

## VII AFTERWORD

---

Writing a doctoral thesis for me resembled a cooking experience in which I was a chef who tirelessly experiments with various ingredients in order to create a gastronomic delicacy whose value only true connoisseurs will recognize. Creating a dish that will carry her name is a dream of every talented and ambitious chef. For there is no preexisting recipe, only the training in basic cooking techniques, followed by practice and practice and practice. If amidst never-ending peeling, cutting, chopping, stirring, boiling and roasting the chef still has the interest, energy or will to add something of herself in the existing repertoire of acclaimed dishes, then she possesses the attitude required to be able one day present a dish ‘a la chef’.

In the process of devising her own culinary signature, she has to accept burning, spilling, rumpling and crumbling as inevitable part of the process. However, the ceaseless effort pays off and one day the cooking wizard presents her edible concept to colleagues, friends and family. The reaction is – yummy! Relief, excitement, and joy. On the day when she has to formally present her innovation to a jury of gastronomic specialists across the field (New York Times culinary column, Michelin guide, Globus lifestyle section and the Relais & Chateaux gourmands guide), she panics, feels miserable, makes mistakes and notices every tiny *faux pas* she has made. There are flashbacks. She should have reduced basil and instead add more mint. She should have let it cool in a fridge for two instead of one hour. She should have...

But there is no time. The table is set, appetizers eaten and the judges ready for the main course. Dry-mouthed, she hears only the beating of her own heart while they consume her creation. Expecting the worst, she gets prepared for scorns, frowns and yawns. Surprise, she has survived the *onslaught* of critical remarks. Criticism is still echoing in her head, when, in disbelief, she hears compliments paid to her, to her, yes to her name.

Nobody suggested more mint. Instead, she got advice for some lemon grass, a touch of cardamom, perhaps some double cream and even a zucchini flower. But all in all, the creation ‘a la chef’ has been officially recognized. The lifelong exercise in excellence can continue.

X X X X X X X X X

This research started with my sincere interest in the politics of the international community towards the Balkans in general and Bosnia-Herzegovina in particular. In the end, this interest led me into doctoral studies. The result is this thesis – a testimony of where I stood at the beginning of my development as a scholar, a free thinker and a confident individual.

From the initial conceptualization, the research evolved just as the case evolved. The dual dynamism set the tone for the entire thesis. The decision to create such format was almost intuitive – I opted for following the progress of the case in order to capture most significant elements and changes in the intervention. One could almost say that this thesis employs the model of the Bosnian state building – the one of expansion, consolidation, and contraction.

The events on the ground forced me to move faster than a systematic doctoral analysis usually permits. Once I completed the information on a new set of events in Bosnia-Herzegovina, I would go back to literature. In this way, the case itself set the tone of the research, requiring additional exploration and dictating the selection of literature.

I mastered piles and piles of literature (the problem of yet another book on the subject before one can start writing a thesis is a nightmare of every doctoral student I know). As the intervention acquired more and more elements of the state building exercise, I moved from the literature on post-Cold War military interventions into the area of state building interventions. Once I came to mechanisms of state building – power sharing, consociationalism, ethnic quotas, parity formulas – I went back to literature.

Without question, this approach has its setbacks and the most visible one is the lack of systematic analysis. However, I will argue that the biggest asset of this thesis is its capacity to capture numerous elements of the intervention and to stand itself as an example of how complex the issue of post-war state building is. To me, it mattered more to present the full story, although it is not necessarily a neat one, than to present a neat, but inherently a partially true story.

To conclude, both this thesis and the intervention have been ones of tireless remodeling. As a metaphor, I could say that they resemble a ball of clay in an art student's hands. A few paragraphs and a few years were a collateral waste of the evolutionary approach, but clay is pliant material that can endure tireless clutching and wringing. If properly molded, heated and painted, the entity can survive decades, even centuries. Ceramics may not equal marble in its resilience in time, but today's sculptors are not, and perhaps should not be, new Michelangelos.