

Description of the Chapters

(Excerpted and slightly abridged text taken from *International Intervention and the Problem of Legitimacy: Encounters in Postwar Bosnia-Herzegovina* by Andrew C. Gilbert)

After the introductory chapters, the book is split into two sections. It begins with two chapters which analyze intervention encounters in the mass news media, an understudied site and instrument of international intervention. **Chapter 1** shows how foreign officials like the international community's High Representative and a range of Bosnian political elites used mass publicity to legitimize and authorize their state-building actions and delegitimize those of their opponents. This chapter identifies political innovations, such as a recombinant approach to democratization, as well as important limits to internationally instigated political transformation.

Chapter 2 analyzes encounters with and within history, showing how foreigners often had to pursue their goals by using cultural forms and historical materials not of their choosing. Gilbert shows how such materials bore traces of their former contexts, and thus resisted attempts to redefine them more narrowly for intervention purposes. Specifically, he analyzes mass media artifacts to show how High Representative Wolfgang Petritsch, by taking a key Bosnian political concept out of one historical, interactional, or institutional context and repurposing it to legitimize foreign state-building in another (a process called *recontextualization*), did manage to alter the Bosnian social and political landscape, just not in the ways he had hoped for.

The second section comprises three chapters which analyze intervention encounters in the refugee return process. **Chapter 3** describes how ideas about ethnic identity functioned as an important heuristic, helping foreigners to navigate a social and political field most knew nothing about. Such ideas also served to legitimize a role for the international community in postwar Bosnia as a neutral mediator between antagonistic ethnic groups. The analysis details how these ideas and roles informed returnee behavior when they engaged foreigners and tried to enlist them to serve their goals. In addition to describing an interactional field underwritten by ideologies about ethnicity, Gilbert also reveals the instabilities created by reliance on them.

One of the most significant undertakings in postwar Bosnia and Herzegovina was the massive housing reconstruction projects run by international aid organizations as part of a highly politicized effort to move refugees back to their prewar homes. Alongside the usual technical tasks of such projects, aid workers spent considerable time and effort in their encounters with refugees creating the social and cultural conditions conducive to humanitarian action—a process Gilbert calls *humanitarianization*.

Chapter 4 analyzes these efforts and demonstrates that the humanitarian status of such aid projects was never more than provisionally settled. It argues that this unstable, provisional nature of humanitarian action forms an underexplored dynamic shaping and limiting aid interventions in Bosnia and beyond.

Chapter 5 explores the role played by an understudied but widespread practice of international intervention: *entextualization*, or the production and circulation of English-language text artifacts. The author shows how entextualization practices helped foreigners manage the uncertainty created by the expectation that they did not need to know much about Bosnia in order to transform it, and their experience that their ability to fulfill their roles was limited precisely by their lack of this knowledge. Entextualization processes stabilized foreign knowledge of Bosnian politics and society by rendering it in terms that foreigners could understand, and this knowledge became the basis for intervention projects of various kinds. But the reliance on entextualization also created problems in intervention encounters

between OSCE officials and returning refugees. Gilbert shows how the very practices designed to decrease uncertainty for foreign officials actually increased uncertainty for Bosnian returnees, and this limited the ability of OSCE officials to fulfill their mandate to combat human rights violations and promote refugee return.