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# **Mountain Militarism and Urban Modernity: Balkanism, Identity and the Discourse of Urban–Rural Cleavages during the Bosnian War**

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## **Mountain Militarism and Urban Modernity: Balkanism, Identity and the Discourse of Urban–Rural Cleavages during the Bosnian War**

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### Abstract:

Recent years have witnessed a growth in research addressing the ways in which policymakers, academics and the media characterized the Bosnian war of the 1990s using a variety of problematic discursive frames. Relatively few scholars have explored how the conflict was often portrayed as a battle between innocent urban centres and an antagonistic countryside. This thesis\* uses a discourse analysis of Western and Bosnian textual material to argue that perceptions of the Bosnian war have been characterized by a discourse that attributes the violence to cleavages between urban Bosnians and their rural counterparts. Moreover, I engage post-colonial theory to demonstrate that this discourse of urban–rural cleavages, in which Western and Bosnian urban self-identity was constructed in opposition to the supposed atavism of the Bosnian countryside, is an advancement of Bakic-Hayden’s concept of “nesting Orientalisms.” My findings problematize a common representation of the conflict, expand the concept of nesting Orientalism and help us to understand why urban participation in the ideologies and violence of the Bosnian conflict has often gone unexamined.

(\*This working paper is a slight revision of the author’s MA thesis, which was defended at Simon Fraser University on January 11, 2017.)

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Ryan Graves currently works as an analyst with the British Columbia Ministry of Finance, where he coordinates and develops responses to issues regarding freedom of information and personal privacy; previously, he worked for the department of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. Ryan Graves holds a MA in International Studies from Simon Fraser University and a BA in International Relations from the University of British Columbia. His research interests include paramilitaries, arms trafficking, southeastern Europe and intrastate conflict.

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# **Mountain Militarism and Urban Modernity: Balkanism, Identity and the Discourse of Urban–Rural Cleavages during the Bosnian War**

## **1. Introduction and Theoretical Approach**

The animosity and violence that accompanied the disintegration of the Yugoslav state during the 1990s shocked many both inside and outside of the region. In particular, attempts by militant and nationalist groups to fracture Bosnia into “ethnically pure” ethno-religious states, quickly becoming the first instance of genocide in Europe since the Second World War, was a tragic surprise for many citizens and foreign observers who recalled Bosnia’s reputation as a place of amiable coexistence between Orthodox Christians, Muslims and Catholics. In response to this conflict, journalists, politicians and academics all strove to explain why pernicious xenophobia and violence had erupted in Bosnia after decades of peace. One of the first theories produced was that the Bosnian War was the inevitable consequence of intractable centuries-old hatreds in the region (Kaufman 2001, 3). While this theory was frequently espoused in major media outlets and had a significant impact on policy-makers, it was largely discredited in serious academic scholarship. Instead, academics often pointed to the role of macro-economic factors (Woodward 1995), opportunistic politicians (Bennett 1995, 63) and media manipulation (Allen and Seaton 1999) in fostering the tensions that beset Bosnia in the early 1990s.

However, another explanation exists, alleging that the Bosnian War was not an ethnic war but a struggle between two types of people in Yugoslavia: the progressive, tolerant and sophisticated urbanites and the coarse, rancorous and primitive rural denizens of Bosnia’s rugged countryside. According to this narrative, which appears to increasingly supplant the aforementioned “ancient hatreds” theory, aggressive ethno-nationalism was overwhelmingly a rural phenomenon and should be seen as the most recent reiteration of rural inhabitants historical anti-urbanism.

As this thesis will demonstrate, such a narrative has been repeated or alluded to by many Western and Bosnian journalists and intellectuals. Despite its prevalence, the notion that the

violence of the Bosnian War was a product of the Bosnian countryside has largely escaped critical examination in academic literature. Indeed, this thesis analyses several instances of Western scholars uncritically circulating this narrative in journal articles or monographs. The historically minded analysis of the relationship between highlander and lowlander ethno-psychological types in Yugoslavia by Marko Zivkovic (1997) is a noteworthy exception, as is Xavier Bougarel's sociological research on the "revenge of the countryside" (1999) and John Allock's work on the socio-economic dimensions of Yugoslavia's urban-rural differences (2002). All three authors recognize the importance of a supposed gulf between the city and the countryside in studying the roots of the conflict and their research has contributed greatly to this thesis and the field. However, all of the above scholars skirt the questions of identity and discourse that are central to the narrative of urban-rural cleavages. Existing literature on the relationship between urbanity and the Bosnian War generally uses the categories of "urban" or "rural" without considering the normative weight and historical baggage associated with such labels and eschewing the theoretical contributions made by post-colonial scholars.

I argue that the notion of a Bosnian society during the 1990s divided between two antithetical cohorts can be seen as part of an urban-rural cleavage discourse, in which local and foreign discussion of the Bosnian War rearticulates an image of the Bosnian countryside as a place of atavistic mores and violent "Balkan hatreds". This thesis examines the nature and prevalence of the urban-rural cleavage discourse through a post-colonial lens, by which the effects of colonization upon the ideas and identity of both the colonizer and the colonized can be studied. Using the notions and theories of post-colonialism in this thesis is an attempt to reveal to how this discourse, and the constructed "urban" and "rural" identities associated with it, should be conceptualized as a continuation of the historical discursive Othering of the Balkans.

The central aim of this thesis is not to conclusively ascertain the accuracy of the "urban" and "rural" labels or the notion of urban-rural cleavages. Rather, this thesis analyses these concepts in an effort to determine "what symbols they promoted, what images they projected, what interests they were meant to advance" (Bracewell and Drace-Francis 1999, 6), and in so doing problematize the constructed urban-rural binary. Moreover, this thesis advances Bakic-Hayden's concept of *nesting Orientalism* by demonstrating how the basis of Othering in Bosnia

relates not only to one's cultural status but also to one's perceived urban identity. In other words, I assert that Western and urban Bosnian self-identity was constructed in opposition to the supposed backwardness and hatred of rural Bosnians.

In summary, this thesis seeks to confront two main questions. First, in what way have urban–rural cleavages been linked to the hostilities in Bosnia? Second, how can a post-colonial theoretical framework, as elucidated by Said, Todorova and Bakic-Hayden, broaden and structure our understanding of the popularity of the urban–rural cleavage discourse among both foreign observers and urban Bosnians? This thesis addresses the above questions theoretically and empirically. The subsequent section of this chapter acts as a theoretical framework, introducing the foundations and assumptions of post-structural analysis, as well as its contributions to scholarship on the war in Bosnia. The section then introduces post-colonial theory by charting the growth of Said's concept of *Orientalism* and describing how this concept spurred Todorova's application of post-colonial theory to the Balkans, leading to the development of *Balkanism*. Further sections detail how the concept of nesting Orientalism was developed to describe the process of Othering within the region of the former Yugoslavia.

As a result, in Chapter 2 a methodology for empirical analysis of Western and Bosnian textual media and scholarship is devised with this theoretical framework in mind. Chapter 3 begins with an overview of the historical background behind the ideological relationship between urbanity, civilization and the idea of Europe. Next, this chapter charts the empirical results of my analysis, organizing the findings by source and theme, and then discusses the results to demonstrate how the findings of this thesis can be theoretically conceptualized by expanding Bakic-Hayden's concept of nesting Orientalism. Lastly, Chapter 4 summarizes the thesis and outlines its contributions and limitations.

## ***Theoretical Framework***

### *Post-structuralism and the Balkans*

Since the 1990s, there has been a proliferation of literature produced by journalists, public figures and academics that purports to explain the apparently senseless bloodshed that accompanied the break-up of Yugoslavia into its current successor states. However, one of the

principal weaknesses of many traditional academic accounts of the civil war has been their reliance on a materialist ontology and their inattention to the ways in which the conflict was conceptualized and explained by the wider public. In addition, traditional analyses of the war concentrate on the interests of the various states and militias, failing to see the way in which the identities of these groups were often formulated in opposition to each other. Fortunately, the publication of academic literature on the Bosnian War coincided with a mounting number of articles in civil war studies and international relations that utilized constructivist perspectives. Constructivists contend that social facts are dependent upon human agreement and that “the manner in which social facts become established is considered relevant to the way in which they exert their influence” (Adler 1997, 339). Accompanying the constructivist turn was a renewed application of post-structural analysis to violent conflict.

As a result of these two trends, scholars have begun to pay particular attention to coverage of the conflict in the media and in academia, discovering that popular explanations of the conflict often relied upon essentializing stereotypes and depoliticized explanations (Hammond 2005). Scholars have worked especially hard to dismantle the pernicious notion that the Bosnian War was rooted in so-called “ancient/tribal hatreds” (Guzina 1999). David Campbell’s thorough book *National Deconstruction* (1998) is the premiere post-structural reappraisal of the conflict’s causes. Campbell expanded the boundaries of the intellectual debate by providing a counter-narrative to the mainstream representation of the war as an inevitable outcome of the “unnatural” cohabitation of various national identities on a shared territory. According to Campbell, the idea of supposedly historical ethnic divisions was fabricated post facto to justify violence and was then parroted by Western journalists, policymakers and politicians.

Another seminal work on the Bosnian War was Lene Hansen’s *Security as Practice* (2006), which utilized post-structural theory to meticulously outline links between Western foreign policy and identity. In addition to providing a helpful methodological template for discourse analysis (elucidated in the Methodology chapter of this thesis) Hansen scrutinizes Western political debates and media reports to show how different degrees of otherness in the Balkans drove Western policymaking in that region. Hansen also identifies the development of a



“Balkan Discourse” in which the notorious tribal hatreds and intractable violence of the Balkans legitimized a policy of tragic inaction (Chapter 6). According to Hansen, a “Genocide Discourse,” in which multi-cultural Bosnia represented European identity and Western inaction posed a threat to Western identity, soon challenged the “Balkan Discourse” (Chapter 6). While Hansen’s analysis of the West’s construction of the Balkans is penetrating, she mostly neglects to look at the self-representation of the Balkans by the people of the region themselves. In addition, Hansen stops short of fully developing her concept of a middle position between the “Other” and the “Self” in her analysis of how otherness conditioned Western policymaking.

One of the great advantages of post-structural scholarship like that of Hansen and Campbell, as well as the post-colonial research that was post-structuralism’s theoretical progeny, is that it recognizes the importance of discourse in conflicts, which can reveal how dominant conceptions are created and how alternative representations are excluded, often implicitly. Moreover, post-structural scholarship recognizes the important linkages between power and knowledge; in the words of its founding father, “power and knowledge are mutually supportive; they directly imply one another” (Foucault 1979, 27). Since the central focus of my research is the creation and propagation of a discourse painting the conflict as a result of urban–rural tensions, I adopt a post-structural approach to the subject matter. Furthermore, since I conceive of this discourse as an extension of the West’s self-identity construction in opposition to a supposed Other, the post-colonial approach popularized by Edward Said will also be used.

### *Post-Colonialism*

Said’s seminal work *Orientalism* (1978) significantly ruptured academic understandings of the West’s relationship with the Orient, creating an entire subfield of international relations theory and shifting third world studies away from the prevailing paradigms of economic development and modernization and toward cultural and discursive analysis. Said refined and furthered the discourse analysis pioneered by Foucault to explore how Western scholars, writers and artists essentialized the Orient in order to justify imperialist attitudes and policies. Like many other post-structural scholars, Said did not simply treat the discourse of Orientalism as a static ideology but instead chose to trace the development of the discourse from its beginnings at the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century to its current manifestation. Through myriad textual examples, Said

revealed how the Western image of the Orient became one of despotism, beguiling sensuality, and irrationality, with the corresponding European self-image of good governance, virtue and rationality.

Said's critique was not, however, an attempt to portray the French, British and now American scholars who specialized in the Orient as necessarily untruthful or malevolent but rather to illustrate the extent to which the discipline was embedded in a colonial understanding of the world, resulting in an academic perception of the Orient that justified Western dominance. In fact, Said's commanding book was less about the Middle East and more about the Western self-perception that resulted from a collection of self-professed experts who constructed an intellectual system that determined what the Middle East "was" and who could "know" it. While Said concentrated on Europe's depictions of the Middle East, his approach and conceptual framework led to an outpouring of subsequent studies that applied post-colonial and Orientalist theory to numerous other contexts (Gorovogui 2007).

Said's concept of Orientalism and approach toward discourse plays a crucial role in my research as it provides a helpful conceptual framework for understanding the creation of a discourse that delineates the Self and the Other. In the case of this thesis, Orientalism can help to show how urban Yugoslav self-identity was centered on its contrast to the rural Other. However, while there was overt imperial subjugation of the Middle East by the colonial powers of Europe, the relationship between western and south-eastern Europe has been more complicated, with its own particular set of imperialist nuances and representations. As a result, while the European understanding of the Balkans mirrors many aspects of Orientalism, Said's concepts cannot necessarily be applied neatly to the region. Consequently, in this section I will seek to chart the various theoretical outcomes of post-colonial scholarship's study of the Balkans.

While several scholars have conducted acclaimed research regarding Europe's identity vis-à-vis Eastern Europe (Wolff 1994; Neumann 1999; Bejlic and Savic 2002; Kuus 2004), Milica Bakic-Hayden and Robert Hayden were the first to extend post-colonial theory to south-eastern Europe specifically, seeing a direct parallel between the attitude of Europeans toward the Balkans and the foundational logic and narrative that underpinned Orientalism (Bakic-Hayden and Hayden 1992). Hayden and Bakic-Hayden assert that the logic of Orientalism can be found

in the writings of foreign journalists as well as from some Yugoslavs themselves, albeit primarily from the northern regions of the state (2). The authors point to how the centuries of Ottoman, thus Oriental, rule in the Balkans led to a rhetoric that represented the Balkans as a cultural, political and religious other to the “proper” Europe of north-western Europe (3). Furthermore, the new demarcation of liberal west and oppressed east during the Cold War replicated and solidified this symbolic geography (3).

