of the Yugoslav Army alongside discussions within the Supreme Defense Council, followed by the orders of the President of Yugoslavia and their operationalization through orders and instructions of the Yugoslav Army and other state bodies. This type of "decision trail" makes it possible to identify where secrecy is produced, how an administrative language of concealment is constructed, and what the practical consequences are on the ground.

Institutional Framework and the Strategic Logic of Concealment

The constitutional framework of Yugoslavia designated the Supreme Defense Council as the highest body of military authority, with the President of Yugoslavia serving as the President of the Supreme Defense Council and as the supreme commander in both peace and war.[2] The first session of the Supreme Defense Council

2 Article 135 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia provides that the Yugoslav Army is commanded in both war and peace by the President of the Republic, in accordance with the decisions of the Supreme Defence Council. The same article states that the Supreme Defence Council is composed of the President of the Republic and the presidents of the constituent republics, and that the President of Yugoslavia also serves as the President of the Supreme Defence Council. ICTY, Prosecutor v. M. Perišić, Exhibit No. P1186, *Official Gazette of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia*, No. 1, Year I, Constitution of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia,

was held on 30 June 1992 and was chaired by Dobrica Ćosić, the President of Yugoslavia and, by virtue of that position, also the President of the Supreme Defense Council. However, the significance of the Supreme Defense Council does not stem from its formal definition, but rather from the way it functioned in practice as the central point of coordination of the war effort beyond the territory of Yugoslavia, namely in the Republic of Croatia and the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina.[3] The transcripts show that the sessions of the Supreme Defense Council addressed personnel arrangements, financing, armaments, logistics, and other "sensitive" issues directly related to the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, with a constant awareness that exposing these connections would entail international legal and political consequences.[4] It is precisely here that the strategic logic of concealment becomes evident: the state leadership sought simultaneously to sustain the war-making capacity of the "Serb armies" outside Yugoslavia while managing the risks of sanctions, international intervention, and legal responsibility. This is particularly visible in episodes where documentation was deliberately restricted. The existence of sessions without transcripts or official minutes, and later "slippages" in which the 30th and 40th Personnel Centers (the latter relating to the self-proclaimed Republika Srpska Krajina in the Republic of Croatia) were mentioned retrospectively, suggests that the most sensitive issues were intentionally removed from the formal record or reduced to a minimum of traceable documentation.[5] Such a practice is not evidence in itself. Still, in combination with subsequent acts emphasizing secrecy (a single copy of the document, the avoidance of the names Republika Srpska / Republika Srpska Krajina in orders), it demonstrates that secrecy functioned as an instrument of state policy, rather than as a matter of routine bureaucratic practice.[6]

No. 1503/1, Belgrade, 27 April 1992, p. 10.; Momir Bulatović (2005), *Pravila ćutanja* [*Rules of Silence*], 4. izdanje, Zograf, Niš.

3 For a more detailed analysis of the work of the Supreme Defence Council, see: Muamer Džananović, Hikmet Karčić, Emir Suljagić i Sead Turčalo (2024), *Dekodiranje agresije: Vrhovni savet odbrane Savezne Republike Jugoslavije i rat protiv Republike Bosne i Hercegovine* [Decoding Aggression: The Supreme Defence Council of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the War against the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina], UNSA – Fakultet političkih nauka, Memorijalni centar Srebrenica, UNSA – Institut za istraživanje zločina protiv čovječnosti i međunarodnog prava.

4 Ibid, This paper is the result of the author's research conducted within a scientific project financially supported by the Srebrenica Memorial Center – Memorial and Cemetery for the Victims of the 1995 Genocide. In certain sections, the author refers to previously published research presented in the co-authored volume *Dekodiranje agresije* [*Decoding Aggression]*.

5 ICTY, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Supreme Defense Council, *Stenographic Notes from the 27th Session*, 27 September 1994, p. 1.

