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Bosnia-Herzegovina

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Introduction

For more than twenty years, Bosnia-Herzegovina has been a prominent case in the peacebuilding literature, a benchmark by which other conflict-ridden societies have been evaluated or compared to. Its significance in the realm of peacebuilding and state making stems from several interrelated factors. First, the Bosnian War began at the threshold of a Post-Cold War era when new international rules were in the process of being formed. The Bosnian war shattered the European peace architecture that had emerged after World War II resulting in frantic efforts by the international community to create an alternative conceptual framework that later became known under the moniker of liberal peacebuilding (Mac Ginty 2011; Campbell, Chandler, and Sabaratnam 2011; Newman, Paris, and Richmond 2009).

Second, the daily coverage by major international news agencies and the TV images of the siege of Sarajevo and ethnic cleansing brought home to North American and European households the realities of the Bosnian War. Even though an effective international peace-making campaign took years to put together, pressure by Western publics to "do something" was present from the first days of the war in the Spring of 1992. Moreover, the sheer brutality of the war that left close to 100,000 people dead in three and half years (Tokaca 2018; Guzina and Marijan 2013) raised questions about the actual costs of peace and the limits of peacebuilding operations in the supposedly liberal world order.

For all these reasons, the entire first generation of post-Cold War scholars, humanitarian workers, and policy analysts have been heavily influenced by the Bosnian peacebuilding experience. Indeed, it is hard to find an edited collection of chapters or a monograph on

peacebuilding that does not refer to the international involvement in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In general, there are two schools of thought on the case of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Foreign policy makers and pragmatically oriented scholars are quick to praise the stability brought about by the newly created, internationally orchestrated power-sharing structures in Bosnia-Herzegovina (Tonge 2014; Durch 2006). From this perspective, one of the central achievements of the Dayton Peace Agreement (also known as Dayton Peace Accords) that brought an end to the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina is the lack of violent conflicts in more than twenty years. A more critically oriented scholarship instead argues that Bosnian peacebuilding offers a cautionary tale where the prescribed goals of liberal peacebuilding have produced a political system based on rigid power-sharing, lack of local ownership, disempowered citizenship, and a deeply fractured civil society (Merdzanovic 2017; Richmond 2014; Donais 2012).

Bosnia-Herzegovina is an ideal case study for understanding the complexities of post-Cold War conflict resolution. The chapter provides an overview and an evaluation of the lessons that can be drawn from the Bosnian peace process. More specifically, it addresses the following questions: how can the Dayton peace process be evaluated from the perspective of the past twenty-some years? Can Bosnia-Herzegovina be genuinely upheld as the "gold standard" of peacebuilding? And, does Bosnia-Herzegovina lend itself to easy comparisons?

Conflict analysis

The descent of Bosnia-Herzegovina into fratricidal war should be situated within a broader context of the geopolitical transformation sparked by the implosion of the global communist system. Without the changes in the geopolitical map of Europe, it is doubtful that Yugoslavia would have collapsed, and Bosnia-Herzegovina would have ended up in war. One of the central tenets of the European Cold-War structure has been the critical role played by the former Yugoslavia as a bridge between the liberal West and the communist East. With the implosion of the Soviet Union and the bloodless revolutions in Eastern Europe, the need of the international community for such a bridge disappeared, leaving Yugoslav actors in the position to pursue their respective policies without regard for the broader implications of their actions.

Serbian President, Slobodan Milosevic, Croatian President, Franjo Tudjman, and Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Alija Izetbegovic each relied on nationalist ideology to legitimise their respective political agendas. In particular, Milosevic's orchestration of the so-called anti-bureaucratic revolution in Serbia, in a series of mass rallies across the republic, allowed him to bypass both the Serbian and Yugoslav constitutions and to undermine the territorial autonomy of the multi-ethnic Serbian provinces of Vojvodina and Kosovo (Ramet 2006; Popov 1996). Milosevic sought to unify Serbs living within Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina; both regions had a substantial percentage of local Serbs (according to the last Yugoslav Census in 1991, Serbs constituted 12.2 percent of the population in Croatia, and 31.4 percent in Bosnia-Herzegovina). Likeminded Tudjman also sought to carve up Bosnia-Herzegovina and incorporate those areas with a substantial Croat majority (in particular, Western Herzegovina) into Croatia. Izetbegovic, on the other hand, was never able to attract Bosnian Serb or Croat allegiances; his legitimacy was deeply rooted in the Bosnian Muslim constituency.

Unfortunately, a peaceful dissolution of a multinational federation in the context of the former Yugoslavia was only possible in regions that were ethnically almost entirely homogenous. Slovenia, with a tiny percentage of non-ethnic Slovenians, was the only republic that fulfilled this condition. Thus, after brief skirmishes with the Yugoslav Army (the so-called Ten Days War for Independence from 27 June to 7 July 1991), the Yugoslav military withdrew, and Slovenia effectively became an independent state. In all other cases, the dissolution of the multinational one-party federal state would not only fail to open the door to peaceful self-determination and democratic transition but would also bring bloody wars to Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Kosovo.

