



Building the Future

Bosnia and Herzegovina
and the Potential
of Constitutional Pluralism

edited by
Mario Perini

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Table of Contents

Concept and Presentation <i>Mario Perini, Edin Škrebo, TerraProject</i>	7
Introduction <i>Mario Perini</i>	9
Building The Future: a Journey Through Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Potential of Constitutional Pluralism <i>Edin Škrebo</i>	11
PHOTOGRAPHIC REPORTAGE <i>TerraProject</i>	31
The Authors	103

Introduction

Mario Perini

This book is the result of a photographic journey developed within an academic and cultural framework, seeking to connect research, visual storytelling and public reflection. The project, “Building the Future: Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Potential of Constitutional Pluralism”, was conceived as a documentary exploration of contemporary Bosnia and Herzegovina.

This volume is part of the wider International Mobility Programme: Assessing Constitutional Crisis Impact and Security (IMP-ACCTS), an international academic initiative that fosters cooperation between universities. Through mobility, research collaboration and interdisciplinary dialogue, the programme examines how constitutional systems operate in contexts of political tension and institutional transformation. The programme’s overarching goal is to promote a critical understanding of democratic governance and to strengthen academic networks capable of addressing complex societal challenges.

Within this framework, photography provides a valuable additional perspective. While legal scholarship and the social sciences analyse institutions, norms and political processes, visual documentation can capture the environments and human experiences within which these structures ultimately take shape. This photographic project was developed with precisely this intention: to explore how a constitutional framework, understood here as a neutral analytical backdrop tracing the country’s institutional evolution, which is often discussed in abstract terms, coexists with the daily realities of the people who live within it.

The work carried out by TerraProject does not attempt to interpret Bosnia and Herzegovina through ideological lenses, nor does it propose political readings of its institutional arrangements. The photographs are not intended to argue, persuade or advocate. Rather, they seek to observe. They depict places, people, landscapes and gestures, as ordinary moments that together form the texture of contemporary life. In this sense, the project does not advance any particular political vision but instead develops an artistic and documentary inquiry grounded in observation.

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During the project, the photographers travelled across the country and explored a wide variety of environments, including urban centres, rural villages, public institutions, informal gathering places, classrooms, workshops, cultural venues, religious spaces and sports arenas. Each setting revealed a different aspect of the social landscape, offering fragments of a diverse and interconnected reality.

The resulting images do not follow a single narrative line. Instead, they function as a visual constellation, with different scenes interacting with one another. A street corner, a school corridor, a stadium crowd, a quiet rural road or an individual captured in a moment of stillness all contribute to a broader mosaic. Together, they convey the complexity of a society that cannot be reduced to simplistic categories or historical stereotypes.

Importantly, the project was conceived in a constructive and forward-looking manner. Bosnia and Herzegovina is often represented by images focusing almost exclusively on past conflicts or political tensions dominating international headlines. While these are undeniable parts of the country's history, they do not fully define the experience of its citizens today. This photographic work therefore seeks to broaden the perspective by highlighting the everyday spaces where life unfolds, relationships develop and communities evolve.

Specific attention is given to individuals and environments that embody openness, creativity and dialogue. Young people, cultural initiatives, grassroots associations and shared public spaces are all featured throughout the project, showcasing places where interaction and coexistence flourish. Rather than presenting a simplified or idealised portrait of the country, these scenes reveal the many ways in which individuals navigate diversity and complexity in their daily lives.

For this reason, the images collected in this book should not be interpreted as a political statement. They do not promote a particular vision of Bosnia and Herzegovina's constitutional future, nor do they seek to depict the country definitively. They are instead rooted in a research framework that remains analytically neutral with respect to competing constitutional and political perspectives. Their purpose is more modest, yet equally meaningful: to provide viewers with a visual space in which they can freely reflect on fragments of reality.

The collaboration between an academic research programme and a documentary photography project reflects a broader belief in the value of interdisciplinary dialogue. Understanding societies, especially those shaped by layered histories and plural identities, requires multiple perspectives. Law, the social sciences and visual narratives each shed light on different aspects of the same reality. This volume brings these approaches together to open new ways of looking at the relationship between institutions, communities, and everyday life.

Ultimately, this book is an invitation. It encourages readers to move beyond simplistic narratives and experience Bosnia and Herzegovina through a series of visual moments: places that are inhabited, lives that are unfolding and stories that are suggested rather than explained. The photographs do not claim to capture the full complexity of the country. Instead, they offer glimpses of a living society whose future is still being shaped by its inhabitants.

Together, these images convey a quiet yet hopeful message: a reminder that, despite constitutional frameworks and political debates, there are always spaces where people come together through dialogue, creativity and shared experiences to build a better future.