6 For further details, see: M. Džananović et al, *Dekodiranje agresije* [*Decoding Aggression]*. Momir Bulatović, President of Montenegro and a member of the Supreme Defense Council, in a 2006 work, presents excerpts from transcripts of several sessions of the Supreme Defense Council. Momir Bulatović (2006), *Neizgovorena odbrana: ICTY vs Slobodan Milošević* [*The Unspoken Defence: ICTY vs. Slobodan Milošević*], Zograf, Etra, Niš, Podgorica; See also: Momir

At this level of analysis, it is important to emphasize the structural dependence of the political and military apparatus of Republika Srpska (RS) on the resources of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, as this dependence provides the context in which it becomes clear why formal-legal and administrative mechanisms of concealment, such as the personnel centers, were developed in the first place. In this sense, the statements of key actors (the political leader of the RS, Radovan Karadžić; the Commander of the Main Staff of the Army of the RS, Ratko Mladić; and the Chief of the General Staff of the Yugoslav Army, Momčilo Perišić[7]) are important contextually. They do not serve as independent proof of the international character of the conflict, but rather as indicators of how the principal actors of the politico-military project understood power relations, the war's resource structure, and the limits of the RS's autonomy. From a methodological perspective, their value lies not in the rhetorical weight of individual statements. Still, in the way they complement one another and demonstrate that both the political and military leadership of the RS tied the combat capability of their own formations to the external state capacities of Serbia and Yugoslavia, ranging from personnel and command structures, through finances and armaments, to logistics and the basic maintenance of the army.[8] Communications from the military leadership tell a similar story, including intercepted conversations and facsimile messages in which the basic maintenance of the system (food supply, material provisioning, and logistics) is addressed, demonstrating that the dependency was not merely "strategic" but also operational and everyday.

Ultimately, the key contribution of these statements is not to substitute for documentary evidence, but to explain the institutional logic that will be analyzed in the sections that follow. If the wartime capacity of the Army of the RS was systemically dependent on Yugoslavia, it becomes understandable why personnel issues emerged as a "state problem" and why internal acts openly referred to the lack of a "firm legal basis" and the need for a "high level of data protection." In this sense, Karadžić's statement that "without Serbia there would be nothing, we

Bulatović (2021), *Slobodan Milošević: neizgovorena odbrana* [*Slobodan Milošević: The Unspoken Defence*] Vukotić media, Beograd; See also: Nevenka Tromp (2019), *Smrt u Hagu – Nezavršeno suđenje Slobodanu Miloševiću* [Death in The Hague – The Unfinished Trial of Slobodan Milošević], University Press, Sarajevo.

7 The first Chief of the General Staff of the Yugoslav Army was Života Panić, who attended the sessions of the Supreme Defense Council until the end of August 1993. Following his dismissal, on 26 August 1993 Momčilo Perišić was appointed Chief of the General Staff of the Yugoslav Army, at which point he assumed a key role in operationalizing personnel arrangements vis-à-vis the Army of the RS and the Army of the Republika Srpska Krajina. The armed formations of the Republika Srpska Krajina were established on 18 May 1992 and remained in existence until August 1995, when they were completely defeated by the Croatian Army. ICTY, Trial Judgment in the case against Momčilo Perišić, paras. 3, 82.

8 For excerpts from the session transcripts, see: M. Džananović et al, *Dekodiranje agresije* [*Decoding Aggression*], 83-549.

do not have those resources, and we would not be able to wage war."[9] constitutes an initial empirical "signal" of dependency. At the same time, the actual evidentiary burden in this study is carried by the mechanisms that translate this dependency into operational practice, namely, the 30th Personnel Centre (30th PC) as a system of records, financing, and status regulati-on for officers, and the Supreme Defence Council as the forum in which this regime is politically safeguarded and maintained under conditions of secrecy.[10]

A similar pattern can also be identified in the intercepted telephone conversation from May 3, 1995 between Ratko Mladić, Commander of the Army of the RS, and Slobodan Milošević, President of Serbia and leader of the Greater Serbian project, in which Mladić states that without assistance from Serbia the Army of RS could not have survived "either until now or from now on."[11] The significance of this statement lies not only in its content but also in its temporal context: it was made in the final phase of the war, when the exhaustion of manpower, ammunition, and logistics had become clearly evident, which further confirms the long-term, rather than temporary, dependence of the Army of the RS on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. This dependence became even more explicit immediately after the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement, when Ratko Mladić, in a fax sent to Slobodan Milošević (with the knowledge and involvement of the Chief of the General Staff of the Yugoslav Army, Momčilo Perišić), requested "assistance in feeding the army."[12] In this document, Mladić does not speak of one-off or humanitarian assistance, but of systemic support which, according to his own words, throughout the entire war was of "immeasurable value," "comprehensive," and "timely," particularly at moments when it was most needed. It

9 ICTY, *Prosecutor v. R. Karadžić*, Exhibit No. P1389, audio recording of the 40th session of the National Assembly of Republika Srpska held on 10–11 May 1994 in Brčko.