The European Economic Community's (EEC; as of 1993, European Community – EC) initial strategy centred around the recommendations of the Arbitration Commission of the International Conference on Yugoslavia (the so-called Badinter Commission) set up on 27

August 1991 to provide the Conference with legal advice. The EEC's Badinter Commission set forth criteria based on principles of liberal democracy including widespread support for independence through democratically organised referenda and protection of national minority rights. Once these criteria were fulfilled, the regions could legitimately secede and establish themselves as independent states. But, the Commission also applied the post-colonial principle of *uti posseditis*, which effectively legitimised and imposed Yugoslav provincial borders as the borders of those newly emerging states (Caplan 2005; Radan 2002). This principle was not acceptable to Serbia and local Serbian leadership in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Their interpretation of the principle of self-determination was as belonging to the people rather than to territories. Accordingly, they sought to redraw regional borders in their fight for self-determination by any means necessary.

The case of Bosnia-Herzegovina, in particular, exemplifies the tensions and limits of the Commission's recommendations. The republic was divided among three national communities, none of which had full majority status. Bosniaks (as of 1993, the historical term used to refer to Bosnian Muslims) were the most numerous comprising 43.7 percent of the population according to the 1991 Census. Bosnian Serbs accounted for 31.4 percent and Croats 17.3 percent of the population (Burg and Shoup 1999: p. 27). To secure representation and peace within the region, the Bosnian Constitution declared all three groups as collectively the founding nations in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and thus no one group could be treated as a minority. The constitution also ensured that the combined majority vote of two ethnic groups would not undermine, nor impose decisions on the third national community in the country.

Be that as it may, following the Badinter Commission's ruling, Bosnia-Herzegovina held a referendum on the question of independence that took place on 29 February and 1 March 1992. By then, Bosnians of all ethnic stripes were caught in a circle of escalating violence and deep mistrust. Even before Bosnia's recognition as an independent state, Bosnian Serb forces, with the support of the Serbian Army (then, still operated under the official name of the Yugoslav Army) engaged in aggressive military actions against Bosniaks and Croats (Hoare 2007;

Ramet 2006). When the referendum was finally organised, Bosnian Muslims and Croats voted overwhelmingly in favour of independence, while Bosnian Serbs boycotted it. Despite the constitutionally problematic character of the vote, the Bosnian Muslim politician, Alija Izetbegovic, as the Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia-Herzegovina, declared independence on 6 April 1992. Ironically, this date came to represent the birth of a new state, but also the formal beginning of the war. The following day, both the United States and the EEC nominally committed themselves to the unity of Bosnia-Herzegovina by recognizing it as a new European state. While doing so, they underestimated the ethnic divisions pervading the region.

In response, Bosnian Serbs intensified military campaigns and laid a three-years-long siege of Sarajevo, which became a symbol of the entire Bosnian war. Bosnian Serb military and political objectives in the ensuing conflict were made public from the very beginning; if a Serb-dominated Yugoslavia was not possible, the second-best solution was to establish a territory of their own. Already on 7 April 1992, Bosnian leaders in the Bosnian Serb stronghold of Pale declared the creation of Republika Srpska (RS) within Bosnia-Herzegovina. On 12 May, during the session of the assembly of the RS in Banja Luka, the Bosnian Serb leader, Radovan Karadzic, announced that the "belt along the Drina [the river separating Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina] must basically belong to Serbian Bosnia-Herzegovina" (qt. in Karcic 2015). At the same assembly, the delegates adopted Karadzic's "Six Strategic Objectives of the Serbian People in Bosnia and Herzegovina" (the document was later published in the Republika Srpska's Official Gazette on 26 November 1993). The most strategic objective was a proposal to delineate a new state that would connect the corridors of all "Serb territories" into one coherent area. In other words, as early as April 1992, Bosnian Serb leaders officially inaugurated the politics of ethnic cleansing both as a war tool and political objective. After all, according to the 1991 Bosnian Census, there was not one single municipality at the territory that later became known as Republika Srpska where Bosnian Serbs, Croats and Bosniaks did not live together.

In the early stages of the war, the Bosniak position was much more precarious. Faced with the heavily armed Bosnian Serb forces, they focused their efforts on securing international support

(from the UN, USA, EEC, OSCE, and Islamic states) for the preservation of a unified Bosnia-Herzegovina. Diplomatically, this proved to be a successful strategy given the international outrage against the Bosnian Serb practice of ethnic cleansing. Yes, despite international support, an arms embargo was imposed on all warring sides in Bosnia-Herzegovina, which effectively precluded Bosniaks from arming themselves with heavy weaponry. Similarly, external military assistance to Bosniak forces was not deployed until the last stages of the war. Thus, throughout most of the war, the United Nations mission on the ground (UNPROFOR) was best understood as peacekeeping and humanitarian intervention rather than peacebuilding. In the words of the Bosnia-Herzegovina UNPROFOR commander, Michael Rose, "the UN was not ready to cross 'the Mogadishu line' between peacekeeping and warfighting" (qt. in Cousens and Harland, p. 57 in Durch 2006).