Intersecting this symbolic geography is the perceived hierarchy of religions in the Balkans, with Croatian or Slovenian Catholicism seen as more “European” (and thus more desirable) than the Orthodox Christianity of the Serbs, which is in turn perceived as more “European” than the Islamic faith of the Bosniaks or Kosovars (5). It is at this point that the authors introduce the concept of “nesting Orientalisms” (4), or a system in which each region perceives its own culture, religion and society as superior to those of its more southern counterpart; this concept is developed further in subsequent research by Bakic-Hayden (1995) and will be elaborated upon later in this thesis. In this imaginary chain, with the Protestant powers of Northern Europe at its apex, the seemingly neutral distinction between northern and southern, eastern and western, becomes irrevocably imbued with meaning, privileging and valorizing the Catholic and former Hapsburg regions over those that governed by the Ottomans (Bakic-Hayden and Hayden 1992, 5).

Through numerous examples from the media and journals, the authors demonstrate how contemporary stereotypes of the various ethnic groups in the Balkans are based upon the religions of conquerors that have been absent from the region for more than a century, with one *New York Times* article (6 April 1990, A8) deeming the Slovenes to be “industrious Roman Catholic Slavs whose culture was shaped by centuries spent under Austrian rule” in contrast with their “strange and threatening” Muslim or Orthodox neighbours. The Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek was also one of the first scholars to comment on the parallels between European attitudes toward the Orient, and European attitudes toward the Balkans. Žižek’s explication of the Balkans’ imaginary and intangible location within Europe fits with Said’s conception of the Orient as an ill-defined region, detached from any specific lands. Additionally, borrowing no doubt from his background in psychoanalysis, Žižek claims that the Balkans serves as Europe’s

“persistent reminder of its own past” (1992), a ghost that reminds Europe of its own past of bloody ethnic violence, long since tamed by European civilization. Zizek’s critique becomes even more provocative, alleging that the Balkans constitutes a “place of exception with regard to which the tolerant multiculturalist is allowed to act out his/her repressed racism” (1992) since the condemnation is directed not at people of colour but at white Europeans.

### *Balkanism*

While Hayden, Bakic-Hayden and Zizek saw replicas of the West’s disparaging view of the Middle East in Europe’s attitude toward southeastern Europe, other scholars have argued that Orientalism is an inadequate or even misleading designation. While written several years after Bakic-Hayden’s article on nesting Orientalisms, Maria Todorova’s much-discussed *Imagining the Balkans* (1997) was the book that brought the debate over the representation of the Balkans to the forefront of post-colonial research. Like Said, Todorova spends a significant portion of her book drawing on an extensive array of travelogues, letters, academic treatises and journalistic accounts to outline the development of “the Balkans” as an idea through the last several centuries. Furthermore, Todorova’s consistent treatment of every text as a discursive interaction between the reader, the writer and the existing literature represents a brilliant example of intertextuality in action.

However, Todorova also recognizes the importance of a multiplicity of disciplinary perspectives in her endeavour and thus reinforces her post-colonial theory with references to other scholars of national identity like Benedict Anderson and Ernest Gellner. While Bakic-Hayden makes no mention of the Balkan wars of the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Todorova posits that it is this conflict that associated the Balkans with intractable and primordial conflict in the minds of outside observers, an association that resurged during the 1990s to dominate western coverage of the civil war. In addition to the already prevailing stereotypes of tribalism and underdevelopment, “Balkan violence” came to define Western imagery of the Balkans. For Todorova, the relationship between Europe and the Balkans is too complex to be understood simply as Orientalism, deserving instead its own term: *Balkanism*. Todorova defends the creation of this new term by defining several crucial differences between the Balkans and the Orient.

First, while Todorova also records several of the Orientalist characterisations Bakic-Hayden points to, she argues that many of the “Oriental” traits were never attributed to the Balkans. For example, Todorova points to Said’s observation that the West saw itself as mechanistic compared to the refined, mystic and exotic sensuality of the Orient (11). In contrast, Western representations of the Balkans portrayed the land and its people as crude, brutish and primitive (11). In the words of Bozo Jezernik, the word ‘Balkans’ conjures “a negative connotation of slovenliness, passivity, unreliability, disrespect toward women, conniving, unscrupulousness, opportunism, laziness, superstition, inconsistent and overzealous bureaucracy and so forth” (2003, 23).

Second, while Said pointed to an Orientalism produced by Europe against an Other *outside* of Europe, Todorova looks at the Balkans as a transitory space inside, or at least alongside, Europe, similar to Europe but fundamentally incomplete. For Todorova, Balkanism represents the “imputed” ambiguity, the differences within a single type, while Orientalism represents the imputed opposition between two types, the West and the Orient. The marginal position of the Balkans within Europe’s symbolic cartography was exacerbated by the historical fact of the Ottoman conquest; indeed, one traditional English moniker for the Balkans before the 19<sup>th</sup> Century was “Turkey-in-Europe” (Glenny 1999, 12). The Balkans’ simultaneous inclusion and exclusion from symbolic Europe contributed to its image as bridge between West and East, as well as a bridge between levels of growth (Todorova 1997, 16). The portrayal of the Balkans as locked in a marginal or transitional state is crucial, as transitional states are considered dangers, both to themselves and to others (17). At the same time, Todorova claims, the people of the Balkans constructed their own self-identity against their own Orient, be it the Ottoman Empire or even their “less-European” neighbour; here Todorova is echoing Bakic-Hayden’s concept of nesting Orientalism. Regrettably, Todorova’s sampling of Yugoslav intellectuals and commentators is rather sparse and she stops short of exploring the role of local self-representation.

In addition to their physical presence in or at the doorstep of Europe, the inhabitants of the Balkans remain, particularly in skin colour, outwardly similar to Europeans. Todorova also points to the overwhelmingly Islamic character of the Orient as opposed to the Christianity of

both Northern Europe and the Balkans, although she seems to ignore the hierarchy of Catholicism and Orthodoxy that Bakic-Hayden revealed. Todorova, in opposition to Hayden and Bakic-Hayden, argues that the people of the Balkans haven't been orientalized but rather have been represented as "the differences within one type" (19). Put differently, the people of the Balkans are allowed to be "European" and white but are seen as less civilized and more bloodthirsty than the prototypical European. Finally, Todorova distinguishes Balkanism from Said and Bakic-Hayden's Orientalism by arguing that the Balkans, while it may possess fluid and intellectually contested borders, does occupy a more concrete geographical space than the amorphous and "intangible nature of the Orient" ever did (16).

Andrew Hammond has parsed the differences between the Balkanist and the Orientalist post-colonial approaches to the Balkans in even greater detail. Hammond points out that there was never an established field of Balkan studies in Western academia, in contrast to the extensive field of Oriental linguistic, historical and textual study that was, according to Said, the most important foundation for modern Orientalism (Hammond 2007, 202). In fact, Hammond draws on his background in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century literature to illustrate how European writings on the Balkans were not academic studies but, more typically, in the form of adventure fiction or travelogues (203). Hammond notes that most popular literature regarding the Balkans has traditionally been addressed to non-specialists and written by supposed experts drawing on journalistic or travel experience; the popularity of these accounts has usually exploded in tandem with the outbreak of violence in the region (203).

In the end, Hammond finds Balkanism to be more than a mere sub-species of Orientalism; instead, it is an identity of its own, neither Oriental nor European. In addition to lacking the tradition of formal knowledge-production that was part of Orientalism, the Balkans also had a different experience of European imperialism. While Said repeatedly emphasized the imperial context of Orientalism's discourse production, Hammond concurs with Todorova's assertion that the absence of European or American imperial interests in the Balkans led to a different representation of it in the Western mind. According to Todorova, her "predisposition for historical specificity" (16) prevented her from finding any instances of colonialism or

imperialism, strictly defined. While this commitment to specificity is commendable, I fear that the author risks missing out on the insights that can be produced by comparing the period of Ottoman or Austro-Hungarian rule to the era of Western colonialism in the Middle East. Moreover, both Hammond and Todorova fail to engage with the growing body of literature that describes the EU and American relationship with the region as neo-colonial (Petrovic 2010; Jusdanis 1998; Lisiak 2010).

Nevertheless, any shortfalls of the Balkanist approach are more than compensated for by Todorova's thorough research, which is buttressed by an astounding variety and amount of primary sources, and by the historical and geographic specificity of Todorova's concepts. Moreover, Todorova correctly points out the significance of the Balkans symbolic location, their "in-betweenness" (18), a distinction overlooked by Hayden and Bakic-Hayden who saw the cognitive division separating Europe and the Orient in simpler binary terms, leading me to generally prefer her concept of Balkanism over Hayden and Bakic-Hayden's concept of Orientalism in the Balkans.

### *Nesting Orientalism/Balkanism*

As mentioned earlier, Milica Bakic-Hayden and Robert Hayden coined the term nesting Orientalism to describe the way in which various regions within Yugoslavia and its contemporary successor states construct an image of their neighbour to be less "European" and more "Oriental" than themselves. The concrete consequences of this phenomenon have been pointed to by scholars like Cveta Koneska (2007), who attributes the failure of formal regionalization in the Balkans to a nesting Orientalism that spurred "competition between states on how not be associated with the Balkans" (83). Additionally, Nicole Lindstrom (2003) argues that Slovenia's accession to the European Union, nearly a decade before Croatia's acceptance, was due in part to Slovenia's successful differentiation of itself from the Balkans (317).

Three years after Bakic-Hayden devised the term nesting Orientalism, she revisited it in an article that explored the term in further depth, defining it as "a pattern of reproduction of the original dichotomy upon which Orientalism is premised" (Bakic-Hayden 1995, 918). Bakic-Hayden observed that, for many in Europe, the frontier of the Balkans was always southeast of

the speaker, a symbolic cartography that privileged one's own position as a tolerant, rational and disciplined European at the expense of the Oriental 'other' (Bakic-Hayden and Hayden 1992, 4). Orientalism, according to Bakic-Hayden's theory, has long been redeployed internally in an effort to cast the Balkan image off of oneself and onto another. Put differently, the various inhabitants of the Balkans concurred with the Balkan stereotypes propagated by northern Europeans but consistently attributed these stereotypes to the Other below them on the map (Volcic 2007, 173; Luhar and Luhar 2003). Zizek described the unfolding of nesting Orientalisms in the Balkans thusly:

For Serbs, [the Balkans] begin in Kosovo or in Bosnia where Serbia is trying to defend civilised Christian Europe against the encroachments of this Other. For the Croats, the Balkans begins in Orthodox, despotic and Byzantine Serbia, against which Croatia safeguards Western democratic values. For many Italians and Austrians, they begin in Slovenia, the Western outpost of the Slavic hordes. For many Germans, Austria is tainted with Balkan corruption and inefficiency; for many Northern Germans, Catholic Bavaria is not free of Balkan contamination. Many arrogant Frenchmen associate Germany with Eastern Balkan brutality – it lacks French finesse. Finally, to some British opponents of the European Union, Continental Europe is a new version of the Turkish Empire with Brussels as the new Istanbul – a voracious despotism threatening British freedom and sovereignty. (1999, 3)

Geographic proximity to Turkey, the archetypal Orient on Europe's doorstep, is not the only axis upon which the Balkan symbolic geography is constantly being divided and re-divided into Europe and the Orient. In addition to the privileging of Catholicism over Orthodoxy and Islam, Bakic-Hayden (1992, 4) writes that distinctions are made on the basis of script (Cyrillic and Latin) and 20<sup>th</sup> Century ideology (capitalist and socialist, Warsaw Pact and non-aligned). This process has also been termed a "delegating mechanism" by Kuus (2004), in which countries discover the foreign disdain for their nation and their culture and thus develop "an inferiority complex... which shifts to finding the 'other' outside one's nation to blame" (Anderson 2007, 6).

The concept of nesting Orientalism is an invaluable tool in understanding identity in Europe but there are several gaps in Bakic-Hayden's theory that I wish to fill in this thesis. First, while Bakic-Hayden focused on cataloguing and critiquing instances of nesting Orientalism in the years preceding or during the fragmentation of Yugoslavia, I seek to illustrate how an orientalist discourse that emphasized the supposed gulf between the violent and primitive



countryside and a peaceful urbanity existed throughout the decades previous and has been deployed even after the war. Furthermore, Bakic-Hayden, Kuus and Andersen fail to consider the possibility that “nesting” does not only take place between nationalities or “outside one’s nation.” Consequently, I will widen the debate on nesting Orientalism by demonstrating that “nesting” can also occur within a nation, even between members of the same ethno-religious group. Lastly, I assert that “nesting Orientalism” is better termed “nesting *Balkanism*” instead, since Todorova’s concept of Balkanism more accurately reflects the liminal and semi-peripheral nature of the Balkans and captures the particular negative popular image of the Balkans. Accordingly, I will henceforth use the term “nesting Balkanism” to denote the process in which groups in the Balkans reproduce dominant constructed hierarchies of Otherness.