10 ICTY, *Prosecutor v. M. Perišić*, Exhibit No. P1872, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, General Staff of the Yugoslav Army, strictly confidential no. 840-2, complete set of documents of the General Staff of the Yugoslav Army and the Ministry of Defence of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, 8 October 1993; ICTY, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Supreme Defence Council, stenographic notes from the 14th session, 11 October 1993; ICTY, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Supreme Defence Council, stenographic notes from the 15th session, 10 November 1993.

11 ICTY, *Prosecutor v. M. Perišić*, Exhibit No. P1282, intercepted telephone conversation between R. Mladić and S. Milošević, 3 May 1995.

12 In the fax, Mladić states, inter alia: "Mr. President [addressing Slobodan Milošević, author's note], throughout the entire duration of the war, the assistance of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and particularly of Serbia and your personal assistance, to Republika Srpska and especially to its army, was of immeasurable value. It is difficult even to imagine how events would have unfolded had that assistance not existed. It was comprehensive and, in essence, timely. I wish to emphasize that it most often arrived and was particularly valuable precisely at the moments when we needed it most. This is well known, especially within the ranks of the Army of RS, for which it will remain permanently grateful to you." ICTY, *Prosecutor v. M. Perišić*, Exhibit No. P2710, Main Staff of the Army of RS, conf. no. 02/2-58, "Assistance in feeding the Army of RS-request," 17 December 1995.

is especially indicative that even after the formal end of the war, reliance on the same centers of decision-making and financing continued, demonstrating that the military apparatus of the Army of the RS (VRS) could not be sustained without external state support even in the post-conflict period.

The position of Momčilo Perišić complements these statements, expressed at the 18th session of the Supreme Defense Council, according to which neither the RS nor the Republika Srpska Krajina could "certainly defend themselves without our material assistance in terms of weapons and military equipment."[13] Unlike the statements of Karadžić and Mladić, which originate from the structures of the RS, Perišić's statement carries additional weight because it comes from the very top of the Yugoslav Army. In this way, the dependence of RS is confirmed not only "from below," from the perspective of the recipient of assistance, but also "from above," from the perspective of the institution that planned, approved, and distributed that assistance. Their analytical value lies in explaining the motive and rationality behind the conduct of the Yugoslav leadership: the military apparatus of the Army of RS depended on personnel, finances, and logistics from Serbia and Yugoslavia. It becomes clear why it was necessary to stabilize this condition through institutional mechanisms that enabled long-term functioning while simultaneously producing a formal appearance of an internal, "local" conflict. It is precisely in this context that the establishment of special personnel centers of the Yugoslav Army – most notably the 30th PC – should be understood as an administrative-legal response to the real, acknowledged, and long-term dependence of the Army of RS on the state resources of Yugoslavia.

The Establishment and Normative Formalization of the 30th Personnel Center

The process that led to the establishment of the 30th PC was gradual, moving from a practical problem and pressure originating from the Army of RS, through legal-political risk, to an administrative solution. The initial layer is visible in the correspondence and requests of the Army of RS leadership, where, for example, as early as March 1993, Mladić insisted on the concept of a "single Yugoslav battlefield" and demanded the disciplining of personnel who were "unilaterally" returning from the Army of RS to the Yugoslav Army, expecting the leadership of the Yugoslav Army to prevent their acceptance and promotion without the consent of the Army of RS.[14] The document's normative tone is also significant, as the Army of RS is treated as a space of "mandatory" service for personnel origi-

13 ICTY, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Supreme Defense Council, stenographic notes from the 18th session, 7 February 1994, p. 38.

14 ICTY, *Prosecutor v. M. Perišić*, Exhibit No. P1529, Main Staff of the Army of RS, No. 29/9-91, "Preventing the outflow of human resources from the Army of RS-request," 31 March 1993, p. 1.

nating from Bosnia and Herzegovina. At the same time, refusal is problematized as an issue of loyalty and "patriotism."[15] This indicates that personnel policy was already understood not as a voluntary transfer, but as an instrument for managing the war apparatus.

A key turning point occurred on October 8, 1993, when the General Staff of the Yugoslav Army and the Ministry of Defense of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia prepared a document proposing a formal solution and forwarded it to the President of Yugoslavia and the Supreme Defense Council. This document is evidentially central because it explicitly sets out two points: (1) the scope of personnel recorded in the Yugoslav Army who were deployed to the Army of RS and the Army of Republika Srpska Krajina, and (2) a legal - political problem-namely, that "there is no solid legal basis" for deploying active military personnel outside the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia without consent, together with the need for a "high level of data protection" due to domestic and international public scrutiny.[16] This constitutes an "internal admission" that the solution was not sought for administrative purposes, but rather for risk management and concealment.