Bosnian Croats, the smallest of three communities, had the most difficulties in creating a coherent strategy. They were territorially dispersed; western Herzegovina was an overwhelmingly Croat region, yet the rest of Bosnian Croats were spread out through many Bosnian municipalities. Herzegovinian Croats had the same objectives as Bosnian Serbs – the creation of an exclusively Croat entity, the so-called Herzeg Bosnia. However, despite Croats' eight-month war against Bosniaks in 1993, they failed to create a so-called third entity in Bosnia-Herzegovina, which effectively marginalised their war efforts until 1995.

In light of the military preponderance of the Bosnian Serb forces (already by mid-1992, they were able to control 70 percent of the Bosnian territory), the incompatible political objectives of all three sides in the conflict, and the reluctance of the external agencies to cross "the Mogadishu line", all peace initiatives succumbed to what James Gow describes as "the triumph of the lack of will" (Gow 1997). The target of Gow's critique was international mediators, in particular, the US dispirited interest to become more actively engaged in the peace process until later in 1994. This lack of interest was particularly manifest with the jointly sponsored UN-EEC initiative, also known as the Vance-Owen Plan in late 1992 and early 1993. Even though at one point all three sides were in principle supportive of the programme, it was shattered by

disagreements between the Clinton Administration and the UN-EEC representatives over the Plan's sustainability on the ground (Burg and Shoup 1999; Owen 1995).

In hindsight, the Plan offered a vision of Bosnia-Herzegovina that the later-signed Dayton Accords never aspired to: an administrative division of the country into nine ethnic cantons, each controlling policing, education and transport, albeit within the framework of a weak unified central government. More importantly, the Plan maintained the principle of ethnic proportionality and pushed back against the Bosnian Serbs' objective to have contiguous borders with Serbia. It also suggested the rolling back of Serb territorial gains by 30 percent (Tonge 2014: p. 139; Owen 1995). Still, as Gow maintains, "the Clinton Administration effectively destroyed the Vance-Owen plan through allegations that it rewarded aggression and condoned ethnic cleansing" (p. 313; also, see Owen 1995). But, perhaps the most important implication of the Plan was that it, for the first time, revealed a split in Serbian leadership. As much as a Serbian President, Slobodan Milosevic, supported the Plan (no matter how problematic that support might be), Bosnian Serb leaders were adamantly against it, a division that would become ever more significant in the later stages of the war, and during the Dayton peace talks. The apple of discord was that Bosnian Serbs did not want to give up on the independently run Bosnian Serb territory and contiguous borders with Serbia.

Different pieces of the peace puzzle were finally put together in the summer and fall of 1995. What accelerated the process was the UN's failure to prevent the Bosnian Serb massacre of Bosniaks in the UN-designated safe area, the town of Srebrenica, in July 1995 when more than 7,000 Bosnian men were killed (Nettelfield and Wagner 2013; Honig and Both 1997). The United States was forced to act more decisively by launching the NATO air campaign, Operation Deliberate Force, against Bosnian Serb positions. Already, a year before, the Contact Group (comprising of USA, Britain, France, Germany, and Russia) was created, which led to the Washington Framework Agreement of 1 March 1994. The Agreement established a joint Bosnian Muslim and Croat Federation; it also lay the groundwork for a new Bosnia-Herzegovina

that would include the Bosnian Muslim and Croat Federation along with the Bosnian Serb Republic.

Ultimately, with the Croatian Army regaining control over Croatia in 1995, followed by ethnic cleansing of Serbs from Croatia, the Bosnian Serbs' military luck started to change in Bosnia-Herzegovina as well. The moment was at last ripe for a peace. No one has explained this better than the top American negotiator, Richard Holbrooke: "the success of the Croatian (and later, in similar circumstances, the Bosnian-Croat Federation) offensive was a classic illustration of the fact that the shape of the diplomatic landscape will usually reflect the balance of forces on the ground. In concrete terms, this meant that as diplomats we could not expect the Serbs to be conciliatory at the negotiating table as long as they had experienced nothing but success on the battlefield" (1998: p. 73). By mid-October 1995, the Serb-held territory was scaled down from 70 percent to roughly 50 percent of the Bosnian land.

The Western bombing campaign was simultaneously followed by the very successful American-initiated shuttle-diplomacy. First, on September 14, Milosevic and the Bosnian Serb leaders agreed to sign the document that effectively put an end to the Bosnian Serbs' siege of Sarajevo. Second, by October 5, Holbrooke successfully negotiated a ceasefire that was for the first time since the beginning of the war respected by Bosnian Serb and Bosniak forces (Pomfret 1995). Finally, after almost four years of fighting, all sides were genuinely ready to pursue peace talks, even though each of the warring parties entered the negotiations with radically opposing expectations.

The conflict resolution process
The Bosnian peace talks lasted a total of 21 days from the 1st to the 21st of November 1995. At first, the place chosen for the negotiations seemed rather peculiar – the Wright-Peterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio. This site was selected deliberately to keep the warring sides away from the press thereby reducing the possibility of any one party outbidding the other in the public war of words. At the end of the "lock everyone up until they reach agreement"

(Holbrooke 1998: p. 232) style of negotiations, the General Framework for Peace with its eleven annexes (the so-called Dayton Peace Accords), was agreed to and officially signed a month later in Paris on 14 December. The peace process was achievable because all parties, both international and regional powers, accepted the peace process as in their mutual interest. As Hampson points out, peace settlements require "a combination of international and regional strategies", and they are always "inextricably tied to the interests of neighbouring regional powers and their overall commitment to the peace process" (1996: p. 217).