It should be noted at this point that I am mindful of the potential risks in applying a theory about the Balkans in general to Bosnia, a single country. However, I maintain that this approach is defensible given the extent to which Bosnia and “the Balkans” were often conflated by outside observers. Indeed, many Western writers and journalists regarded the Bosnian conflict of the 1990s as something inherently “Balkan,” characterized by a uniquely “Balkan violence” and “Balkan hatred” (Hatzopolous 2008, 42). Many of the most influential and popular books on the war make explicit connections between the violence in Bosnia itself and the wider region, ignoring the fact that most other republics and states transitioned relatively peacefully into post-socialist systems.<sup>1</sup> As Todorova points out, the Spanish Civil War was never described as an Iberian war and the Greek Civil War escaped the “Balkan” label (186). Thus, the deliberate externalizing of the Bosnian War to the ‘Balkans’ and its attendant negative images is indicative of the Balkanism already elucidated earlier in this thesis. With its supposed internecine butchery and its Byzantine politics, Bosnia represents the archetypal Balkan nation in the minds of many Westerners (Burg and Shoup 1999, 18). Since Bosnia and the Balkans are regularly, and purposefully, used interchangeably by popular commentators, and I am analyzing popular narratives of the Bosnian War, I assert that Todorova and Bakic-Hayden’s theoretical precepts on

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<sup>1</sup> For example: *Balkan Tragedy* (1995), *Balkan Babel* (1992), *The Fall of Yugoslavia: the Third Balkan War* (1992), *The Fragmentation of Yugoslavia: Nationalism and War in the Balkans* (1997), *Balkan Odyssey* (1995).

identity and representation in the Balkans are not only applicable but acutely significant in Bosnia itself.

In summary, I study how the Bosnian war was constructed as a battle between the city and the countryside by building upon the theoretical foundations provided by post-structuralism and post-colonialism in several ways. First, inspired by the contributions given by Hansen and Campbell's post-structural analysis, I focus on how a discourse of urban–rural cleavages developed and conditioned the way in which the conflict was represented to Bosnians and the world. Second, I use Said, Bakic-Hayden and Todorova's understandings of identity and construction of an 'other' to demonstrate that the idea of an urban–rural divide, largely ignored by those authors, should also be recognized as a salient axis upon which civilized Europe was delineated from the rural Orient during the Bosnian War. Third, I build upon and reformulate Bakic-Hayden's concept of nesting Orientalism to argue that the widespread usage of the "urban–rural cleavage" discourse within Bosnia should be seen as a manifestation of nesting Balkanism.

## **2. Analyzing Textual Discourse: A Methodology**

Since "the intentions of the analyst always guides the theory and method" (Rogers 2004, 3), my goal of illuminating and historicizing the prevalent discourse of urban–rural cleavages benefits from the tools of discourse analysis. Consequently, I utilize discourse analysis to answer my research questions. While discourse analysis is marked by its vast internal heterogeneity (Laffey and Weldes, 2004), its foundations rest in Michel Foucault's seminal *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969), which marked a shift in academia towards supplementing analysis of the material world with analysis of the way in which things are discussed and conceptualized. Foucault posited that knowledge (and therefore power) was produced through discourse. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin describe Foucault's theory of discourse as:

... a system of statements within which the world can be known. It is the system by which dominant groups in society constitute the field of truth by imposing specific knowledge's, disciplines and values upon dominated groups. As a social formation it works to constitute reality not only for the objects it appears to represent, but also for the subject who form the community on which it depends. (2000, 42)

Indeed, discourse analysis eschews attempts to assert “Truths” in favour of analyzing how power is constituted through language and knowledge. Foucault’s concepts of social order inform this thesis’ approach to power and discourse, but conducting discourse analysis requires additional methodological and theoretical understandings, which can be broken down into several parts.

First, while I share with constructivist scholars their understanding of meaning as something constructed by people, my analysis follows the example of most other discourse theorists by also analyzing who has the authority to construct meaning and identity, and in what manner. The poststructuralist focus on relationally constituted identity is a fundamental ontological departure from conventional constructivist theory (Hansen 2006, 21). Accordingly, discourse analysis’ concentration on privileged positions and binary oppositions is a crucial trait that distinguishes it from other interpretive methodologies (Milliken 1999). Thus, I hope to situate those who propagated this discourse in the wider power structures of Yugoslavia and Europe in order to illustrate how “the authority to speak” shaped the way in which the discourse of rural militant anti-urbanism was formed and disseminated. The role of academics in legitimating certain discourses due to their esteemed position as holders of scientific “truth” is especially critical (Milliken 1999) and will be an important part of my analysis. However, it is important to consider Richard Price’s admonition that scholars should not assume that the power hierarchies behind dominant norms necessarily align with material power hierarchies (Price 1995, 88). Consequently, my discourse analysis will remain cognizant of the fact that military power and capability in Bosnia was often wholly separate from ideological and normative power and capability.

The second component of discourse analysis is to determine the object’s place relative to other objects, revealing how an object’s identity is relationally constructed. Consequently, I will examine how rural areas and their citizens were categorized and conceptualized in direct opposition to their urban counterparts in the literature mentioned above. To be specific, my analysis summarized briefly above will focus on the detailed manifestations of discourse in language (Fairclough, 1995). For instance, does the text under analysis use ‘loaded’ or emotive language (e.g. “rednecks” and “hillbillies”)? Grammatically, what does the pronoun usage of the

author reveal about their identities (e.g. “us” and “them”)? What is the prevalence of evidentialities in the text; are there phrases that imply assumed factualities (e.g. “it is well known that...)? Does the writer rely upon suggestive rhetorical techniques (e.g. hyperboles, historical allusions, similes)? These are the sorts of questions that will guide my collection of material and determine what material is relevant to my thesis. Naturally, I will not focus solely on the specific language communicated but will analyze the language within the social and political environment; as Tarik Jusic (2009) puts it, “to analyze discourse is to analyze meanings that emerge through the use of language in context” (31).

Of course, discovering and collecting this sort of material is not sufficient without careful interpretation. Consequently, I will engage in an explanation of how the urban–rural cleavage discourse operates and what it means for our understanding of the Bosnian civil war. My interpretation will be couched in the theoretical understandings of Todorova. Inspired by Said’s ontology of the Orient in Western imagination, Todorova developed the concept of Balkanism, asserting that Western Europeans constructed the Balkans as a place of primitivism and violence, against which Europe could build a self-identity as a place of modernity and enlightenment (7). I hope to use Balkanism as a theoretical lens through which one can understand how and why the urban–rural discourse was reproduced.

The discursive material being analysed in this thesis is textual, due to the preponderance of written material produced on the Bosnian conflict (e.g. newspaper reports, editorials, books, journal articles, periodicals, etc.) and the easy accessibility of written material from decades past. Visual material (e.g. photographs, documentaries, television reporting) was a major medium during the period of the Yugoslav conflict and there is certainly potential for invigorating research on the portrayal of Bosnia’s urban–rural cleavage in television journalism and cinema. However, a proper analysis of discourse in visual material, with an examination of the speech, images, music, sound and cinematography involved, deserves a more comprehensive and expansive analysis than allowed by the confines of this thesis. Furthermore, visual material on Yugoslavia produced from decades past is relatively scarce, thus potentially limiting the historical scope of my analysis.

As a result, books, academic publications and journalistic reports are my primary sources for Western opinion on the urban–rural cleavage. News media accounts of the conflict will be especially highlighted as I see them as a potent source of power, in line with other scholars of international politics (Dalby 1990). Print media’s “ubiquity, coupled with intensity of usage, public attention and political influence, should generate an intrinsic interest... [it] very much reflects the social mainstream” (Kryzanowski and Wodak 2008b, 32). Public statements and interviews, novels and academic research will be my primary source for Yugoslav opinion. The diversity of genres selected in this thesis is the result of an attempt to illustrate how certain modes of imagining the Balkans permeate epistemic boundaries, crossing both scholarly and non-scholarly modes of knowledge.

While there are obvious practical challenges in studying discourse in such a range of materials, there are potential gains to be made from intertextualization, which can be a potent method of discovering cross-genre similarities in discourse (Hopf 2012). The concept of intertextuality stems from Julia Kristeva’s (1980) exploration of how meaning is mediated through ideas and symbols embedded in other texts. Kristeva’s theory of intertextuality represents a reappraisal of the idea of intersubjectivity, in which meaning is imparted directly from the writer to the reader (69). Kristeva’s concepts were elaborated further by Roland Barthes (1977), who demonstrated that a text’s meaning is embedded not only in the text itself but also woven into a wider network of pre-existing texts. On a practical level, scholars discern intertextuality by tracing links between texts “through continued reference to a topic or main actors; through reference to the same events; or by transfer of main arguments from one text into the next” (Kryzanowski and Wodak 2008a, 205). As a result, my analysis will emphasize the ways in which the material I analyze is engaged in an implicit, or even explicit, dialogue with other material.

Regarding the source material to be analyzed in my research, I find that the ideal types suggested by Hansen in *Security as Practice* (2006) for designing discourse analysis are helpful in structuring the analytical scope of my research. Hansen stresses the importance of intertextualization when analysing discourse, not only between different authors at similar levels but also between texts produced by different genres (50-55). In keeping with her commitment to

the development of organized discourse analysis methodologies, Hansen has devised four categories, or models, for intertextual research on the basis of what material a researcher is analyzing (53-59). The official discourse produced by heads of state, senior civil servants and high-ranking military personnel is the analytical focus of Model 1, while Model 2 incorporates the discourse of opposition to these governing figures. For instance, research designed along Hansen's Model 2 would look at the discourse propagated by both official government pronouncements as well as the discourse produced in parliamentary debates or within newspaper editorials. Model 3's analytical scope expands to embrace nongovernmental material that does not overtly engage with the official discourse (Model 3A) or which is explicitly engaging with official discourse but only from the margins of the public debate (Model 3B). Hansen sees Model 3A as focusing on cultural representations in popular culture and the arts, while Model 3B analyzes material produced by academics, non-governmental organizations and marginal newspapers and books.

For Hansen, discourse analysis is at its strongest when texts from multiple models are analysed in conjunction, allowing the analyst to discern the dominance of a discourse and the extent to which it is reproduced or challenged through references to other texts (190). Thus, my analysis will draw from multiple models in an effort to illuminate how various sites of knowledge production constructed a discourse of urban-rural cleavages to explain the war in Bosnia. Since I seek to chart and problematize a discourse found in both popular print media and academic literature surrounding the Bosnian civil war, this thesis analyzes source material from Model 2 and Model 3B. This thesis will not, however, include an analysis of material at the level of Model 1. There has already been a great deal of impressive research in recent years on the discourse produced at the highest level of government regarding the conflict in Bosnia. Furthermore, the urban-rural cleavage discourse explicated in this thesis was largely absent in the discourse produced by Western generals, policymakers and politicians, whose statements and policies engaged instead in the "genocide discourse" or in what scholars have deemed the "ancient hatreds." Popular culture and other artistic material produced under the umbrella of Model 3A is beyond the capabilities and scope of this thesis. However, I have little doubt that an analysis of this sort of material by a researcher with greater time, and a first-hand knowledge of local cultural nuances and references, could reinforce and broaden the findings of this thesis.

Most of the material I analyze has been accessed virtually, with online databases being used to reach academic sources from the countries of the former Yugoslavia as well as from Western Europe, the United States, Canada and Australia. Most major news services, Western or otherwise, have digitized their coverage of the Bosnian civil war. I have used LexisNexis Academic, an online electronic database of full-text articles, as the main avenue of accessing this journalistic coverage of the war. In gathering my source material, I searched for news articles written in English between January 1991 and January 1996, roughly one year before and one year after the war in Bosnia, which mention the words “Bosnia” or “Yugoslavia” along with the words “war”, or “conflict” or “battle”.

The large amount of results returned by this search precluded an exhaustive analysis of every result, so I devised a ‘stopping rule’, a point at which I could cease collecting and analyzing material. Post-structuralist discourse analysis operates without a codified quantitative methodology, so researchers cannot easily rely upon statistical significance to determine the optimal amount of texts for analysis (Hansen 2006, 77). Moreover, sample size is less of a focus in many studies of discourse analysis than the variety of ways in which language is used (Potter and Wetherell 1987, 161). Consequently, my stopping rule is based on Milliken’s suggestion to halt analysis when “upon adding new texts and comparing their object spaces, the research finds consistently that the theoretical categories she has generated work for those texts” (Milliken 1999, 234). My selection of texts from within these initial results also follows Hansen’s recommendation on determining whether a text is important enough to be included in my analysis by assessing whether it has influenced a wide audience or come from a speaker who has the authority to influence the topic being discussed (Hansen 2006, 79). In the end, I ceased my data collection after looking through a total of 440 newspaper articles and editorials. A representative sample of the urban–rural cleavage narrative found within many of these articles, and my analysis of it, is included in Chapter 3 of this thesis (in the section titled “A ‘Deliverance Scenario’ ...”).

Since these articles are downloaded from an online database, non-textual elements of the source material, such as layout, surrounding articles and accompanying images, cannot be taken into account. While these elements can offer additional support to a discourse analysis, the

breadth of such analysis is beyond this thesis' resources. Another potential limitation of my source material is that many smaller newspapers have not yet digitized issues published during the Bosnian war. However, given that most of these papers would have been reproducing content generated by the larger media companies and my interest is in analyzing material that reflected and influenced popular opinion, I contend that my inability to access these sources has had little impact on the research as a whole.

All textual material studied in this thesis was written or translated into English, as I cannot read Serbo-Croatian. Fortunately, English is the *lingua franca* of Western academia and most writers from the Yugoslav states had their works translated in order to reach audiences outside of the immediate region (Filipovic 2013). As mentioned earlier, texts were selected based upon a consideration of whether the text in question influenced a wide audience or was produced by someone with the authority to influence the topic. There are certainly un-translated texts that pertain to my topic but that are directed for, and consumed by, Bosnian audiences only. However, the focus of this thesis on material produced by the higher levels of academia and journalism engaging in a dialogue with international audiences (Model 2 and Model 3B in Hansen's blueprint) suggests that these texts would be of comparatively lesser value for my analysis.