At the 14th session of the Supreme Defense Council (11 October 1993), Perišić translated this into the language of institutional tactics, saying how "we have invented a temporary formation" within the Yugoslav Army... "they are, in fact, not here, but there."[17] Slobodan Milošević added, "Do it however you want, just make sure there is no withdrawal." Together with Bulatović's insistence on secrecy as a "vital state interest," the exchange provides political confirmation that the solution's objective was also to protect the state from the consequences of disclosure.[18]

This was followed by normative formalization: Zoran Lilić, who was at that time President of Yugoslavia, signed the order establishing the personnel centers on November 10, 1993[19], and on the same day, the 15th Session of the Supreme Defense Council elaborated on the operational regime of concealment: only a single copy of the document was made, and in individual orders, it omitted the names of

15 See in more detail: M. Džananović et al, *Dekodiranje agresije* [*Decoding Aggression*], 35-36.

16 ICTY, *Prosecutor v. M. Perišić*, Exhibit No. P1872, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, General Staff of the Yugoslav Army, conf. no. 840-2, Complete set of documents of the General Staff of the Yugoslav Army and the Ministry of Defence of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, 8 October 1993.

17 ICTY, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Supreme Defence Council, stenographic notes from the 14th session, 11 October 1993, p. 24.

18 Ibid. For a more detailed discussion of the debate and proceedings of the 14th session of the Supreme Defence Council, see: M. Džananović et al., *Dekodiranje agresije* [*Decoding Aggression]*, 38–40; 201–209.

19 ICTY, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, No. 1/2-02-033/93-1, Order of the President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on the establishment of special personnel centers, Belgrade, 10 November 1993.

the RS and the Republika Srpska Krajina, with personnel referred to solely as assigned to a "personnel center."[20] This section also retains the part on promotions: the discussion about not specifying in the presidential decree where an individual is actually stationed, while noting that he is "otherwise on our payroll," directly demonstrates the function of the 30th PC as an instrument for concealing actual service while retaining formal status and associated rights.[21]

Two days after the Supreme Defense Council adopted the decisions on November 12, 1993, the Chief of the General Staff of the Yugoslav Army, Momčilo Perišić, immediately operationalized them.[22] In accordance with the order of the Supreme Defense Council, he instructed the Personnel Directorate of the General Staff of the Yugoslav Army to prepare a draft Instruction specifying the manner of functioning and the program of activities of the two personnel centers. At the same time, he tasked the Sector for Organization, Manning, and Legal Affairs of the General Staff of the Yugoslav Army, in cooperation with the Personnel Directorate, to immediately prepare proposals for special organizational arrangements for these centers. According to the order, the personnel centers were to be structured as specific, "experimental" organizational units, whose tables of organization encompassed all key elements of a wartime army, including specialized components, which further indicates their genuine military, rather than merely administrative, function.[23] "He further emphasized that the implementation of the tasks set out in this order was to begin immediately, and that the draft Instruction was to be completed and submitted to him for signature by 30 November 1993."[24]

Following the previously adopted decisions of the Supreme Defense Council and the operationalization of the conclusions reached at its sessions, Momčilo Perišić signed a separate Order on November 15, 1993, establishing the 30th and 40th Personnel Centers within the General Staff of the Yugoslav Army.[25] This order precisely defined their competencies, internal organization, and administrative identity, including the assignment of military post numbers for the 30th PC (in peacetime: 3001; in wartime: 12103) and for the 40th PC (in peacetime: 4001; in

20 ICTY, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Supreme Defence Council, Stenographic Notes from the 15th Session, 10 November 1993; M. Džananović, et al, *Dekodiranje agresije* [*Decoding Aggression*], 209-216; On the establishment and significance of the 30th PC, see also: Muamer Džananović (2024), "Uloga vrhovnog saveta odbrane Savezne Republike Jugoslavije u Agresiji na Republiku Bosnu i Hercegovinu" ["The role of the Supreme Defence Council of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in the aggression against the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina"], *Historiji pogledi*, Centrar za istraživanje moderne i savremene historije, Tuzla, broj 11, 352-355.

21 Ibid.

22 ICTY, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, General Staff of the Yugoslav Army, conf. no. 965-1, Order, 12 November 1993, p. 1.