A series of prior events (some previously discussed) laid the conditions that would allow for all parties to come to the negotiation table. These included the creation of the Bosnian Muslim Croat Federation a year earlier, the military defeat and the cleansing of local Serbs from Croatia, NATO bombing of Bosnian Serb positions, and, most importantly, the American decision to replace the Europeans and the UN as principal architects, engineers and guarantors of the entire peace process. Furthermore, what made those talks possible was the emerging congruence of interests between principal regional actors (Serbia and Croatia) and the United States' strategy to address violent conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Serbia and Croatia sought respectively to lift international sanctions against Serbia and regain control over eastern Slavonia, an area in Croatia that was not yet firmly integrated with the rest of the country. Both sides also gave up their resolve to carve up Bosnia-Herzegovina and, instead, began to support institutional arrangements that will allow them to retain their interests in Bosnia-Herzegovina (Bildt 1999; Holbrooke 1998). Moreover, both Presidents were forced into agreeing to a political compromise; a negotiated outcome that local Serb or Croat delegations were less likely to accept.

The peace process resembled an intricate chess game with continuous moving parts that ultimately converged with the peace talks and the Dayton Agreement. From the very beginning of the war, the position of external actors has been twofold – to reach permanent peace and preserve Bosnia-Herzegovina as a multi-ethnic state. These two interrelated goals were best integrated in the joint EC-UN initiative (the previously discussed Vance-Owen Plan) that

revolved around preserving the multi-ethnic character of the Bosnian state by reversing the effects of the ethnic cleansing campaign that uprooted half of the pre-war Bosnian population. The Plan proposed dividing the country into cantons, each of which would retain demographic diversity even though nominally identified as Bosnian Serb, Croat, or Bosniak (Owen 2013, 1995). The Americans rejected such a plan because the proposed programme of action was not feasible, but also for the "ethical reasons" of not wanting to territorially reward the Bosnian Serbs that the Clinton Administration perceived as aggressors in the war.

And yet, a year later, the American approach to the Bosnian war shifted in two fundamental aspects. First, the United States actively supported the creation of the Bosnian Muslim-Croat Federation (1994). At the same time, they also implicitly recognised the need for territorial separation between the Federation and Republika Srpska, albeit within a federal structure that would keep the Bosnian state formally multi-ethnic. Second, the US compromised on its initial position regarding the delineation of borders within the country. More than a year before the Dayton talks, the proposed border formula called for 51 percent for Bosniak-Croat territory and 49 percent for Republika Srpska; in other words, already at that time, all external actors accepted this proposal as the most realistic as for how to end the war. However, with the US firmly behind such a plan, this meant that American negotiators acknowledged Republika Srpska's contiguous borders with Serbia. By 1995, during the Dayton talks, the goal of achieving a peace accord overshadowed any American previous ethical concerns. It would be shown later that this effectively led to the acceptance of the ethnic cleansing as an acceptable tool in the Bosnian war.

How should one understand such a "pragmatic" shift in the American approach to the Bosnian conflict? Part of the answer is already provided in Hampson's recognition that peace settlements require that major external peace strategies should be aligned with the interests of neighbouring regional powers and their overall commitment to the peace process. American readiness to accept Serbia and Croatia as legitimate actors in any deal on peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina goes a long way to explaining the outcome of the Dayton peace talks. Belloni adds

another dimension to the international efforts to achieve the peace. In his insightful analysis of state building and international intervention in Bosnia-Herzegovina, he (2008) has identified three major lessons for international peacekeepers. First, the multiple objectives of all actors involved in conflict complicate reaching a genuinely agreed upon solution to such a conflict. Second, contrary to the rhetoric of moral arguments, "the focus of international actors has been to preserve stability as much as possible while neglecting the more important need for a long-term change" (p. 5). Third, the focus on stability goes "hand-in-hand," with the "preoccupation with visible and concrete short-term results (p. 5)".

Once American negotiators identified peace between Serbia and Croatia as strategically essential for the stability of the entire region, the Bosnian delegation had no choice but to accept the agreement even though they recognised that the particulars of the deal would undermine an integrated multi-ethnic state and, instead, result in deep ethnic divisions. Indeed, the country that emerged out of Dayton (usually referred to as a Dayton Bosnia) is a nation that walks a fine line between partition and reintegration. Formally, Bosnia-Herzegovina preserved its internationally recognised borders. But, it is also internally divided in a threefold way: administratively, ethnically, and territorially. Each of these aspects is fully elaborated upon in Annex 4 of the Dayton Peace Accords that became recognised as a new Bosnia-Herzegovinian Constitution.