### **3. A Discourse Analysis of the Bosnian Conflict**

The purpose of this chapter is to present the findings of this thesis' discourse analysis by detailing the various ways in which the urban–rural discourse manifests itself in textual sources. I commence with a brief overview of the social and historical circumstances that have led to the West's contemporary understand of the relationship between violence, the city and civilization. I then move to studying Western portrayals of the conflict as a rural phenomenon so that I can illustrate the Balkanism inherent in such a narrative – first analyzing Western newspapers printed during the conflict or in the immediate aftermath of hostilities, and then analyzing post-war academic literature on the Bosnian War. In the final sections of this chapter I narrow the scope of my analysis and 'zoom in' on the portrayal of the conflict by Yugoslavs and Bosnians themselves to refine my analysis and demonstrate how the Balkanist urban–rural cleavage



discourse found in Western writing on the conflict was not simply projected by the West upon a passive Balkan audience but was reproduced and reinforced by elite and urban citizens.

### *The City and Civilization in the Western Imagination*

The discourse of urban–rural cleavages, like other discourses and interpretative frames, arises from being evoked by texts and also by being invoked by the readers of those texts (Fillmore, 1985: 232). In other words, the urban–rural cleavage discourse is articulated and propagated in two ways. First, the discourse is evoked by the metaphors, lexical choices, and other linguistic mechanisms of the writer. Second, the discourse is invoked by the interpreter of a text who works through a text by interpreting it against a background of urban and rural stereotypes. Before analysing how the urban–rural cleavage discourse has been textually articulated in Western reporting and scholarship, it is important to give a brief, and by no means comprehensive, overview of the normative connotations that condition the interpreter’s “invoking” of a text. In the following paragraphs, I will explain how a discourse equating urbanity with civilisation and peaceful tolerance rests upon several normative assumptions with deep roots in Yugoslavia and the Western world.

It should come as no surprise that terms such as “urban,” “rural,” “peasant” and “urbanite” are far from neutral. Indeed, before moving to explain how Western and urban self-identity were constructed in opposition to the rural and alpine areas of Bosnia, it is important to keep in mind the charged significance of the aforementioned terms.<sup>2</sup> The conception of “the city” as “the setting for a [more] civilized life” in the Western popular imagination has been traced back by many to the classical world, with city-states becoming the foremost sites of socio-political organization (Short 1991, 41).

In addition, the city represented freedom from the sovereign after the Middle Ages in northern Europe, although this representation was less common in the Balkans where cities were the locus of regional control and the most visible representation of Constantinople’s imperial

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<sup>2</sup> I focus on the Western connotative significance of ‘the city’ and ‘the countryside’ due to this paper’s concern with Bosnian and Western discourses. However, similar discourses can be found in other regions of the world. For instance, Ibn Khaldun wrote in depth about the inherent antagonism between settled urban Arabs and their nomadic opponents in his volume *The Muqaddimah* (1969).

reach (Norris 1999, 91; Todorova 1997, 173). Todorova points out that with the advent of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century in Europe, the disdain of the aristocracy for the peasantry evolved into a contempt of the regressive, irrational culture of the countryside by the “urban bourgeois rational culture” (112). After all, Marx and Engels (1969) themselves asserted that towns rescued citizens from the idiocy (or, more accurately, isolation) of rural living (17). The city was the privileged site of European self-identity; more to the point, urbanization, as both a material process and a cultural transformation, was how Europe became “Europe” according to mainstream Western thought (Zijdeveld, 1998). This connection between the concept of the “city” and “civilization” was further entrenched by a Western understanding of the city as a place of tolerance and civility.

The result of this ideological heritage linking Europe/civilization to urbanity is that ethnic violence was seen as not only against the city but also foreign to the city (Herscher 2007). Following this line of thinking, it follows that observers began to look outside of the city for the origins of violence; in other words, if violence is foreign to the city, it must be an import from the countryside. Of course, this constructed dichotomy of city-countryside ignores the numerous gradations of urbanity present in Bosnia, where no such tidy spatial division between the town and the countryside can be found (Grodach 2002, 77). Nevertheless, the West came to regard violence, especially ethnic violence, as a distinctly rural phenomenon, with non-urban areas fitted into a negative semantic context, solidified by lexical choices of “backward,” “primitive” and “traditional.” According to Keen (1999), industrialized Western societies depoliticized violence in non-Western locales after the Cold War by stripping them of their political and economic motivations and reducing them to a narrative of clashing primordial tribes. As the following section will demonstrate, the idealized notion of the city, and the normative connotations of civilization, advancement and cosmopolitanism associated with it, played a significant role in characterizing media and academic representations of the Bosnian war.

### ***A “Deliverance Scenario”: The Bosnian Conflict and Urban–Rural Cleavages in Western Discourse***

#### *The Urban–Rural Cleavage Discourse in Western Newspapers*

Journalists covered the Bosnian conflict extensively, in large part due to its proximity to the rest of Europe, the keen audience interest in the siege of Sarajevo and the developed nature of

the region's infrastructure. Several scholars have studied the media's role in defining the Bosnian conflict for Western audiences, pointing out the consequences for Western policy in Bosnia that resulted from the media's portrayal of the conflict (Allen and Seaton 1999). Thus, I begin my analysis by scrutinizing texts from Hansen's Model 2, namely newspaper reports and editorials from major Western newspapers. The various examples cited in this section are far from an exhaustive list of the texts studied in my research; however, they provide a representative sample of the sort of rhetoric and discourse found in Western newspapers of that time period. In addition, practical considerations force the collection and analysis of texts to stop at some point. Following Milliken's "stopping rule" (1999, 234), I halted my analysis when I found that the addition of new texts neither refined nor challenged the urban–rural cleavage discourse discernible in the initial source material.

A close reading of European and North American newspapers reveals that there are frequent insinuations that the Bosnian conflict was driven by tensions between pacific city-dwellers and their jingoistic rural counterparts, with the latter being culpable for the violence that wracked Bosnia in the 1990s. This discourse, what I term the urban–rural cleavage discourse, is marked by two basic assertions: that the conflict is a struggle between the city and the countryside, and that it is the latter, with its traditional hatreds, savagery and superstitious primitivism, that is to blame for the conflict. I will begin by analyzing how Western newspapers articulate the first assertion of the urban–rural cleavage discourse.

Some of the most prominent Western newspapers explicitly framed the conflict as a battle between the city and the countryside in their reporting on Bosnia. For example, a *Washington Post* (27 February 1994) article suggests that "the struggle between cosmopolitan city dwellers and angry men from the hills" had been a distinguishing mark of the conflict since the beginning. The *New York Times* (30 December 1993) uses the same approach in an article about wartime Serbia, explaining that an enduring ideological chasm exists between "relatively sophisticated city dwellers and rural people who cling to centuries-old nationalist or religious hatred." Another *New York Times* (26 December 1999) article sees the cultural gap between the rural mountains and the lowland cities as a primary component of "the Balkan poison -- perhaps the key ingredient," contrasting Sarajevo and Belgrade, "emblems of European sophistication

and cultural fusion” with the archetypal Balkan village which was “a hard and pitiless place...where ancient feuds are nursed and passed on for generations, where change and outside influence is deeply mistrusted.” Peter Maass, a prominent journalist who later wrote a book based upon his experience reporting in Bosnia, stated: “...to a surprising extent, this was a war of poor rural Serbs against wealthier urban Muslims, a Deliverance scenario” (Maass, 159). In the opinion of one *Baltimore Sun* (14 October 1992) reporter, those who were besieging Sarajevo were fighting to defend the city and the plains from the countryside and the mountains.

A commonality in these causal characterizations of the war as an urban–rural struggle is their reliance upon evidentialities. The writers of the above texts may look at the reasons behind violent rural antipathy toward urban Bosnians but the issue of how they have been violent, or indeed whether they are hateful in the first place, goes unexamined. Subsequent references to rural hatreds that occur in the texts act only to strengthen this presupposition, subjugating other potential versions of the news story. Furthermore, texts that frame the war as an assault on urban modernity by the “ancient feuds” or “centuries-old...hatred” of the countryside are merely reformulating the common but hotly contested “ancient hatreds” trope; however, in this reformulation, “ancient hatreds” are synonymous with rural Bosnian villages rather than the Balkans as a whole.

Moreover, journalistic descriptions of paramilitary and militia group in Bosnia often allude to the rural origins or supposedly rural characteristics of their members. One *Washington Post* (31 October 1994) article labels Karadzic’s followers as “brash mountain men” while an article in the *Independent* (11 August 1994) speaks of the region that became the quasi-autonomous *Republika Srpska* as a land where “farming and fighting go hand in hand” and “soldiers move easily from tanks to tractors.” The *Baltimore Sun* (14 October 1992) explains that the Serb forces are composed of “uncontrolled wild mountain Serbs or wild irregulars,” what another journalist describes as “drunken hillbillies” (Maass 1997, 6). The *New York Times* (10 April 1994) points to the role of the Dinaric Alps in incubating “extreme, combative elements” and asserts that the inhabitants come from “wild, warlike, frequently lawless societies whose feuds and folklore have been passed on to the present day like the potent home-brewed plum brandy that the mountain men begin knocking back in the morning.” Another *New York Times*

(24 May, 1992) journalist does admit that many figures in the militia are urban and hold American and European college degrees but then goes on to speak of the militiamen as “wild men from the remote mountainous areas of Bosnia.”

The frequent lexical collocation of “mountains” with the various words used for paramilitaries is a recurring theme in Western accounts of the violence and, I would argue, should be seen as a linguistic trigger that stimulates in the reader’s mind the wider urban–rural schema analyzed in this thesis, with mountains acting as a symbol for non-urban areas in general. Furthermore, the abundance of quasi-synonymous terms for “uncivilized” even within a single newspaper article should be seen as instance of over-lexicalization, in which repetitious terms are layered over a text “as a pragmatic strategy of encoding ideology in news discourses” (Teo 2000, 20). While short descriptions of the militants’ demeanour may be justified as the provision of basic facts pertinent to the conflict, the excessive and perhaps over-persuasive use of terms like “wild,” “brash” and “primitive” can signal an ideological preoccupation on the part of the writer or the institution that produces the text (Simpson and Mayr 2010, 112; Fowler et al. 1979). Lastly, it is critical to keep in mind Fairclough’s suggestion that discourse is often revealed in language through the use of emotive or “loaded” terminology (1995).

The emphasis Western newspapers give to the supposedly rural nature of the war’s combatants can also be seen in journalists’ frequent usage of certain Serbo-Croatian slang terms. Local terms like *seljaci* [villagers] or the more pejorative *divljaci* [savages] and *papci* [an old Turkish word literally meaning ‘pig feet’ but the figurative meaning is closer to hillbillies] began to make an appearance in Western newspaper reporting and editorials soon after Serb paramilitaries encircled Sarajevo. For instance, Marcus Tanner of the *Independent* (26 April 1992) declares the real conflict to be between city-dwellers and “the Papci...bad country people.” In a different article, Radovan Karadzic is described as “papak, the bumpkin from Montenegro” (Hugeux, 1995), while a *New York Times* (24 May 1992) journalist opts for the local word “divljaci” [savages] to describe members of ethnic militias. However, during the course of this thesis’ research, there were very few other examples of Serbo-Croatian words being integrated into Western newspapers. Thus, the uncritical inclusion of selected pejorative terms like *papci* and *divljaci* in Western reporting indicates that the uncivilized, rural character

of the militants was seen as an integral aspect of their militancy and a key to understanding the conflict.

One of the most illustrative instances of the urban–rural cleavage discourse being invoked by the press is the common depiction of Serb leader Radovan Karadzic as a peasant arrival to Sarajevo, whose frustrated ambitions and peasant mentality combined to create the architect of destruction he became in the 1990s (Woodward 1995, 250). One headline in the *Irish Times* (17 June 1995) summed up the current siege of Sarajevo as the “revenge of Dr. K., country bumpkin, on the smart-talking people of Sarajevo.” The article proceeded to recount how the Karadzic family left the “harsh backdrop of Mount Durmitor”<sup>3</sup> for Sarajevo when Radovan was a teenager, allowing Radovan to become a medical student who attended literary clubs, wrote poetry in his spare time and studied in New York on a Fulbright scholarship. However, according to an apocryphal anecdote repeated in many Western articles, the nascent poet-psychiatrist found little acclaim during his three decades in Sarajevo (Toael and Dahlman 2011, 88). As a result,

[Karadzic] never forgave this urban elite for having treated him with such disdain. Perhaps the viciousness with which the Serbian artillerymen today try to reduce the Bosnian capital to ashes reflects Karadzic's troubled desire for vengeance. (Huguex, 1995)

Several of the various themes presented thus far were reiterated in other Western media profiles of Karadzic; indeed, a causal relationship between Karadzic's contemporary militarism and the “backwards” nature of his hometown is implicitly and explicitly established in many Western newspapers. According to one American paper (*San Jose Mercury News*, 16 June 1995), Karadzic is as “rough-hewn as the mountains of Montenegro where he was born” and the Karadzic family was composed of “very poor people, primitive, with a village mentality.” Karadzic's rural “mentality” was echoed in a *Washington Post* (9 June 1995) article that attributed the Serbs' intransigence at peace talks to their leader's “mountain mentality -- a sense of being isolated and still wanting the rules set by them.”