23 M. Džananović et al, *Dekodiranje agresije* [*Decoding Aggression*], 41-42.

24 Ibid, 42.

25 ICTY, Chief of the General Staff of the Yugoslav Army, conf. no. 3087-1, Organizational and formation changes in the Yugoslav Army – Order, 15 November 1993.

wartime: 13676). The 30th PC was responsible for professional military personnel of the former Yugoslav People's Army and the Yugoslav Army who were assigned, deployed, or engaged within the Army of the RS, that is, on the territory of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. By contrast, the 40th PC had an identical function with respect to officers and other professional military personnel engaged in the Army of Republika Srpska Krajina, that is, on the territory of the Republic of Croatia.[26] This division of competences clearly demonstrates that the personnel centers were conceived as parallel, mutually symmetrical mechanisms, adapted to the specificities of the two theaters of war, yet placed under the unified institutional control of the General Staff of the Yugoslav Army. It is important to emphasize that both personnel centers were physically located in Belgrade, within the buildings of the General Staff of the Yugoslav Army, specifically in the Personnel Directorate premises. This arrangement ensured direct oversight of their activities and their full integration into the central system for personnel, status-related, and administrative management of the Yugoslav Army. Although they were formally presented as separate organizational units, their location, hierarchical subordination, and mode of operation confirm that the personnel centers were integral components of the central military apparatus of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, rather than autonomous or temporary structures.

The Functioning of the 30th Personnel Center as a Personnel-Financial and Command "interface" Between the Yugoslav Army and the Army of the RS

Analyzing the operational phase of the 30th PC requires a shift from merely describing procedures to examining its actual institutional role within the system of state control. The key analytical question in this segment of the paper is not what the 30th PC formally was, but what it in fact did regarding the management of personnel, finances, and command continuity between the Yugoslav Army and the Army of the RS.

The instructions of the Personnel Directorate of the General Staff of the Yugoslav Army established an extensive system of personnel records that went far beyond the technical maintenance of administrative lists. Changes in personnel composition were recorded, special records were kept by origin and status, individuals already assigned to the personnel center were registered, as were those who, according to the assessment of the competent authorities, could be assigned in the future. Significantly, records were also kept of individuals who refused reassign-

26 ICTY, *Trial Judgment in the case of Momčilo Perišić*, paras. 771, 772; ICTY, Chief of the General Staff of the Yugoslav Army, *Organizational and formation changes in the Yugoslav Army – Order*; See also: M. Džananović et al, *Dekodiranje agresije* [*Decoding Aggression*], 42.

ment.[27] The management of the availability, selection, and conduct of personnel represents a classic function of effective control rather than neutral bureaucracy.

A second key element of the 30th PC's functioning concerns the financial and status regime. Members of this center retained all rights and benefits of professional officers of the Yugoslav Army, including regular salaries, pension rights, various monetary allowances, and the right to housing. This established a long-term relationship of loyalty between personnel assigned to the Army of the RS and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia's institutional system. In practical terms, this meant that the command apparatus of the Army of the RS was sustained through the budgetary and status framework of Yugoslavia. Additional evidence confirms the systemic nature of this regime, showing that personnel center members continued to enjoy certain material and status-related rights even after the end of the war. The fact unequivocally disproves interpretations of these arrangements as temporary or "humanitarian" solutions for the status of former members of the Yugoslav People's Army. At a session of the Supreme Defense Council held in late 1993, Momčilo Perišić stated that the total number of officers, non-commissioned officers, and other professional personnel within the Yugoslav Army system was 54,866, of whom 7,233 were assigned to the two personnel centers responsible for RS and Republika Srpska Krajina.[28] This ratio clearly demonstrates the scale of Yugoslavia's institutional engagement in sustaining the command-and-personnel apparatus of Serbian military structures outside its own territory. The 30th PC regulated the status of VRS's highest-ranking and most influential officers, who constituted the backbone of its command system. These were personnel occupying key positions within the Main Staff, corps, and brigades of the VRS, including the top command leadership and its closest associates.[29] Thus, the 30th PC did not merely serve for the replenishment or rotation of lower ranks, but rather constituted a mechanism through which Yugoslavia retained direct personnel and status-based influence over the strategic level of the military structure of the Army of RS. The same system also regulated the status of certain civilian and politico-military officials of the RS. Ratko Mladić's status is paradigmatic of this. From May 12, 1992, when the Army of the RS was established, he formally served as Commander of the Main Staff of the VRS throughout the war. For several years after its end, he remained listed as a professional officer of the Yugoslav Army. His personnel file shows that he was removed from the register of professional military personnel of the Yugoslav Army only on June 16, 2001, while he was deleted from the military records of the RS a year later. Furthermore, his earlier extraordinary promotion to the rank of Colonel General, by a decree of the

27 M. Džananović, *Dekodiranje agresije* [*Decoding Aggression*], 43-44.

28 ICTY, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Supreme Defense Council, stenographic notes from the 16th session, 25 December 1993, p. 23.