The Dayton Agreement hinged on the ability of the international community to enforce and oversee the peace process. It contained an additional ten annexes covering such a wide variety of issues, ranging from military aspects and regional stabilisation (annex 1), interethnic boundary lines (annex 2), elections (annex 3), human rights and refugees and displaced persons (annexes 6 and 7), to civilian implementation and an international police task force (annexes 10 and 11). Each of these annexes was supported by key external implementers with a NATO-led implementation force and the newly created Office of the High Representative. Also, especially in the first years of Dayton Bosnia, the OSCE – Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees played an essential role in organising the

first elections and in securing the framework for a safe return of refugees and protection of human rights. Finally, even though not part of the Dayton structure, both the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY, already created in 1993) have become central agencies through which the issues of transitional justice and the responsibility for war crimes have been addressed.

The peace process was successful in ending the war. Within ten years, the international military presence downsized from 60,000 to less than 6,000 troops (Cousens and Harland: pp. 83-87 in Durch 2006). The leaders responsible for war crimes were arrested and sent to The Hague for prosecution at the ICTY, including the former President of Serbia, Slobodan Milosevic, and Bosnian Serb political and military leaders, Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic. Moreover, a series of post-war elections in the past twenty years were organised peacefully. Finally, the country rebuilt its destroyed infrastructure, and it has been engaged in formal negotiations to join the European Union (EU). In other words, the objectives that have been identified within each of the signed annexes have been fully implemented. And yet, Bosnia-Herzegovina did not emerge as a fully integrated, democratic, federal state. Quite the contrary, the achieved results of international intervention are ambiguous at best.

To understand this apparent paradox, one needs to separate the international intervention in terms of short-term, easily identifiable goals of the peace process from post-conflict peacebuilding which requires a more ambitious project of "state making from scratch", a simultaneous process of rebuilding state institutions, democratic transition, and inter-ethnic integration. Most of the achievements reflect what Belloni has described as short-term goals of the international community's approach to peacebuilding (Belloni 2009, 2008). The rest of this section outlines three outstanding long-term issues that external and local actors still struggle with, specifically, the question of local ownership; the permanent shift in the demographic structure of Bosnian society; and the competing narratives over the responsibility for the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Finally, these raise the critical question of citizens' satisfaction with the post-Dayton period in Bosnia-Herzegovina. A focus on these challenges underscores the limits

of the peace process and questions the extent to which post-war peacebuilding has achieved the presumed long-term stability of the region.

Without relying on massive international military and civil presence, Bosnia-Herzegovina would not have achieved peace understood in terms of stability and security. The multinational troops were employed with the primary task to secure the *status quo* on the ground. However, such "realist concerns with stability merged uneasily" with the broader objectives of Dayton to guarantee human rights protection, rebuild civic structures and reverse wartime ethnic cleansing (Belloni 2008: p. 173). Thus, in the early years of the international engagement in Bosnia-Herzegovina, such a stability-oriented strategy necessitated the primacy of robust military structures (IFOR) at the expense of a strong civilian mandate from the Office of the High Representative. Later, the roles reversed, and the OHR became overinvolved in a top-down Bosnian state and social engineering, undermining the development of a genuine Bosnian civil society and local political structures (Donais 2017, 2005; Chandler 2000). This new strategy of intrusive institution building was inaugurated at the Peace Implementation Council (PIC, the organization in charge of implementing the Dayton Accords) meeting in December 1997. It allowed the PIC to legitimise the UN High Representative's request to use his administrative powers and impose a solution despite strong disagreement between local Bosnian parties. The so-called Bonn powers permitted the practice of external imposition of the rule of law in the country thereby allowing for the dismissal of elected politicians and the external imposition of constitutional principles, laws and regulations (Merdzanovic 2017; Caplan 2005).

Even though the Bonn powers were initially upheld as central to the future success of Bosnia, many scholars have argued that they blocked domestic political debate on the flaws of the Dayton Agreement. Moreover, that the external bureaucratic interventions in Bosnian affairs worked against the very democratic principle of self-government that the Office of the High Representative sought to achieve. The focus of such critique was in particular that the international community imposed a "culture of dependency'' among the local population, resulting in a "paternalistic, authoritarian manner" by which international agencies undermined

local grass-root incentives for more democratic involvement in politics (Chandler 2017, 2000). In essence, the interventionist template imposed on Bosnia-Herzegovina has hollowed out the public space for any local agencies attempting to challenge the imposed consociational system (Donais 2017, 2012, 2005).

Another (un)intended peacebuilding outcome is the failure of external actors to address the growing territorial fragmentation among ethnic groups that began with ethnic cleansing during the war. Population trends suggest increased ethnic fragmentation following the war. For instance, in 1991, what is now Republika Srpska, had a mixed population composed of 55 percent Serb, 28 Bosniak, 9 Croat, 5 Yugoslav, and 3 percent the so-called other. Census data for 2013 reveal that Serbs increased their representation from 55 to 81 percent in this region and Bosniaks dropped from 28 to 14 percent, and Croats to 2.5 percent. Likewise, in the Bosniak-Croat Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, in 1991, the area was composed of 52 percent Bosniaks, 22 Croats, 18 Serbs, 6 Yugoslavs, and 3 percent others. In 2013, in the Bosniak-Croat parts of Bosnia-Herzegovina, 70 percent identified as Bosniaks, 22 as Croats, and 2.5 percent as Serbs (Bosnia-Herzegovina Statistics Agency 2013).