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<sup>3</sup> Mount Durmitor is one of the highest points in Montenegro's mountainous interior.

In light of Karadzic’s four decades in Sarajevo, his medical training, his schooling abroad, his career in psychiatry and his involvement in local literary circles, the media’s attribution of Karadzic’s undisputable ruthlessness to his “ruralness,” so to speak, is at first perplexing. However, Karadzic’s peasant reputation makes sense when considered within a discursive context that equates urbanity with tolerance and peasantry with brutish “Balkan” antagonism. As mentioned earlier, the concept of urbanity was so ideologically tethered to civilized Europe that ethnic violence could only be seen as foreign to the city, or at the very least an import from the rural hinterland to the city. When confronted by an urban intellectual who is also a militant ethno-nationalist, in other words someone who cannot be neatly placed into the pre-existing schemata, urban Bosnians and sympathetic foreigners are forced to seek out evidence that Karadzic was actually not so urban after all. Thus, the “rural” designation refers “less to actual social facts than to ascribed cultural mentalities” (Steffanson 2007, 63).

Karadzic was not the only militant leader whose chauvinism was attributed to his rural roots. Indeed, symbolic oppositions between rural and urban were recursively projected onto most ethno-nationalist leaders. An article in the *Guardian* (20 August 1995) sees many of the nationalist leaders as “country boys from the rural fringes of the respective nations: frontier fanatics” and points to the provincial childhoods of Slobodan Milosevic, Serbia’s authoritarian leader, and Gojki Susak, the jingoistic Croatian defence minister. It must be noted, however, that both of these “country boys” spent the majority of their lives in major metropolitan areas; Susak immigrated to Canada in early adulthood and spent the decades preceding the conflict as the owner of a pizzeria in Ottawa (*The New York Times*, 5 May 1998).

Another *New York Times* article published after the war added Serb paramilitary leader General Ratko Mladic and Croatia’s then president Franjo Tudjman to the list of war criminals from small towns (26 December 1999). The same article concludes by claiming that the political and economic fragmentation of Yugoslavia prompted the aforementioned leaders to regress to the “primitive laws and passions of the village”. Reportage in the *Times* (6 August 1993) agrees, fixing blame on the “parochial and patriarchal rural culture, ethnically pure, fearful of urban energy, [which] took up arms against the cities” and declaring that it is this culture that produced most of the conflict’s decision-makers. A *Washington Post* report (14 June 1992) cites one

Sarajevan, who claims that those responsible for the violence were born in “little country towns that nobody has ever heard of.” Even when Western journalists do acknowledge the urban upbringing of many ethno-nationalist leaders, it is deftly explained away by claiming that “the Balkan village’s medieval code of honor and loyalty” is so deeply ingrained in the Bosnian psyche that “city dwellers seem to return to its thrall in moments of crisis” (*The New York Times*, 26 December 1999). Furthermore, even when political and economic factors behind the fragmentation of Yugoslavia are considered, it is seen only as a catalyst that prompts Yugoslav leaders to regress to the “primitive laws and passions of the village” (26 December 1999).

It is clear that Western journalists and their urban Bosnian informants were willing to frame ethno-nationalists, as well as ethno-nationalism itself, as a product of the countryside. Journalistic descriptions of urban politicians slipping inexorably “backwards,” regressing to the aforementioned “primitive laws and passions of the village,” also point to the advantages of Todorova’s theory of Balkanism over Bakic-Hayden’s application of traditional Orientalism to the region. While Bakic-Hayden sees the West’s approach to the Balkans as a replication of Orientalism, Todorova shows how the Balkans occupies a transitory place in Western minds.

Indeed, Todorova posits that the Balkans’ fragile “in-betweenness” is one of its salient features, distinguishing its representation in the West from that of the Orient, a place that is seen as wholly ‘other’ and diametrically opposed to the West (18). Western unease with the Balkans’ tenuous and liminal symbolic position at the borders of Europe reveals itself in concerns over the violent irrationality of the “Balkan village,” an ever-present spectre that threatens to drag urban Bosnians out of the rational, civilized European sphere and back down to the Balkans. Consequently, Western media portrayals of the war should be seen as a repackaged form of Balkanism in which the vices previously ascribed to the Balkans as a whole are now attributed to the rural population only.

#### *The Urban–Rural Cleavage Discourse in Western Academia*

The following paragraphs extend this thesis’ analysis of the urban–rural cleavage discourse in texts to Hansen’s Model 3B, material produced by academics and marginal publications, by including academic texts from scholars in North America and western Europe.



Widening the scope of my analysis to contain academic texts can reveal intertextual discursive dialogues among different genres and, as Hansen points out, suggest the extent of a discourse's hegemony. Moreover, the inclusion of academic texts in my analysis represents a departure from other works of discourse analysis regarding the Bosnian war, which generally focus on the disconnect between serious scholarly examinations of the war and political/journalistic framing of the conflict and its causes. However, unlike the “ancient hatreds” discourse, which had always dominated popular media and literature more than academic study (Cohen and Dragovic-Soso 2008), I contend in the ensuing paragraphs that many serious academic studies articulated some of the implicit assumptions and logic of the urban–rural cleavage discourse.

Sabrina Ramet's article “Nationalism and the Idiocy of the Countryside: the Case of Serbia” (1996) can be seen as an example of academic engagement with the urban–rural cleavage discourse. Ramet's central argument is that the rise of nationalist parties in the decade prior to the war represents the triumph of rural culture over the ideals of the city (75). Furthermore, the author argues that the xenophobia, dogmatism and misogyny of nationalism in Yugoslavia are the result of its “rural character” (75). For Ramet, it goes almost without saying that the countryside is mired in “social ignorance and unconscious tolerance” (72), serving as “the repository of chauvinism” (80) where “the dominant mood is one of resentment” (81). Ramet goes on to contrast the countryside's mores and temperament with the cosmopolitanism and secular values of the city (72), which she alleges fell victim to nationalism, “a profoundly rural phenomenon” (76). Ramet supports her arguments by pointing out that ethnic violence flared up first in rural areas in the lead up to war and by documenting the salience of rural symbols and tradition in Serbian culture; neither of these points are incorrect in and of themselves.

However, Ramet doesn't consider the possible practical reasons that violence might begin in economically disadvantaged and isolated areas, which experienced weaker central authority and were often politically and economically excluded from mainstream Yugoslav society (Allock 2002, 100-3), a reality exacerbated by the roll out of IMF liberalization policies during that period (Woodward 1995, 50-55). By contrast, Ramet is satisfied with linking ethnic violence in the countryside to the culture of the region itself. In addition, while it is true that rural

traditions were often re-purposed for nationalist purposes during the 1990s, it is unclear if this proves that nationalism in Yugoslavia was a rural phenomenon. Furthermore, Ramet barely acknowledges that some academics have linked nationalism with the rise of industrialized major population centres, not the countryside or mountain villages (Carment and James, 1997). Indeed, it is mentioned only briefly that many of the urban elite abetted the development of ethno-nationalism in Yugoslavia, failing to fully acknowledge the well-documented role of urban intellectuals (Woodward, 85) and politicians in fostering jingoism.

Other Western academics echoed Ramet's characterization of the war as a struggle of rural militancy against progressive but defenceless urbanity. Donia and Fine (1994), who together wrote one of the most authoritative books on the conflict, comment that it was the "relatively uneducated armed hillsmen, with a hostility toward urban culture" that "allowed themselves to be recruited into Serb paramilitary units" (28). Donia and Fine's image of rural militants can be contrasted to their appraisal of urban Bosnians as "cultured Europeans, representing the best in Bosnia" (9). The two authors imply that the urban cosmopolitanism of Sarajevo makes its inhabitants "Europeans." The privileged symbolic position as "Europeans" Donia and Fine give to Sarajevans is in stark contrast with that of their non-urban counterparts, who are separated from Europe by their traditional rural antagonisms and anti-urban hostility. When studying Donia and Fine's discussion of the chasm between armed hillsmen and cultured Sarajevans, one can detect echoes of traditional Balkanism, where European writers of previous decades described the gulf between the advancement of Europe and the brutish Oriental primitivism of the Balkans.

Another academic, Mieczysław P. Boduszyński (2010), writes of the tension in Balkans between the "collective, neotraditional, anti-Western, illiberal culture associated with rural areas and a cosmopolitan, civic, modernizing, liberal orientation associated with urban areas" (194), with the Bosnian conflict representing a defeat of the latter at the hands of the former. Steven Burg and Paul Shoup (1999) see the conflict as a contest between rural regions dominated by nationalist cultures and the civic spirit of the larger urban centres, while Bettina Gruber (2013) asserts that Yugoslavia has been subject to a "retraditionalization" during its dissolution, with ethno-nationalistic ideology accompanying a "broad cultural contamination" (22) of the cities

(presumably by rural Bosnians). Michael Ignatieff (1998) goes a step further, deeming the entire conflict a “village war.” Chris Bennett (1995), in his well-received *Yugoslavia’s Bloody Collapse: Causes, Course, and Consequences*, suggests that it was the divide between rural and urban communities, not that between ethnicities, that helped to set the stage for bloodshed in Bosnia (63).

One can see further evidence of the popularity of the urban–rural cleavage discourse among many academics in an anecdote related by Ger Duijzing (2007) in his review of an article by Robert Hayden. Duijzing repeats an account detailed in his own book, *History and Memory in Eastern Bosnia*, in which the largely-Muslim municipal council of Srebrenica convened at the start of the war to oust the presiding Muslim mayor and his supporters, who were reluctant to meet the demands of local Serb nationalists, in the interest of preserving peace (118). According to the townspeople, the former mayor represented a “village” faction of “peasants” who had no place in an urban center like Srebrenica (118). After recounting this story, Duijzing claims that this anecdote demonstrates how “urban–rural divisions crosscut ethnic ones” during the war in Bosnia (118).

While the above anecdote undoubtedly informs Duijzing’s observation, his reluctance to critically interrogate the notions of “urban–rural divisions” or the label “village faction” is disappointing. After all, the terms “village” or “peasant” are saturated with normative meaning. While the urban–rural or city-village dichotomy may be articulated in geographical terminology it is, in practice, based more upon perceived identity and behaviour than a simple reflection of fixed geographical or material facts. By treating “rural” as a straightforward social category, Duijzing and other writers reify a normative label that is as much a social construction as any of the ethnic division of Bosnia. The frequency with which Western academics link the Bosnian conflict to “villages”, “hills” and rural “traditions” suggests that many Western academics reproduced the urban–rural cleavage discourse. Indeed, rather than serving as a scholarly bulwark against this conceptualization by Western media, many academics implicitly or explicitly incorporated it into their analysis.

Martin Coward, an English academic specializing in International Politics and Security Studies, is another academic whose studies of the Bosnian war often reproduced the urban–rural

cleavage discourse. Coward's understanding of the conflict is especially important given that he is largely responsible for popularizing the notion of "urbicide." Coward's first usage of "urbicide" theory focused on the mutilation of Bosnian cities during the 1990s and he quickly dispensed with the idea that the severe damage done to cities in the Bosnian conflict was the result of collateral damage, instead positing that the urban destruction that accompanied the Bosnian war should be seen as attempted urbicide (2001, 99). Urbicide, according to this new conceptual definition, was the intentional and systematic destruction of cities, not merely as part of eradicating a people (as in genocide) but as an end in and of itself. Coward argues that urbanity's defining characteristic is its "heterogeneity in which identity is constituted in relation to difference" (2004, 169), a heterogeneity that stands in direct opposition to the homogeneity and denial of difference that ethno-nationalists cherish. As a result, the physical infrastructure that marked Bosnian urban society, the built environment that symbolizes urban pluralism, was just as targeted for elimination as the physical bodies of Bosniaks were with urbicide in Bosnia as "a phenomenon in its own right" (2006, 150), apart from the wider attempts at ethnic cleansing and genocide.

Coward's research on the urban destruction wrought by the Bosnian conflict is meticulous and can offer academics insights into the interplay between war, genocide and urban destruction but his conceptual framework of "urbicide" in Bosnia appears to rest upon assumptions reminiscent of the urban-rural cleavage narrative found in other works. For instance, when referring to the notion of "urbanity" represented by the city and allegedly despised by its rural opponents during the Bosnian conflict, Coward points out that "urban" is seen in the Western world as a way of life "...that is in some way more civilized. Whilst I do not want to dwell on this normative connotation, it is important to note the way in which urbanity derives its meaning through an opposition with the rural way of life" (54). Coward imbues Sarajevo with the attributes of any proper city: pluralism, culture, tolerance, etc. In the words of one scholar, "...Sarajevo was not just a city under siege. It became the city under siege- a symbol of tolerance and culture under attack by violence and ignorance" (Dell'Agnesse 2003, 7). Of course, Sarajevans themselves enthusiastically reproduced the representation of Sarajevo as a model of European cosmopolitanism (Kurtovic 2012, 220). Thus, it would appear that Coward's framing of the war as a targeted attack by intolerant anti-urban rural militias on urban centres,

and ‘urbanity’ itself, seems to coincide neatly with the imagined ideas of “urban” and “rural” present in the urban/rural dichotomy, thus warranting a closer examination of the “normative connotations” Coward declines to dwell on.

