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WHEN ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL

Failed Ideals of Liberal Peacebuilding,
Socio-Economic Downward Spiral and
the Bosnian Spring Protests of 2014

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ABSTRACT

Harri Toikkanen: When One Size Does Not Fit All: Failed Ideals of Liberal Peacebuilding, Socio-Economic Downward Spiral and the Bosnian Spring Protests of 2014

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In early 2014, Bosnia and Herzegovina experienced the worst civil unrest it had seen since the 1992 - 1995 war as a wave of protest, called by media commentators 'the Bosnian Spring', shook the fragile country. The initially fierce and violent protests soon took a more institutionalized form as the protesters began forming plena, or citizens' assemblies, and articulating their demands through the means of direct democracy. This research seeks to give a comprehensive understanding of how the country had come to such state that its people were willing to raise up on the barricades that year. This is done by utilizing the perspective of criticism of liberal peacebuilding – a top-down led peacebuilding strategy applied in BiH. The failures of liberal peacebuilding are juxtaposed with a thorough analysis of the protest movement: who did they seek to represent, what was the object of their resistance and how did they undertake their resistance? To answer these questions, a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of documentation produced by the protesters, such as lists of demands, declarations, statements and meeting reports, is carried out.

The findings of the research point out that the Bosnian Spring protest movement can be described as partly a workers' movement, building on the socialist-era tradition, and partly a populist or civic movement, claiming legitimacy also beyond the working class. The asymmetric power relations between the protesters and the political establishment served as a key factor for defining the collective identity of the movement. Attempting to escape domination by political parties, elites and governments, the movement constructed its proclaimed apolitical identity based on the people-versus-elite dichotomy. Manipulation by the establishment, years of experienced neglect and wrongdoings and common calls for solidarity between the plena served to strengthen the collective identity. The movement focused its resistance particularly on political parties, elites and governments, administrative and political inertia and neoliberalism. Calling for social justice, the movement's most common demands included taking away unjustified financial benefits from political party and government representatives and redistributing them to the society, replacing current governments with politically unaffiliated expert governments, reversing the failed post-war privatization processes and ending the impunity of repressive state-authorities and those benefiting illegally from the privatizations.

The research pieces together a portrait of the peace process in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which has been characterized by stagnation, grey economy, corruption, clientelism, economic exploitation, a pronounced role of predatory elites and a dependency on a long-living international presence. While the poorly performing ethno-nationalist parties have dominated the legislatures, their success in repeatedly winning their seats has been contrasted by an overwhelming distrust towards them, prevalent among average Bosnians. At the same time, the importance of basic socio-economic issues for the everyday lives of Bosnians has been overlooked parallel to a disproportionate emphasis of inter-ethnic distrust. The Bosnian Spring protests fit this narrative expectedly, as the protesters' criticism of the status quo of ethno-nationalist parties and elites sent out a message that hunger weights more than political fault lines. The links between the failures of liberal peacebuilding and the witnessed resistance are deemed evident as at the root of the protesters' criticism were the same issues that liberal peacebuilding seeks to achieve: democracy, rule of law, civil society, human rights and economic liberalization. It is argued that the space for civil society actors to influence societal developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina and to act to bring upon positive change is highly restricted due to the domination and manipulation by the political elites.

Keywords: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Resistance, Civil Society Movements, Peacebuilding, Liberal Peace, Criticism of Liberal Peacebuilding, Local-Turn, Hybrid Peace, Social Justice, Neoliberalism, Democracy

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I will never in this lifetime be able to understand Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as someone who has lived his or her life in the country, or who had to flee war or hopelessness.

This is to all my Bosnian friends.

List of Acronyms

B/S/C = Bosnian/Serbian/Croatian languages

BiH = Bosnia and Herzegovina (“Bosna i Hercegovina”)

CDA = Critical Discourse Analysis

DPA = Dayton Peace Agreement or the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina

ECtHR = European Court of Human Rights

EC = European Community

EU = European Union

EUD = Delegation of the European Union to Bosnia and Herzegovina

EUSR = European Union Special Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina

FDI = Foreign direct investment

FBiH = Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina

GDP = Gross domestic product

GNP = Gross national product

HDZ = Croat Democratic Union

HVO = Croatian Defence Council

IDP = Internally displaced person

ICG = International Crisis Group

ICTY = International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia

IFI = International financial institution

ILO = International Labour Organization

IPE = International Political Economy

JNA = Yugoslav National Army

MA = Municipal assembly

NATO = North Atlantic Treaty Organization

OHR = Office of the High Representative

OSCE = Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

PCR = Peace and Conflict Research

PIC = Peace Implementation Council

PIF = Fund for Privatization Investment

R2P = Responsibility to Protect

RS = Republika Srpska

SAA = Stabilization and Association Agreement

SDA = Party of Democratic Action

SDS = Serb Democratic Party

SME = Small and medium-sized enterprises

UN = United Nations

UNHCR = United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNDP = United Nations Development Programme

USAID = United States Agency for International Development

VRS = Army of Repulika Srpska

1. Introduction

On 4 February 2014, outraged factory workers marched out to the streets of the industrial city of Tuzla in Bosnia and Herzegovina¹. Questionable privatizations, asset-stripping, bankruptcy and unemployment – the story they had to tell was something that had been commonly heard in post-socialist transition economies alike. While initially the workers’ protest was peaceful, the events soon took a violent turn, as in the following days the country experienced the worst civil unrest it had seen since the war of 1992 - 1995. In hundreds, the protesters clashed violently with the law enforcement, torched government buildings and destroyed other property. The protests soon spread to other cities, particularly in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH). After a quick and fierce beginning, the protests took a more institutionalized form as the protesters began forming plena, or citizens’ assemblies, and started to articulate their demands through the means of direct democracy. Issues raised such as corruption, inequality, poor social welfare, high unemployment and bloated government salaries and benefits suggested that the nearly twenty-year, internationally led peacebuilding and statebuilding intervention in BiH had not managed to answer to the citizens’ needs and expectations.