The official 2013 Census results (the first since the 1992-1995 war) only confirm that the legacies of ethnic cleansing remain a permanent fixture of the Bosnian state. These demographic shifts in ethnic composition were just in part a result of the ethnic cleansing war strategy. They were also a product of the peace agreement itself. Indeed, the Bosnian territorial divisions, as enshrined in Dayton, rewarded the nationalist parties for their territorial feuds and ethnic cleansing policies. Despite initial efforts to encourage refugees and internally displaced persons to return and settle roots in their homeland, people sold their lands in favour of moving to areas where they felt more secure among their respective ethnic majority. Hence, rather than fostering ethnic integration in each of the cantons and within RS, the peace arrangements intensified divisions between ethnic groups, thereby, undermining long-term regional stability.

A final and most damaging limitation on peacebuilding in Bosnia-Herzegovina has been the complete failure of the international actors to challenge the competing local narratives over the causes and consequences of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina. This issue, more than any other, betrays the tensions between Dayton's short-term peace objectives and long-term goals of re-integrating Bosnian society. At the heart of this tension is the very structure of the Dayton Accord – its territorial and institutional solutions to peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In particular, it revolves around the Dayton Accords' support for the internal territorial integrity of Republika Srpska. But, the emerging post-war Bosniak narrative is that of being the victims of Bosnian Serb genocide against them. On their side, Bosnian Serbs' representation of the war is as the fight for national self-determination and protection from possible retaliation by other communities in Bosnia.

From the very beginning of Dayton Bosnia, Bosniaks hoped that the international community would prosecute Bosnian Serbs for engaging in genocide in the war. Accordingly, Bosniaks were much more interested in the genocide case against Serbia in front of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) than in the individual cases before the ICTY (Subotic 2009). The ICJ's decision against Serbia would have recognised the Bosnian war as a war of aggression and resulted in the abolition of Republika Srpska. In other words, Bosniaks hoped that the ICJ ruling would achieve what could not have been accomplished during the Dayton negotiations. However, in February 2007, the ICJ issued a ruling that cleared Serbia of direct responsibility for the genocide and any complicity in the genocide that happened between 1992 and 1995. The verdict reiterated the ICTY decision that the only confirmed case of genocide in Bosnia is the one committed by Bosnian Serb forces in Srebrenica (Guzina and Marijan 2013).

The Court outcome intensified deep-seated tensions between these ethnic groups. It also reinforced local public perceptions that the ICTY has done little to support or inspire reconciliation between the communities. Instead, the joint ICJ and ICTY ruling appears to have intensified those divisions. Or, as Meernik has put it, "[M]ore often than not, ethnic groups

responded with increased hostility towards one another after an arrest or judgement" (2005: p. 287). In the end, there is still a widespread sense of a continuing conflict shared by Bosnians irrespective of which community they belong to. Within the environment of the "incomplete peace" in Bosnia-Herzegovina, "everyday peace politics" has almost naturally resulted in conflict over the symbols and competing narratives over the causes of war (Marijan 2017). In 2018, as much as was the case in 1995, Bosniaks perceive RS as a "genocidal creation", while for Bosnian Serbs it is a "legitimate outcome" of the Bosnian Serbs' struggle for the right to self-determination.

In the end, the identified three Dayton Bosnia's challenges oblige every student of Bosnian affairs to address, however briefly, two interlocked questions: whether any local agency has the leverage and power to make necessary changes to Bosnia-Herzegovina's political system? And, exactly how viable is Bosnia-Herzegovina in the long term? With hindsight of more than twenty years, the answer to both questions appears to be ambiguous at best. Despite constant emphasis on the need for change reiterated during every single Bosnian election, the changes in the system merely reinforce the status quo allowing "Bosnian oligarchs to stay as they are" (Calori 2014).

The latest Bosnian election of 2014 is an excellent example of the pretext of such "changes". Only months prior to the 2014 elections, thousands of citizens in Bosniak majority areas took part in massive street protests to express frustration against political and economic corruption and the astronomic unemployment crippling the country (GDP growth rate averaged only 0.31 percent from 2009 to 2017; the average unemployment rate from 2007 until 2017 is at the staggering 42.65 percent; and, about 150,000 young people have left their homes since the end of the war, with 10,000 leaving every year) (Trading Economics 2018; BalkanInsight 2013). Thus, the so-called Bosnian Spring street protest reflected deep seated dissatisfaction with Bosnian political elites at all levels of government. However, they also revealed the territorial divisions within Bosnia-Herzegovina, for citizens of Republika Srpska were much less prone to join the street protests (Marijan and Guzina 2014). Only a few months after the street protests, radical

demands for social and economic changes all but disappeared and nationalist parties resumed their dominance in the political domain. The Bosniak, Croat and Serb nationalist parties (respectively, SDA-Bosniak Party of Democratic Action; HDZ-Croatian Democratic Union; SNSD-Serb Alliance for Independent Social Democrats) did manage to incorporate some of the protestors' requests for change in their political platforms, thereby, securing their triumph once again in the 2014 general elections (the next elections are scheduled for the fall 2018). However, these changes were minimal and did little to disrupt existing political structures that reinforce ethnic divisions.