The “Recommendations on the Cultural Situation in the Former Yugoslavia,” prepared and delivered by the Council of Europe, engages with this perceived relationship between urbanity and sophisticated civilization, declaring that the physical degradation of urban Bosnian structures represented a breakdown in “European civilization and values” (1994). It appears that the Council of Europe saw urban architecture as synonymous with Europe and civilization. The consequence of this notion is that the perpetrators of this degradation are constructed as a non-European, and thus, uncivilized Other. Besides perpetuating the urban–rural cleavage discourse, this articulation of urban destruction as something contrary to European values and civilization is rather absurd in light of Europe’s own history with urban self-destruction during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

It is not the intention of this section to claim that all Western journalists and academics reproduced some or all of the urban–rural cleavage discourse in their coverage of the Bosnian conflict. However, it seems clear that a number of the most prominent newspapers and most widely read scholarly books on the conflict linked the Bosnian conflict to “villages”, “hills” and rural “traditions”, whether consciously or not. The characterization of the Balkans as intrinsically “rural”, with the exception of Sarajevo, extends to Western imagery of the region’s inhabitants, whose mores, demeanour and temperament are linked to the landscape. This is done sometimes explicitly and other times through the use of certain signals (e.g. “mountain-men,” “tribal”) that denote the wider narrative of rural savagery. Given the close relationship between the idea of “the city” and notions of tolerance and progress in Western political thought, the image of the Balkans as a non-urbanized region likely widened the perceived gulf between the cosmopolitan and advanced West and the backwards and intolerant Balkans.

I contend that this constructed dichotomy should be seen as an instance of Balkanism. A central tenet of post-colonial scholarship is the understanding that the self-identity of an imperial power rests upon its supposed contrast to a recognized Other. While Bakic-Hayden, Hayden and Todorova differ on how exactly this Other was constructed and in what specific image, they

agree that this image helped the West to understand and legitimize its own self-image. However, it seems apparent that these scholars have overlooked one of the most central stereotypes of the Balkans: its supposedly “rural” character, upon which the fault for all manner of non-Western ills (e.g. irrationality, barbarism, squalor) is assigned. Identifying ethno-nationalism with a primeval Balkan countryside allowed the West to shore up on its own self-identity as a place of tolerance and cosmopolitanism, of cities and urban values, while further pushing large portions of the Balkans out of the idealized European community. However, this process of differentiation upon degrees of perceived urbanity/civilization is not only found in Western discourse on the conflict. The following sections explain how nesting Balkanism occurred in the region, with the internationally focused urbanites and intellectuals of the ex-Yugoslav states reproducing the urban–rural cleavage discourse discussed thus far for their own aims.

### ***Barbarians at the Gates of Rome: Discourse in Yugoslavia and Bosnia***

Thus far, the urban–rural cleavage discourse has been evaluated at the level of Western newspapers and academia. However, I think it is important to go deeper and to analyse how urban intellectuals and public figures within Yugoslavia and Bosnia produced the urban–rural cleavage discourse in their writings and interactions with Westerners. After all, scholars are beginning to take Bakic-Hayden’s lead in studying nesting Balkanism and the co-opting of Balkanist discourse by groups within the region. It should be stressed that the Bosnian war was not simply framed as an urban–rural battle by Western writers and then unconsciously repeated by Bosnians and other citizens of the former Yugoslav states. In addition to robbing the people of that region of their agency, this assumption overlooks the various ways in which the urban–rural cleavage discourse was refined and legitimized by many Bosnian academics, writers and politicians.

In fact, the relationship between Yugoslav intellectuals, “Balkan experts” and Western media was a crucial factor in the propagation of the urban–rural cleavage discourse. After all, a community often accepts as fact the knowledge that is produced by sources seen as credible or authoritative, such as mainstream media or scholars (Nesler et al 1993). Consequently, Yugoslav intellectuals’ articulations of the urban–rural cleavage discourse, which were often quoted in major Western news outlets, deserve special attention. The following sections will chart the

development of this discourse in the decades leading up to the 1990s conflict, beginning with a focus on the impact of Jovan Cvijic and Dinko Tomasic, two academics whose theories were critical in shaping and legitimizing the idea of urban–rural cleavages in Bosnia and the other ex-Yugoslav states.

*Jovan Cvijic, Dinko Tomasic and the Intellectual Roots of the Urban–Rural Discourse in Yugoslav Academia*

Jovan Cvijic was an ethnologist and geographer in Serbia at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century whose ethno-geographical taxonomy, represented best in *The Balkan Peninsula and Southern-Slavic Countries*, shaped and influenced later sociological understandings of the Balkans. First published in French at the end of the First World War, *The Balkan Peninsula and Southern-Slavic Countries* was an extensive academic foray into the various ethnic groups of what was soon to become Yugoslavia. Cvijic wrote that there are two main types of societal organization and “ethno-psychological types” in the Balkans: the “Highlanders” and the “Lowlanders.” According to Cvijic, echoing a narrative already established in the Balkans, there was a large-scale retreat of the Christian population into the mountains in the wake of the Ottoman conquest (Brunnbauer and Pichler 2002). Cvijic claimed that the Slavs who remained on the fertile and relatively urbanized plains compromised with their new rulers, while those who now resided in the mountains maintained an adversarial and combative attitude. Of course, Cvijic’s narrative conflicts with the research of Ottoman experts who note that the migration of Slavs from the agricultural valleys and plains to the highlands occurred well before Ottomans advanced into the Balkan peninsula (Brunnbauer and Pichler 2002).

Nevertheless, Cvijic based his ethno-psychological classification upon this initial fissure between highland Slavs and lowland Slavs, claiming that the highland peoples were characterized by martial courage, strict honour systems and a love of liberty (Brunnbauer and Pichler 2002). Cvijic’s research asserted that the rugged terrain of the Dinaric mountain range fostered small but competitive and tight-knit clans, which in turn nurtured the heroic martial virtues found in the highlanders. When one Serb general justified his indiscriminate shelling of the coastal city of Dubrovnik by stating “zero elevation produced a zero category of people” (Kiernan 2008, 593), he was channelling Cvijic’s purported links between terrain and culture.

Another example of this attitude can be found in the distinction drawn by Nikola Koljević, a leader of Republika Srpska and former professor at the University of Sarajevo, between the “agrarian tender souls” of lowland Serbia proper and the “fighting spirit” of those in Republika Srpska (Brunnbauer and Pichler 2002).

The creation and development of the highlander/lowlander narrative in Yugoslavia was conditioned in part by the ideological and historical milieu Cvijic was writing in. To begin with, Cvijic was no doubt influenced by the geopolitical shifts occurring in the region at the time. Cvijic himself participated in the Paris Peace Conference at the end of the First World War, lobbying the victorious powers to create a Kingdom of Yugoslavia out of the remnants of the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian Empire. As such, Cvijic had an obvious incentive to portray at least some of the Yugoslavs as naturally pre-disposed to nation-state building. Indeed, as Marko Zivkovic (1997) points out, Cvijic romanticized the mountainous South Slavs as noble freedom-lovers, ardent opponents of Oriental occupation and natural statesmen. Cvijic’s success at the Paris Peace Conference and his subsequent academic success in Yugoslavia (where he is still considered the founder of geography and anthropology in the region) cemented Cvijic’s ethnological theories and transformed them into national ideals (Jovanovic 1991, 83).

The growth of the highlander/lowlander dichotomy was also fostered by Western ideological and academic trends. At the time, many Western academics sought to categorize races or ethnicities based upon supposedly inherent personality traits, attempting to give ideas of national identity a scientific foundation (Yeomans 2007, 97); the popularity of Cvijic’s “Dinaric type” and highland/lowland distinctions can be seen as a result of this trend. Additionally, Cvijic’s ideals seem to draw upon certain elements of what Hansen terms “the Byronic Balkans,” an 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Century European view of the Balkans in which the region was seen through a Romanticist lens (Hansen 2006, 88). The valorization of courageous and tough “liberators” was a vital component of the Romanticist optic, as was the constitution of “the rural” as the essence of “the People” (Goldsworthy 1998, 23).

Consequently, one can see how Cvijic’s image of the highland Dinarics, a martial race of freedom-loving mountain-men that represented the Serbian *volksgeist*, fit neatly within, and academically reified, the Byronic Balkans narrative described by Hansen. Cvijic’s



contemporaries received his scholarship warmly and Cvijic's *Völkerpsychologie*, a type of study mostly regarded now as the embarrassing antecedent of contemporary anthropology and human geography, was kept alive in the former Yugoslavia for decades by many academics (Halpern and Hammel 1969, 21). Nevertheless, European Romanticist images regarding the Balkans were being gradually supplanted by a civilizational, and thus pejorative, discourse by the time Cvijic published his theories.

Indeed, shortly after the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was established, the Croatian sociologist Dinko Tomasic rearticulated Cvijic's theories in his seminal work *Personality and Culture in Eastern European Politics* (1945). Despite its title, the book focused primarily on Yugoslavia and rested heavily upon Cvijic's research and theories. However, Tomasic reinterpreted the supposed nobility and courage of the highlander, the "natural statesmanship," as atavistic pugnacity. In other words, Tomasic reversed Cvijic's valuation of the highlander type. According to Tomasic, the Dinaric Alps and the rural highland of central Yugoslavia bred "out-laws, guerrilla fighters, mercenaries, military leaders, dynasts and political terrorists" (449). Like Cvijic, Tomasic's theories were likely shaped, at least in part, by wider historical and ideological trends shifts. The wider turn in Western views on the Balkans away from the Romanticist Byronic Balkans and toward a civilizational discourse is reflected in Tomasic's rearticulation of the highlander/lowlander dichotomy.

While Romanticist notions of nationalism inspired Cvijic, Tomasic was inspired by the modern, industrial ideals adopted by the new socialist regime. Indeed, the socialist ideology espoused by Tito's government after the war attempted to mould an urban proletariat by promoting urbanity and class consciousness, championing "essentially urban views of the nature and direction of development" (Allcock 2002, 103) while dismissing the rural peasantry and their culture as "obstacles to modernisation" (103), with no proper role to play in the new modes of production (Pickering 2006; Diamond 1980, 442). As a result, Tomasic's reappraisal of the Highland/Dinaric type can be seen as a reflection of the prevailing belief in the superiority of industry and modernity, as represented by the city and agriculture. Tomasic's writings also presage the narrative of urban–rural cleavages that came to the forefront during the 1990s. Indeed, Tomasic went as far as saying that the main struggle in Yugoslavia was between the

culture of settled, lowland farmers and the Dinaric warriors who were then filling the upper echelons of the Yugoslav military and government (1948, 204).

*The Urban–Rural Cleavage Discourse and Local Interpretations of the Bosnian Conflict*

I argue that the ethno-psychological frame Cvijic and Tomasic provided lasted far beyond their time and contributed to the establishment of the urban–rural cleavage discourse in the minds of many Yugoslavs. For instance, Zivkovic (1997) notes that the celebrated Belgrade psychiatrist Vladimir Adamovic, just before war broke out in 1991, proclaimed that the “Dinaries” had overtaken the police, military, party and state apparatus; thus, in Adamovic’s mind, these institutions will be led by people inclined to aggressiveness and fanaticism. In addition, the popular writer Danko Popovic (1993) complained that Serbian institutions were like “a colony populated by primitive tribes” in which the highlanders are pushing a “tribal spirit and habits on an area which is legally organized as a state” (93). Also during the war, the powerful Belgrade periodical NIN ran a series of essays called “The Dinaries and the Serbians” (Zivkovic 1997). The fondness in Yugoslav intellectual circles for the highland/lowland binary opposition, as well as the wider urban–rural cleavage discourse it feeds into, is revealing as academics often legitimize certain discourse due to their privileged position as knowers of scientific “truth” (Milliken 1999, 229).

Indeed, intellectuals in the former Yugoslavia were not the only public figures to cling to the theories and terminology propagated by Tomasic and Cvijic, as illustrated by Stjepan Mestrovic and Slaven Letica’s *Habits of the Balkan Heart* (1993). Mestrovic, a distinguished American sociologist of Croatian descent who provided expert testimony to the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), and Letica, a one-time adviser to the Croatian president Franjo Tudjman, drew heavily from Tomasic to explain the various “social characters” behind post-communism in South-eastern Europe. Mestrovic’s suggests that the disorder following the collapse of Yugoslavia was the latest manifestation of an age-old pattern of conflict between nomadic mountain Yugoslavs and settled, lowland Yugoslavs. Several social scientists have criticized Mestrovic’s reliance on Tomasic’s cultural typology, raising concerns that borderline essentialist theories are being given to the ICTY and even suggesting that Mestrovic’s theory of social character “borders on straightforward racism” (Allcock 2002).

Mestrovic's explanations epitomize what Gupta and Ferguson call the "naturalized association of culture with place" (Gupta and Ferguson 1992, 35). I would also point out that the value of Mestrovic's approach seems to rest more in its rhetorical description than actual explanatory value.

Nevertheless, Mestrovic's book marked a minor revival in academia of the brutal Balkan mountaineer stereotype as an explanatory model for the intensification of hostilities in Bosnia. For instance, several German scholars (Grandits and Halpern 1994, 101; Kaser 1995, 10) also began to use Tomasic's classifications and Sabrina Ramet (1999), mentioned earlier in this thesis, quotes Tomasic's description of Dinaric Serb culture to illustrate rural Serbs' susceptibility to ethno-nationalist narratives (79). In addition, Western newspapers began mentioning both Tomasic and Mestrovic specifically in their reports on the conflict, writing that the age-old clash between rural highlanders and urban lowlanders outlined by both theorists has doomed the region to the "authoritarianism of the Balkan past, Byzantium" (*Sydney Herald*, 12 March 1994) and that the relatively peaceful regions of Serbia owe their placidity to "the mild personality of those who live on open plains, in contrast to the warrior mentality of those who inhabit the craggy terrain prevalent elsewhere in the former Yugoslavia" (*The New York Times*, 30 August 1995). It is clear that the academic conceptualizations produced by Tomasic and Cvijic shaped and bolstered the legitimacy of the urban–rural cleavage discourse by constructing a dichotomy between urban and rural Yugoslavs, associating rural/highland Yugoslavs with obstinate and antagonistic traditionalism.