29 ICTY, inv. no. 06008093, List of professional military personnel of the 30th Personnel Center.

President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on June 16, 1994, confirms the continuity of status-based, personnel, and hierarchical ties between the command leadership of the Army of the RS and the state apparatus of Yugoslavia.[30]

The 30th PC's functioning was also scrutinized in the ICTY's judicial proceedings. In the case against Momčilo Perišić, the prosecution characterized the personnel centers as a "complex contrivance designed to deceive," basing this assessment precisely on the system's dual nature: formal affiliation with the Yugoslav Army, but factual activity within the Army of RS and the Army of Republika Srpska Krajina; formally a personnel center in Belgrade, but in reality an operational command on the battlefield in Bosnia and Herzegovina or Croatia; formally service in one army, but really the participation in the armed operations of another.[31]

In this sense, the 30th PC can be understood analytically as an institutional "firewall" of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia: a mechanism that separated administrative records from material reality, thereby diluting international legal responsibility through formal–legal constructs.[32] However, it is precisely through personnel records, financing, and status arrangements that traces of actual state control remain visible. For this reason, the 30th PC does not represent a marginal bureaucratic detail, but rather one of the key points at which it becomes most clear how the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia institutionally sustained the war apparatus in Bosnia and Herzegovina, while simultaneously seeking to conceal its own involvement in an international armed conflict.

The Personnel Center Within the Broader System of State Intervention

To avoid the impression that the 30th PC is the "only story," it must be situated within a broader system: the personnel center represents infrastructure, but infrastructure has meaning only when linked to operational planning and other instruments of state power. For this reason, the "Drina" plan (*Directive for the Use of the Yugoslav Army, the Army of RS, and the Army of Republika Srpska*

30 M. Džananović et al, *Dekodiranje agresije* [*Decoding Aggression*], 43-44. Among the officers of the Yugoslav Army who were deployed to the Bosnian battlefield through the 30th PC and who constituted the key senior officers and the backbone of the establishment, organization, and functioning of the Army of RS were Ratko Mladić and his closest associate, Manojlo Milovanović, as well as numerous other close collaborators, aides, and corps and brigade commanders of the Army of RS. These included Đorđe Đukić, Radivoje Miletić, Milan Gvero, Zdravko Tolimir, Milenko Živanović, Radislav Krstić, Vinko Pandurević, Vujadin Popović, Ljubiša Beara, Vidoje Blagojević, Dragan Jokić, Dragan Obrenović, Drago Nikolić, Svetozar Andrić, Stanislav Galić, Dragomir Milošević, Čedo Sladoja, among others. The 30th PC also regulated the status of Bogdan Subotić and that of Dušan Kovačević, who served as Minister of Defense of RS from January 1993 to August 1994. ICTY, *Trial Judgment in the case of Momčilo Perišić*, para. 795.

31 ICTY, *Trial Judgment in the case of Momčilo Perišić*, paras. 788–819.

32 M. Džananović et al, *Dekodiranje agresije* [*Decoding Aggression*], 45.

Krajina), finalized within the Yugoslav Army's General Staff and signed by the President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Supreme Defence Council (November 14, 1993), constitute strong evidence of a coordinated concept of joint military action and the implementation of politico-military objectives.[33] It is important to emphasize in the text of the directive that this was not merely a "general document," but a directive that presupposed the availability of personnel, logistics, and command coordination in Bosnia and Herzegovina, something that could not, in practical terms, have been achieved without mechanisms such as the 30th PC.[34]

In parallel, the State Security Service of Serbia (UDB) demonstrated a complementary line of state intervention: the organization, arming, and deployment of paramilitary/special units, including operations outside Serbia (e.g., "Pauk"), as well as the involvement of units such as the Scorpions and the Red Berets.[35] The verdict against Jovica Stanišić and Franko Simatović before the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals in The Hague is crucial here, as it confirms the institutional dimension of Serbia's State Security's role in the criminal plan and operations.[36] This not only "broadens the topic" but also demonstrates a model: while the State Security Service of Serbia conducted covert and special operations, the Yugoslav Army, through the Supreme Defense Council and subsequently through the personnel centers, maintained personnel status and command infrastructure. This dual structure rendered the system of plausible deniability stable.