The Dayton plan, in part, is responsible for constraining the rise of multi-ethnic parties that could disrupt nationalist political divisions. Bosnian party system is defined by intra-ethnic electoral competition among parties representing a single ethnic group, typically either Bosniak, Bosnian Serb, and Bosnian Croat, with rare cases of interethnic cooperation. And, even when they occur, as is the case between the leaders of the two major Bosnian Serb and Croat parties (SNSD and HDZ), such cooperation is motivated primarily by reasons of political expediency and effort to outbid or block the third Bosniak side in its determination to change the Dayton structure (Korzeniewska-Wiszniewska and Zdeb 2015: pp. 102-106). Overall, the political system is designed to push voters to choose nationalist candidates as a less risky option than voting for the moderate candidate that might shift the precarious balance imposed by Dayton.

That said, one momentary window of opportunity occurred during the 2010 elections which saw the rise of the Bosnian Social-democrats, and when the Social Democratic Party (SDP) rose to power in the 2010 elections as the only genuinely cross-ethnic party in Bosnia-Herzegovina (Korzeniewska-Wiszniewska and Zdeb 2015). However, the structure of the Dayton Agreement entrenched the dominance of nationalist identity politics making it difficult for intra-ethnic parties like the SDP to disrupt existing political structures. Nor was the SDP able to tackle the significant socio-economic problems gripping the country (Bieber 2014). The SDP subsequently suffered a crushing defeat in 2014. It is important to note that the SDP's defeat should have

been anticipated the months earlier because the street protest first erupted in Tuzla, an SDP stronghold. Citizens in the area were dissatisfied with nationalist politics but saw no possibility or hope in the SDP's ability to challenge existing political structures. The internal fragmentation of the SDP following the 2014 election led to the creation of a new social-democratic party, the Democratic Front (DF). Whether this will lead to a further split within the moderate vote in Bosnia-Herzegovina, or DF might prove to be more successful than SDP, remains to be seen.

Despite the continuing presence of nationalism and the nationalist victory in 2014, it would be wrong to assume that majority of Bosnian citizens are supportive of their respective nationalist parties. Apart from venting their dissatisfaction on the streets in February 2014, citizens' protest was evident in the low voter turnout, with 46 percent of the electorate abstained from voting. This highlights the level of political apathy among citizens, but it also reflects divisions between those who already lost their jobs and support protests or boycott elections, versus those who enjoy the benefits of the overinflated public sector and fear potential reforms that might cost them their jobs (Calori 2015). For the latter, there is still something to lose, for, on balance, a poorly paid job is still better than no job at all.

Finally, while the Dayton Agreement plays a significant role in maintaining a political structure that reinforces nationalist ethnic divisions, this alone cannot explain the current context in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The economic stagnation and the failure of any meaningful socio-economic reforms cut through most of the Western Balkans and the broader area of former communist countries (Milanovic 2014). Bosnian politicians are not the only ones in the region that proved very capable of maintaining their position of control over their respective societies. Similar practice is spread across the region, in particular, in Serbia, Montenegro, and Macedonia. Nor was such development of "elastic authoritarianism" possible without the active insistence of the EU on two-fold goals of political stability and the IMF- and World Bank-inspired economic reforms (Mujanovic 2018). For many regional scholars, what has emerged should best be described in terms of stabilitocracies. As Bieber has poignantly defined it, these are "governments that claim to secure stability, pretend to espouse EU integration and rely on

informal, clientelist structures, control of the media, and the regular production of crises to undermine democracy and the rule of law" (Bieber 2018a).

The future of Bosnia-Herzegovina is tenuous at best. One possibility is the continuation of the EU-inspired policies of support for external stability of the Western Balkans in general, and the territorial integrity of Bosnia-Herzegovina, in particular. But this comes at the costs of a stabilising the political system that legitimises itself by relying on the rhetoric of democracy, while internally being supportive of ethnic tensions and identity politics. At least, this is what many authors fear while evaluating the EU initiatives in support of the Western Balkans. Many would like to see a renewed EU engagement in the Balkans that "could break the downward spiral of authoritarianism and escalating crises and restore faith in the EU model" (Bieber 2018b). However, the continuing EU focus on external stability of the Western Balkans could further legitimise a rise in autocracy in the region. Under such conditions, fragmentation without democratisation will continue to define the events in Bosnia-Herzegovina and elsewhere in the region.

Mujanovic, in his book, *Hunger and Fury*, offers an alternative scenario. Endemic poverty and widespread corruption will eventually spark a new wave of street protests across the countries emerging out of the former Yugoslavia, and not only in Bosnia-Herzegovina. If successful, in Mujanovic's words, "the popular fury will leave in its wake fresh soil from which genuinely reformed societies may emerge" (2018: p. 174). To the extent that this outcome is possible, Bosnia-Herzegovina and other Western Balkans states, might be finally starting to come together and integrate their societies within the region and under the broader architecture of the EU. The first test for those two scenarios are the upcoming 2018 Bosnian general elections. But, one should not hold breath in favor of the alternative scenario. The experience with the Arab Spring and the Orange Revolution has taught everybody a lesson about the resilience of the competitive authoritarian regimes.