Linking contemporary rearticulations of Bosnian rural and urban identity to Tomasic and Cvijic's theories from previous decades may seem dubious; after all, one might assume that Western acceptance of these anachronistic ideas would have evolved or withered at some point during the ensuing years. However, this phenomenon is significantly less perplexing when seen in light of the relative paucity of European and American writing on Bosnian society between the Second World War and the outbreak of hostilities in the 1990s. Outside of narrow academic research, there was relatively little Western interest in Bosnian or Yugoslav society (Todorova 1997, 184).

Yet this is not to say that the Cold War period allowed the previous Balkanist discourses to wither and fade away. By contrast, the socialist period in Yugoslavia was commonly conceptualized in the West as an ephemeral intermission in Balkan history, in which the violent passions intrinsic to that region were frozen in place, lying dormant until the collapse of socialism allowed them to thaw (Hatzopoulos 2008, 60). In other words, the West saw the nearly five decades of peaceable coexistence and industrialization in Yugoslavia as a short-lived aberration from the Balkans' history as a place of primitivism and irrational animosity, an aberration sustained only by Tito's sheer force of will. As a result of socialism's weak imprint upon Western imagery of the Balkans, Western observers fell back upon older, well-trodden conceptualizations of the region when they reported on the Yugoslav conflict, conceptualizations that were facilitated by the "fixity" of the Balkans (Hansen 2006, 95).

According to post-colonial scholar Homi Bhabha, fixity is a strategy of othering that regards the cultural/historical Other as unchanging and doomed to "disorder, degeneracy and daemonic repetition" (Bhabha 1994, 66). Accordingly, the West's construction of the Balkans as a place incapable of change, in the face of contemporary scholarship that maintains that cultures and habits are evolving and constructed rather than static facts (Clifford 1988; Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983), legitimized the deployment of theories that might otherwise be dismissed as antiquated or irrelevant to the modern era if they had been applied to regions other than the Balkans. As a result, there was initially little resistance to attempts to resuscitate and apply Tomasic and Cvijic's ideas to the violence of the 1990s. Indeed, much of the discourse I have recounted in this thesis regarding urban–rural differences can be seen as an intertextual dialogue with the writings of Cvijic and Tomasic.

For instance, Professor Anton Bebler, political scientist at the University of Ljubljana, was quoted in the *Sydney Morning Herald* as stating that the various generals involved in the war are like "...mountaineers and sheep breeders. They are very autonomous, proud and warlike" (6 July 1991). In an interview reprinted in an American newspaper, Milos Vasic, the editor of prominent anti-war journal *Vreme*, describes the war as "anthropological", clarifying that:

We always divided our population more by altitude than by language or ethnic group. First, there is the mountain cattlemen approach. The other is the farmers' approach. The cattlemen perceive the world in terms of space for their herds; the farmers, in terms of time for their crops. That is why the wild mountain men with no sense of humour are the driving force of this war. And that is why Sarajevo and Mostar were so savagely destroyed. These cities are a different civilization to guys frustrated by not being able to settle in them. (*The Baltimore Sun*, 14 October 1992)

Vasic's delineation of aggressive, alpine pastoralists and lowland/urban farmers are not only echoes of the urban–rural cleavage discourse; they are an implicit engagement with the theories produced by Tomasic and Cvijic.

Bogdan Bogdanovic, a former Mayor of Belgrade and an acclaimed Yugoslav architect and public intellectual, was another instrumental figure in the popularization of the urban–rural cleavage discourse. Bogdanovic's jeremiads against what he saw as anti-urbanism in the war were cited in several subsequent academic articles on the conflict (Rusinow 1996) and republished in major newspapers throughout Europe (Bogdanovic 1995, 41). For instance, a *New York Times* article in 1994 saw the war as a clash between the “traditional folk and religious values of the villages against cities like Sarajevo”, citing Bogdanovic who declared it to be “a war of the mountains against the cities” (Kifner 1994). Consequently, Bogdanovic's conceptualization of the war's rural roots deserves close analysis.

In a letter to the *New York Review of Books*, entitled “Murder of the City” and translated from Serbian to English, Bogdanovic laments the desecration of Yugoslavia's urban centers:

Sooner or later the civilized world will dismiss our internecine butchery with a shrug of the shoulders. How else can it react? But it will never forget the way we destroyed our cities. We-we Serbs- shall be remembered as despoilers of cities, latter-day Huns.  
(Bogdanovic, 1993)

Bogdanovic notes the appalled Western response to the indiscriminate shelling of Bosnian cities like Sarajevo and remarks that Western opposition to urban destruction is not based solely upon fear of civilian casualties but also upon the Western equating of “cities” with “civilization”. If the word “urbanity” has represented dignity, sophistication and rationality in the Western world since the fourteenth century, it follows then that artillery bombardments on urban centers are also assaults on the “highest values of civilization,” Bogdanovic writes. In his letter, Bogdanovic

draws a line between “city-lovers” and “city-haters”, arguing that one of the prime movers of civilizational rise and fall is the Manichaean struggle between the two groups. Furthermore, Bogdanovic traced the current militant animus toward cities back to a long legacy of anti-urbanism in the Balkans, “savage’s ancient, archetypal fear of the city,” remarking that even “the great father of our nation, Vuk Karadzic... [taught] us that Serbs prefer not to live in cities.”

Bogdanovic was not the only public figure whose ideas regarding the urban–rural cleavage were taken up by Western journalists. Ivo Straus, an esteemed architect who was in Sarajevo during the siege, spoke derisively in his book *Sarajevo: the Architects and the Barbarians* of the city-hating “armed, toothless and illwashed [sic] primitives” (Straus 1994, 1). Straus’s decision to emphasize the “toothless” and “illwashed” nature of the Serb besiegers, the “primitives” in his words, rather than other possible negative characteristics is revealing. By stringing together those three descriptors, “armed,” “toothless” and “illwashed,” Straus rearticulates a crucial element of the urban–rural cleavage discourse by suggesting that “ruralness,” as signified here by poor hygiene and dental care, is integral to and quasi-synonymous with the militancy he witnessed during the siege. It is also worthwhile to note how Straus’ descriptions of filth and primitivism echo the descriptions of the Balkans as a whole found in 20<sup>th</sup> Century Western writing.

It was outlined earlier in this thesis that the West saw ethnic violence as both contrary and utterly foreign to the city (Herscher 2007), an understanding that allowed Western journalists to readily accept and propagate the notion that ethno-nationalism and violence came from the countryside to the city. Urban Bosnians conceptualized the tensions in their country in much the same way. Indeed, the Sarajevo liberal newspaper *Oslobodjenje* explicitly framed the mounting ethnic tension in Sarajevo as an export from the countryside into the city (Jusic 2009, 240). Anti-war demonstrators, on the eve of their city’s four-year ordeal, carried signs proclaiming, “Primitives from the Parliament, go home to your villages!” (Spaskovska 2012), equating ethno-nationalism with both primitivism and the countryside.

The notion that nationalism was an inherently rural phenomenon, diametrically opposed to the European and modern values of the cities, is also on display in the attitude of Western-minded Sarajevans to Radovan Karadzic. The ‘peasant Karadzic’ narrative was not a new

journalistic product but rather was the propagation of a trope urban Sarajevans articulated even before the war. Urban Bosnians mocked Karadzic's urban roots: in the words of one Sarajevan, who was quoted in a *New York Times* (19 November 1992) article about the siege, "Karadzic is *papak* [hillbilly], he comes from mountains, from sheep, and he wants to be king." Some writers, both Bosnian and Western, looked back on Karadzic's 1971 poem *Let's Go Down to the Town and Kill Some Scum*, seeing it as an omen from Karadzic of the bloodshed to come (Hukanovic 1996). However, this poem was understood before the war as a portrait of Yugoslav peasant attitudes in the historical past (Danner 1998). Thus, reading the poem as an expression of Karadzic's dormant anti-urban militarism is perhaps misunderstanding Karadzic's past and present motivations. Karadzic often spoke fondly of Sarajevo and stated, two days after the infamous marketplace shelling, that he had enjoyed living in a city that culturally "looked more toward the West" (Danner 1998), casting doubt on the claim that it was Sarajevo's urbane culture that Karadzic detested the most.

The urban–rural cleavage narrative was propagated at some of the highest levels of government as well. The Bosnian Foreign Minister, for instance, linked the violence in his country to the hatred of the peasant for the city, likening the Serb gunners encircling Sarajevo to the "barbarians at the gates of Rome" in an interview entitled "New Age of the Barbarian" (*The Times*, 14 January 1993). The Foreign Minister's framing of the conflict is emblematic of the urban–rural cleavage discourse's key components. First, the Foreign Minister treats as a given the fact that ethno-nationalist militancy is exclusive to those from the countryside and then declares that anti-urbanism, rather than any rational political calculation, is at the heart of the bloodshed. Second, the Foreign Minister's historical allusion formulates the siege of Sarajevo as a contest between Rome, with its connotations of Western advancement and civilization, and the "barbarians."

In framing the siege in this way, the Foreign Minister exalts his and his group's identity as advanced/Western/European while simultaneously constructing and debasing the barbarous/Balkan identity of his opponents. It is important to note here that normative and ideological power reproduced through the above discourses was hardly reflective of material power during the Bosnian war. Ultimately, even high-ranking urban Bosnians were at the mercy

of those who had superior military armaments. Nonetheless, those being besieged were usually the shapers of the conflict's dominant discursive framing; the constitutive power of these hegemonic discourses lay not in material superiority but in their ability to construct social difference (Buchowski 2006, 476).

I argue that the reproduction of the urban–rural cleavage discourse by Bosnians, in the manner of the Foreign Minister, should be conceptualized as a continuation and advancement of the concept of nesting Balkanism. After all, as this thesis has documented, the discourse of urban–rural cleavages was predicated upon a supposed dichotomy between the culture and temperaments of rural Bosnians, and those of urban Bosnians. The characteristics of this dichotomy, which have been given additional academic weight by Yugoslav intellectuals who formulated the urban–rural cleavage as a struggle between highland/Dinaric/rural and lowland/urban Bosnians, closely resemble the characteristics endemic in the Balkanist discourse produced by Western writings on the region: instability, cruelty, boorishness, filth and lawlessness (Todorova 1997, 10). These supposedly Balkan categories are opposed to the concept of Europe, which represents “cleanliness, order, self-control, strength of character, sense of law, justice, efficient administration” (10). It is clear that the image of rural Bosnians produced by the urban–rural cleavage discourse is, to a large degree, a reflection of the image of the Balkans produced by the Balkanist discourse. Consequently, this parallel should be theoretically conceptualized as a form of nesting Balkanism.

As detailed earlier in this thesis, Bakic-Hayden claims that the logic and dichotomies utilized in Orientalism or Balkanism reproduce within Yugoslavia and its successor states. As a result, Bakic-Hayden suggests that all societies within the Balkans construct an image of their neighbour that is more Oriental and less “European” than themselves, with Slovenia positioning itself as the European power above the Balkans, Croatia positioning itself as the frontier of Catholicism and the West above the Byzantine, Serbia imagining itself as the last outpost of Christendom at the gates of the Orient, and so forth all the way down the Balkan peninsula. According to Bakic-Hayden, nations in the Balkans demarcated their position on the symbolic cartography of south-eastern Europe according to their religion, their former imperial rulers, their



alphabet, their current political system and, today, their membership status in the European Union (Turkes and Gokgoz 2006).

I contend that the discourse of urban–rural cleavages is a vital component of contemporary nesting Balkanism and that the perceived urbanity, or lack thereof, of a group is an important ingredient in the construction of a “Western” self-identity group, alongside religion, language, etc. Urbanity should be conceptualized as a currency that groups in the Balkans could use to buy membership in the “advanced European” club. In his ethnographic study of Sarajevans years after the war, Stef Jansen (2005) observed that their urban status could be used “to relate ones’ personal narrative to the larger story of European modernity” (162). So, while Bakic-Hayden is accurate in pointing out that most groups in the Balkans regard their southern neighbour as the Oriental Other, she has overlooked the fact that these groups just as often saw the rural inhabitants of the countryside as an internal Oriental Other, a foil against which a flattering self-identity could be constructed and a spot on the internal hierarchy could be staked out. Consequently, C.M. Andersen’s claim that, in the Balkans, “an inferiority complex develops which shifts to finding the ‘other’ outside one’s nation to blame” (Anderson 2007, 6) is incomplete, for the Other is often found within one’s nation; during the 1990s, urban Bosnians perceived their rural counterparts to be an Other within their own country.

In fact, the pattern of nesting Balkanism, already shown to reproduce itself within a single region or nation, can be recursively reproduced, on an even smaller scale, within a single city. After the war ended, many urban Bosnians used the discourse of urban–rural cleavages to frame their discussion of other issues brought about by the conflict. For example, the influx of rural migrants and internally displaced persons (IDPs) into urban centres after the war has led to considerable worry among urban Bosnians that a “peasantization” or “retraditionalization” of the cities is occurring (Jansen 2005, 152). The Sarajevan sociologist Alisabri Sabani (1999), for instance, called the influx of rural refugees into Sarajevo an “invasion” and “attack”; the refugees’ “rural habits” have transformed Sarajevo into a “sad urban phenomenon,” despite the steadfast efforts of native Sarajevans to keep their cosmopolitan culture in this “rural-urban war.” Cvijeto Job (1993) lamented in *Foreign Policy* that:

...industrialization, modernization, and urbanization could not transcend the vindictive mores of the *palanka* [small, rural town]. The opposite happened. With the great migration from the countryside, life in the cities, including the capitals of the republics and the federation, became increasingly dominated by a *palanka* mentality. Instead of the provinces becoming citified, the cities became countrified... (1993, 59)

Anders Steffansson's (2007) anthropological study of post-war Sarajevans describes how contemporary Sarajevans complain that rural newcomers impose their norms upon urban society, rather than adapting to the urban way of life (63). Steffansson observes that Sarajevans, including intellectuals and academics, frame the presence of rural Bosnians in the city as an undesirable intrusion of the Other into "our space" (64).