Conclusion

This paper has demonstrated that the 30th Personnel Center (30th PC) of the Yugoslav Army, established in Belgrade in 1993, functioned as an institutionalized mechanism of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia for managing its wartime engagement in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as in the Republic of Croatia, while simultaneously concealing direct state intervention. Documents of the General Staff of the Yugoslav Army, stenographic records of the Supreme Defence Council, and instructions issued by the Personnel Directorate confirm

33 ICTY, *Prosecutor v. M. Perišić*, Exhibit No. P215, General Staff of the Yugoslav Army, Operations Sector, "State Secret – R Drina," No. 75-2, *Directive for the Use of the Yugoslav Army, the Army of Republika Srpska (RS), and the Serbian Army of Krajina*, November 1993, pp. 1–16; ICTY, *Trial Judgment in the case of Momčilo Perišić*, para. 1306; For more details, see: M. Džananović et al, *Dekodiranje agresije* [*Decoding Aggression*], 47-48.

34 Ibid.

35 ICTY, *Prosecutor v. J. Stanišić and F. Simatović*, Exhibit No. P01302, Republika Srpska Krajina, "Pauk" Command, conf. no. 03/2?, Ministry of the Interior of RS, concerning Mr. J. Stanišić: Regular combat report, 1 July 1995.

36 United Nations, International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (IRMCT), *Judgment in the case of Jovica Stanišić and Franko Simatović* (MICT-15-96-T), 30 June 2021.

that the 30th PC ensured continuity of personnel, command, and financial links between the Yugoslav Army and the Army of the RS: officers retained their status, salaries, ranks, and benefits within the Yugoslav system, while performing the highest command and operational functions in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The explicit acknowledgment in internal Yugsoalv documents of the "lack of a solid legal basis" for deploying active military personnel outside Yugoslavia without consent is key evidence, coupled with an insistence on a "high level of data protection" due to domestic and international public scrutiny. This normative and linguistic layer reveals that the issue was not a neutral personnel policy, but rather a deliberate legal-administrative construction of a protective framework intended to mitigate international legal responsibility.

The stenographic records of the Supreme Defense Council confirm that secrecy was treated as "vital state interest." The scale of the personnel center system, together with the fact that the highest commanders of the VRS retained their status within the Yugoslav Army, further confirms that the 30th PC constituted the central infrastructure of the war effort rather than a peripheral body.

The findings concerning the 30th PC gain their full significance when examined in the context of joint planning and operations, including the "Drina" directive, finalized within the General Staff of the Yugoslav Army and signed by the President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Supreme Defense Council. This confirms the existence of a unified system in which personnel and financial infrastructure were operationalized into politico-military practice on the ground through military operations and crimes committed in Bosnia and Herzegovina, an internationally recognized state. Finally, the 30th PC should be viewed in a complementary relationship with the security apparatus, which confirms that the concealment of aggression against Bosnia and Herzegovina constituted a multilayered institutional management of both the war itself and its public perception.

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BOSNIAN STUDIES
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1

MUAMER DŽANANOVIĆ

Tragovi genocida: Grapska 1992-1995

Univerzitet u Sarajevu – Institut za istraživanje zločina protiv čovječnosti i međunarodnog prava, 2025

BOOK REVIEW

pages 96-111

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Book Review: "Tragovi genocida: Grapska 1992-1995" by Dr. Almir Grabovica (Sarajevo: Univerzitet u Sarajevu – Institut za istraživanje zločina protiv čovječnosti i međunarodnog prava, 2025).

The book *Tragovi genocida: Grapska 1992–1995* (*Traces of Genocide: Grapska 1992*-1995) by Dr. Almir Grabovica was published by the University of Sarajevo's Institute for Research of Crimes against Humanity and International Law in 2025. The work offers a methodologically consistent, empirically thorough, and scientifically relevant analysis of crimes committed against the Bosniak population of the Doboj Municipality, with a particular focus on the settlement of Grpska. The work is a case study that extends beyond the local context and analyzes primary sources and judicial practice.