Lessons to be learned

What lessons can we glean from the international involvement in Bosnia-Herzegovina? Once peace accords are signed, a day-after brings the same uncertainties as the day-before signing them. Short of a clear victory of one side over the other in an intra-state conflict, the former combatants end up in the driver's seat as to how to interpret those agreements. In other words, a delicate and unstable compromise is usually the outcome of the peace accords. Too often, particularly in the case of Bosnia-Herzegovina, international peace agreements obscure the deep-seated tensions that continue to permeate societies; tensions that fuel instability in these regions and that are always at the brink of erupting. Thus, we should not search for generalizable, ready-made solutions that can be transferable to conflicts that were caused by radically different circumstances. Instead, we should recognise that what peace operations have in common are not necessarily shared lessons but shared challenges.

The best way to approach those challenges is by separating peacebuilding as a peace process from peacebuilding as post-conflict state making. The peace process is built by achieving an international consensus on possible steps towards peace. In the context of Bosnia-Herzegovina, it took full three and half years before international actors agreed to act in unison. Moreover, without an orchestrated NATO air campaign against Serb positions in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the summer of 1995, it is doubtful that Serbian President, Slobodan Milosevic, would have reigned in local Serb leaders on the ground and accepted the Dayton peace framework (Holbrooke 1998). International mediators were also careful not to take sides and declare a winner, despite the atrocities perpetrated by some players. Finally, the peace process was built on the clear understanding that no party would be rewarded with more than its "fair" share.

Post-conflict state making, however, requires a more enduring long-term process that seeks to ensure not only stability and peace but also a democratic consolidation of post-conflict states; a process that major external agencies and international humanitarian organisations are often ill-equipped or lack sustained interest to pursue. Post-conflict state making incorporates various negotiated strategies such as security transition, political transformation, societal integration, and economic recovery, to name a few (Castillo 2017). Security transition and internationally

mediated political change have brought the twenty plus years of peace in the region. Albeit, the political institutions that were envisioned in the Dayton Agreement were engineered to end the war (Paris and Sisk 2009; Paris 2004) and required the consent of those who were fighting on the ground. Thus they benefited most those who were directly responsible for the war in the first place.

In sum, the international solution to the destruction of Yugoslavia's federation and the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina was the creation of yet another ethnic federation, that of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The rigidly imposed power-sharing federal structure of a Bosnian state, with its elaborate system of regional veto powers at the expense of the federal institutions, is perilously close in its design to the one of the former Yugoslavia. In both instances, these institutions are overshadowed by 'thick' ethnic tensions that underscore the entire political system. Nowadays, as was the case twenty plus years ago, the question of Bosnian partition remains open. From the Bosniak perspective, the Dayton Accords are just a set of documents to be changed in the direction of building stronger central institutions. For Bosnian Serbs and Croats, with no small help from their neighbouring kin-states (Serbia and Croatia), the Dayton is "the ceiling that should not be further developed" (Belloni 2008: p. 42).

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organized the first official census since 1991 when it recorded 4.4 million citizens. 2013 data
recorded 3.8 million people living in the country.

EUFOR -European Union Force in Bosnia-Herzegovina. At
http://www.euforbih.org/eufor/index.php/about-eufor/background.

ICTY – International Crime Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia. At http://icr.icty.org. It is located in
The Hague in the Netherlands, and it had authority to prosecute individuals for serious
violations of international humanitarian law committed in the former Yugoslavia since 1991.
The United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 827 establishing the court on May 25,
1993. It officially dissolved in December 2017, but the court documents are still available.

Office of the High Representative. At http://www.ohr.int/?lang=en. The Office of the High Representative (OHR) is an ad hoc international institution responsible for overseeing implementation of civilian aspects of the Peace Agreement ending the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

OSCE Mission to Bosnia-Herzegovina. At http://www.osce.org/mission-to-bosnia-and-herzegovina. The Mission's principal aim is to promote stability and reconciliation while assisting Bosnia and Herzegovina on its path to regional political, economic and social integration. Its activities focus on reforming systems of governance, justice and education, as well as upholding human rights and the rule of law for all citizens.

Peace Accords Matrix (PAM), Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, University of Notre Dame. At https://peaceaccords.nd.edu. The PAM project hosts the largest existing collection of implementation data on intrastate peace agreements. In addition to the wealth of information and links to primary documents on Bosnia-Herzegovina, the PAM database is a source of qualitative and quantitative data on the implementation of 34 Comprehensive Peace Agreements (CPAs) negotiated after 1989.

RECOM. At http://recom.link. RECOM is a regional commission for the establishment of facts about war crimes and other serious violations of human rights committed in the former Yugoslavia from 1 January 1991 until 31 December 2001.

UNMIBH – United Nations Mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina. At http://peacekeeping.un.org/mission/past/unmibh/index.html. Provides general information about the UN mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina during its mandate (December 1995 – December 2002).