This framing is strikingly similar to the West's apprehensive discussion of the Balkans in general and should be seen as further evidence of the widespread articulation of Balkanist discourse within the Balkans. The Balkans have long seemed threatening to Europeans because they represent the "Turkey-in-Europe," a quasi-Orient within the Occident, an uncivilized and violent Other "in our very midst" (Wolff, 167). The region's ambiguous but threatening position in the Western imagination is an example of what Julia Kristeva (1991) terms "the disturbingly strange" (201), in which the negative characteristics of the Balkans represent "the otherness of our ousness". Since urban Bosnians have often attributed the negative characteristics of the Other to rural Bosnians, the large-scale migration of rural Bosnians to the city both before and after the war is seen as the infiltration of the Orient into the European city. Put differently, the pattern of nesting Balkanism, already shown to reproduce itself within a single region or nation, is recursively reproduced on an even smaller scale within a single city. Using language reminiscent of the West's anxiety over the Orient within Europe, urban Bosnians fret over what they see as the intrusion of a rural/Balkan mentality and culture into their urban/European space, a miniature Orient within their miniature Europe.

Furthermore, Steffansson also discovers that Sarajevans frame pre-war Sarajevo as a "European city" but that they now deem it to be "one big village, Africa, the Middle East, a place without culture" (Steffansson 2007, 71) due to rural migration to the city; in fact, some Sarajevans even call rural migrants to the city "Afrikanci" [Africans] and "Indianci" [Indians] (66). This discursive shift starkly illustrates the precariousness of Sarajevo's "European" status, susceptible

as it is to revocation if the local culture becomes more “rural”. Moreover, it also demonstrates how a perceived loss of urbanity moves Sarajevo southward and eastward in Sarajevans’ symbolic cartography, placing it decisively in the Orient and away from its precarious position within, or at least on the threshold of Europe’s borders.

In summary, the central argument of this section is that the Bosnian conflict has often been framed as a clash between urban and rural Bosnians and that this discourse should be conceptualized as a form of nesting Balkanism. While Bakic-Hayden described how nesting Orientalism unfolded in the years immediately preceding the collapse of Yugoslavia, I have demonstrated that the discourse of urban–rural cleavages has deep historical roots in Yugoslav academic and popular thought, and that it continues to shape academic, journalistic and popular opinion even after the war. The reproduction of the urban–rural cleavage discourse by urban Bosnians is an attempt by that group to solidify their own European (and thus progressive and sophisticated) self-identity by contrasting it with a rural Other that can be imbued with all the typical negative characteristics of the Balkans (primitivism, savagery and irrationality). Put simply, urban Bosnians appropriated the Balkanism of the West and redirected it against their rural kin. A number of Yugoslav scholars abetted and legitimized the acceptance of this discourse by reifying the Balkan stereotypes as anthropological classifications.

## 4. Conclusion

### *Summary*

In conclusion, I have sought to answer two central questions. First, what is the relationship between the concept of urban–rural cleavages and popular discourse surrounding the hostilities in Bosnia? Second, how can a post-colonial theoretical framework, as elucidated by Said, Todorova and Bakic-Hayden, broaden and structure our understanding of how the urban–rural cleavage discourse relates to identity in Bosnia? My argument was couched in the theoretical and conceptual framework of post-colonialism and Bakic-Hayden’s concept of nesting Orientalism, with an empirical analysis of journalistic and academic discourse on the Bosnia conflict that also traced the historical roots of the urban–rural cleavage discourse. In answer to the first question, an analysis of mainstream newspapers, statements by public figures

and many scholarly works has revealed that Westerners and urban Bosnians have frequently characterized the Bosnian War as a revenge of the countryside upon the city. In fact, this characterization is a component of a larger discourse of urban–rural cleavages that has been facilitated by a pre-existing conceptual relationship between the ideas of urbanity and progress in Western thought, as well as an established academic tradition of differentiating urban and rural cultures in Yugoslavia.

In answer to the second main research question, this thesis has revealed that the propagation of the urban–rural cleavage discourse by urban Bosnians was far from a coincidence but rather was a form of nesting Balkanism that stemmed from a desire to reinforce one’s own self-identity as European by contrasting it with an image of violent and brutish rural Bosnians, the “true Balkans.” Post-colonial theory allows analysts to explore how the normative association of urbanity with modernity, and modernity with Europe, are part of the West’s image of itself as the pinnacle of human civilization and advancement. Furthermore, Todorova’s outlining of the Balkans’ special niche in the Western imagination, as a transitory and marginal Turkey-in-Europe, helps us to understand Western characterizations of the Bosnian war and make sense of contemporary Bosnian fears over rural IDPs. Bakic-Hayden’s concept of nesting Orientalism was developed to explain the prevalence of Orientalist discourse between the former Yugoslav republics but it appears increasingly clear that this concept should be expanded and deepened to explain urban Bosnians’ characterization of the Bosnian War as an urban–rural conflict.

### *Significance*

I suggest that the findings of this thesis hold significance for both the real world and the theoretical field. First, the scripting of the Bosnian war as the inevitable result of friction between a progressive, secular and wealthy urban culture and an antiquated and intolerant rural culture allowed urban Yugoslavs to wash their hands of any potential culpability in the heightening of ethnic tensions. In the words of one scholar,

Depicting war as an accomplishment of anti-urban savages from the Dinaric region is also a standard interpretation by the Belgrade opposition, which is desperately interested in situating the evil in the rural area, in order to be capable of believing in its own innocence (Baskar 1991, 61).

To this day, some urban Bosnians refer to non-nationalist and pro-EU parties as the “*gradanska* opposition,” an adjective derived from the Serbo-Croatian word *grad* [city] (Jansen 2005; 152). Furthermore, it is not uncommon for urban Bosnians to tell researchers “none of the intellectuals with a good education started this war...” (Kolind 2008, 151), which is a striking assertion given that many ethno-nationalist leaders possessed doctorates from Yugoslavia’s leading universities; Vojislav Seselj, for instance, was Yugoslavia’s youngest PhD holder when he founded Serbia’s far-right Serbian Radical Party.

Indeed, there is mounting evidence that ethno-nationalism, of the type that ostensibly motivated the militias and paramilitaries in Bosnia during the 1990s, was a top-down rather than grassroots phenomenon, cultivated by urban intellectuals and politicians who, at least according to rational choice explanations, stand to gain the most from ethnic collective action (Carment and James 1997; Gagnon 2004; O Tuathail and Dahlman 2005; O Tuathail 2010; Carmichael 2002). Evidently, the urban–rural cleavage discourse obscures the role of these urban elites and misrepresents the causal direction of ethnically motivated political movements (Steffanson 2007, 64; Toal and Dahlman 2011, 15). As civil war researcher Stathis Kalyvas (2004) argues, there is a general tendency in some research and media to emphasize rural primitivism, allowing urbanites to collectively forget the nationalistic fervour of urban intellectuals (26-27). Furthermore, as several authors have pointed out, portraying cities as the war’s primary victim is especially cruel given the destruction of countless rural villages in Bosnia during the conflict (Grodach 2002, 77; Bougarel 1999, 159). The persistence of the urban–rural cleavage discourse in the West and in Bosnia itself will hinder any attempt to accurately explain the outbreak of hostilities in Bosnia in the 1990s, to say nothing of attempts at genuine reconciliation.

Second, various scholars have linked Western political reluctance to intervene in the Balkans with the popular portrayal of the war as the product of tribal hatreds (Campbell 1998; Zohar 2012). According to Lene Hansen (2006), media representations of the war as an intractable quagmire in an intrinsically violent region legitimized policies of inaction. In my own research, I read several editorials and letters to the editor that attempted to dissuade their leaders from getting militarily involved in such a ‘convoluted’ war, which was, in the words of one writer, a “war between the hill people and the city-dwellers of Bosnia” (*The Times*, 7 April

1993). Other experts allege that Karadzic persuaded David Owen, the European Union's envoy to Bosnia, to grant the Serbs territory in part because Owen believed in the popular pseudo-anthropological narrative that asserted that Muslims had always been concentrated in cities, while Serbs had a traditional attachment to the agricultural countryside (Baskar 1999, 58). Slobodan Milosevic himself perpetuated the notion that Serbs resided in the countryside while urban centres were the exclusive purview of Bosnian Muslims as well, despite it being a serious demographic distortion (Toal and Dahlman 2011, 74, 102).

Robert Kaplan's book *Balkan Ghosts* (1993), the result of his travels through south-eastern Europe shortly before Yugoslavia broke apart, described Bosnia as "rural, isolated and full of suspicions and hatred" and remarked that outside of the "sophisticated urban center" of Sarajevo "the villages all around were full of savage hatreds, leavened by poverty and alcoholism" (22). While Kaplan was hardly the only writer to give such ominous descriptions of the Bosnian countryside, his articulation of the urban-rural cleavage discourse is especially important given his book's central role in convincing President Bill Clinton to abandon his 'lift and strike' policy in 1993 by popularizing the conceptualization of the Balkans as a place of ancient Hobbesian disorder (Drew 1994, 157).

It appears increasingly evident that the primordialist framing of the Bosnian conflict, which includes the now infamous "ancient hatreds" trope, had tangible consequences for Western public opinion and political action. It must be stressed that I am not suggesting that the urban-rural cleavage discourse, rather than the "ancient hatreds" or "genocide" frames elucidated by researchers like Lene Hansen, should be seen as the most dominant framing of the war. Rather, I contend that the urban-rural cleavage discourse existed alongside other popular explanations for the conflict, and should be seen as acting in a similar manner to condition the possibilities for Western intervention in Bosnia by obscuring the very rational and calculated motivations behind much of the ethnic violence in that country.

Third, my argument contributes to the field conceptually as it illustrates that the concept of 'nesting Balkanism' is broader than previously thought. While Bakic-Hayden and other Balkan scholars recognized the importance of religion, political tradition, and language in drawing the idealized borders of Europe and the Orient, there was little appreciation for how the

urban–rural dichotomy is used to define and condition identity in the region. In addition, my argument extends the nesting Orientalism/Balkanism theory by illustrating that the process of “delegating mechanisms” (to use Kuus’s term), in which the discursive borders between Europe and the Balkans are continually shifted away from one’s own nation, also occurs *inside* a nation. Furthermore, in terms of wider post-colonial study, my argument demonstrates a way of Othering that has often gone unexamined in research on Europe.

### ***Limitations of this Study and Recommendations for Further Research***

Of course, the research and discussion undertaken in this thesis has several limitations and methodological constraints. For example, the post-structuralist approach adopted in this thesis does not lend itself well to studying agency and individual motivation (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002, 17, 90). After all, post-structuralism largely conceptualizes agency as something realized through social relations, rather than something that rests within an individual. Accordingly, further research would need to be done to reveal the various motivations that propelled groups in Bosnia to adopt the positions they took during the conflict.

On the level of methodology, there are several other limitations. For example, non-verbal elements of the textual material gathered for this thesis’ analysis, such as photographs or print size, could not be reliably accessed through the available online database. Accordingly, this thesis focused on the discourse of urban–rural cleavages present within texts. In addition, some scholars have called for researchers to include popular culture, such as films and television shows, in discourse analysis (Neumann 2008). Widening the scope of research to include such visual forms of media, while beyond this thesis, may help academics to understand how the urban–rural discourse was rearticulated visually. Furthermore, this thesis’ research was limited to textual material produced or translated into English. Research conducted by academics fluent in Serbo-Croatian could provide additional insights into how discourse was reproduced at a more micro-level, below the translated material of intellectuals, journalists and writers that has been the focus of this thesis.

In addition, while I outlined the development of the urban–rural cleavage discourse in Yugoslavia as a whole, I was particularly interested in how it was rearticulated during the

conflict in Bosnia. However, how do discourses of urban–rural cleavages impact identity in places like France or Britain, where the need to assert a “Western” or “European” identity is less compelling? After all, while various aspects of the discourse studied in this thesis are widely entrenched in Western thinking, such as the connection between the ideals of urbanity and modernity, many European nations outside of the former Yugoslav sphere actually hold a romanticised, though perhaps equally problematic, view of their own countryside and its culture (Cloke and Milbourne 1992, 359; Bell 2006). As a result, an opportunity for further study is the existence of an urban–rural cleavage discourse in other geographic contexts.

Moreover, while the reproduction of Orientalisms in the Balkans may point to the power of Western hegemonic ideologies, postcolonial literature is beginning to analyse the ways in which Orientalist discourse can be “turned on its head” by those who are the subjects of it (Chatterjee 1993). Consequently, future research could ascertain the extent of rural revalorization among Bosnians, in which the Balkan countryside is held up as the ideal type and it is the city and its “European” values that are disparaged. Analysis of such a phenomenon, while it is outside the confines of this thesis, could provide valuable insight into the ways in which orientalist ideology is not only adopted in the region but also reversed.

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