The author does not view the said crimes as isolated incidents, but as a central element of a broader, planned, and ideologically driven project of aggression and genocide. This approach allows for a clear link between local crimes and political decisions, military structures, and strategic objectives that defined the War of Aggression against the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina from 1992 to 1995.[1]

One of the key values of the book lies in its consistent application of scientific methodology. The author relies on a comprehensive and diverse body of sources: archival materials, court documents from international and domestic courts, verdicts, transcripts, forensic reports, and survivors' testimonies. This approach enables a multilayered analysis in which qualitative insights complement quantitative data without compromising scientific objectivity.

It is especially important to emphasize that the author does not use testimonies merely as narrative illustrations but methodologically integrates them into the research's analytical framework. This avoids emotional descriptions lacking scientific weight and ensures that the presented conclusions are highly credible.

In the first chapter, "The War of Aggression against the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Crimes in the Doboj Municipality," the author establishes a historical and political framework in which the subsequent crimes form a logical sequence rather than spontaneous acts of violence. The author gives special attention to the militarization of the Doboj area, the establishment of a repressive apparatus, and the formation of camps and other detention facilities, including forced labor camps.

Chapter Two: "The Destruction and Demolition of Religious and Cultural Objects in the Doboj Municipality" analyzes the planned destruction of Bosniak religious and cultural-historical heritage. The author interprets this form of violence as an

1 Translator's Note: In English, the said war is most referred to as the Bosnian War (1992-1995).

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integral part of a genocidal process aimed at erasing the identity and historical presence of Bosniaks, rather than as mere collateral war damage.

The central analytical chapter of the book is the third – "The Crime of Genocide in Grapska near Doboj." Therein, the author thoroughly reconstructs the dynamics and forms of crimes against the civilian population of Grapska, determines the identities of the victims, and documents patterns of violence. Quantitative and qualitative data clearly indicate a planned and systematic elimination of the Bosniak community, thereby empirically confirming Grapska as a case study of genocide.

In chapter four, "Mass Graves," the author focuses on mass graves, the identification of remains, and the issue of forcibly disappeared persons. He particularly emphasizes the fact that the remains of all the murdered have not yet been found, which further confirms the scale of the crime and attempts to conceal it.

Chapter five, "Responsibility for Crimes Committed in Bosnia and Herzegovina with a Special Focus on the Doboj Municipality," provides a detailed analysis of the judicial practices of international and domestic courts, including the ICTY, the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, German courts, and the Court of Appeal in Belgrade. The author emphasizes the verdicts of German courts in the case of Nikola Jorgić, of exceptional importance for understanding the genocide against Bosniaks beyond Srebrenica.

In the sixth chapter, "Analysis of the Results of Own Research," the author synthesizes the results of many years of empirical work, providing a detailed analysis of the identities and numbers of victims, the structure of the crimes, and the methods used to commit them.

One of the book's most significant contributions is its reliance on German court verdicts, especially in the case of Nikola Jorgić. In doing so, the author gestures towards a serious reexamination of the dominant legal and public narrative about the spatial and temporal boundaries of the genocide against Bosniaks, which are often limited to Srebrenica and July 1995. Dr. Grabovica's scientific analysis clearly shows that the genocide was not confined to Srebrenica in July 1995 but had a wider territorial and temporal scope.

The rulings of the Higher Regional Court in Düsseldorf and the Federal Supreme Court of Germany, confirmed by the European Court of Human Rights, carry exceptional legal and historiographical significance. They unequivocally established that the murders, torture, illegal imprisonments, and forced expulsions of the Bosniak population in the Doboj region were carried out with genocidal intent – the intent to destroy the Bosniak community, its social integrity and sense of shared belonging, which constitutes an essential element of genocide according

to the 1948 UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

The empirical findings about crimes in Grapska gain their full interpretative power within this legal framework. Data on the eighty-two murdered Bosniak Muslim civilians, the statistics about the victims, the murder methods, and the systematic concealment of bodies clearly correspond with the criteria of genocide that German courts have already recognized and confirmed. Therefore, Grapska does not appear as an exception, but as a local manifestation of the broader genocidal policy carried out against Bosniaks in multiple parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The book thus deconstructs the common myth of the 'localization' of the Bosnian Genocide solely to Eastern Bosnia and Srebrenica, providing a solid foundation for further legal, historical, and scientific analyses of the nature of the war in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a war of aggression, accompanied by genocide. *Tragovi genocida: Grapska 1992–1995* is therefore a significant scientific contribution to genocide studies, as well as an important correction to narrow interpretations of genocide, grounded in verifiable facts, judicial practice, and long-term empirical research.

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ISSN 1840-3204