The protests, called by media commentators ‘the Bosnian Spring’, ultimately faded out as fast as they had begun – not living up to the nickname inspired by the Arab Spring (See BBC 2014b; New York Times 2014). However, two crucial questions were left behind: what do the protests tell about the current state of affairs in Bosnia and could similar civil unrest happen again? As a response to these questions, the purpose of this research is to give a comprehensive understanding of how the country had come to such being that its people were willing to raise up on the barricades that year. This will be done by utilizing the perspective of criticism of liberal peacebuilding – a top-down led peacebuilding strategy applied in BiH. The failures of liberal peacebuilding will be juxtaposed with a thorough analysis of the protest movement, particularly emphasizing the plena: who did they seek to represent, what was the object of their resistance and how did they undertake their resistance? To answer these questions, a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of documentation produced by the protesters, such as lists of demands, declarations, statements and meeting reports, compiled on a blog titled *Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files*, will be carried out. Ultimately, the research will culminate into answering the following research question, which links the findings of the research with the chosen theoretical stance:

¹ Here on referred to also as “Bosnia” or “BiH”.

How is the resistance manifested in the Bosnian Spring protests connected to the failures of liberal peacebuilding seen during the peace process of Bosnia and Herzegovina?

While the protests have raised the interest of a number of researchers, none of the previous research approach the subject from the perspective of Peace and Conflict Research (PCR), specifically through the lens of criticism of liberal peacebuilding. Some of the previous research have assumed an anthropological or a human geography perspective (See Kurtović 2015; Kurtović & Hromadžić 2017; Riding 2016). More politically-oriented research has focused, for instance, on democracy and consociationalism, ethnic politics, civil society movements and EU-integration (See Sejfića & Fink-Hafner 2016; Murtagh 2016; Stefanovski 2017; Majstorović, Pepić and Vučković 2015). This research connects more with previous research which has focused on Bosnia from the perspective of International Political Economy (IPE) but lacked the protests as the subject (See Bojčić-Dželilović 2009; Divjak & Pugh 2008; Donais 2002; Pugh 2002). As Kurtović (2015, 641) notes, this type of research focusing on economic reforms and their consequences in the context of BiH has not been highly prioritized or too common. Hence, this research will add a new and complementary perspective to the currently available literature on the Bosnian Spring protests.

More generally, BiH has often been mentioned as a case in point in research related to criticism of liberal peacebuilding (See Richmond 2014; Richmond & Franks 2009; Kappler & Richmond 2014). However, the so-called 'local-turn' or hybridity theorists have mostly adopted a different view on one of the central concepts of this research: resistance. Their understanding of resistance has been criticized of ignoring the central importance of power relations, creating a blurry account of agency and ultimately reifying binaries and depoliticizing the local (See Nadarajah & Rampton 2015; Chandler 2013; Iñiguez de Heredia 2017). This research will adopt a more pragmatic understanding of resistance, not seeing the concept in the context of hybridity or as a way towards hybrid peace but rather as potentially having roots in the outcomes or failures of the liberal peace project. As Iñiguez de Heredia notes, after all, resistance is not typically aimed at the liberal nature of the interventions nor their externally imposed nature but rather the recreation of an extractive and coercive order through the reconstitution of state authority or the means of war (Iñiguez de Heredia 2017, 3). In this manner, this research will join the vast literature on criticism of liberal peacebuilding, however, bringing with it an updated and fresh take on resistance and a comprehensive and multidisciplinary perspective to understanding the Bosnian peace process.

The field of actors and their interests, the political system as well as the history of BiH are unarguably complex. For this reason, Chapter 2 will focus on contextualizing the research and giving the

reader a required understanding of these aspects. The chapter will begin with a summary of the events of the Bosnian War of 1992 – 1995 and the end of the conflict, namely the General Framework Agreement for Peace, also known as the Dayton Peace Agreement (DPA). After that, a brief outline of the post-conflict peacebuilding process and the political and socio-economic development of the country until 2014 will be given. The description of the Bosnian War and the post-conflict developments are by no means intended to be an all-encompassing and comprehensive history. Rather, they will highlight the main points required for understanding the progress of the Bosnian peace process and the following discussions. The last part of the chapter will be dedicated to the events of the Bosnia Spring protests, as a wider examination of previous research on the topic will be conducted and the events introduced accordingly.

Chapter 3 will outline the theoretical foundations of the research, beginning with defining the concept of liberal peace, the agency behind it and its roots in the UN-led peace operations of the 1990s. The constituent parts of the Western and top-down-led approach to peacebuilding and statebuilding have traditionally been democracy, rule of law, civil society and market economics or economic liberalization in the form of development and free-market reform (Richmond & Franks 2009, 3; Campbell, Chandler & Shabarattam 2011, 1). However, as noted by the so-called ‘local-turn’ critics or hybridity theorists, there has been a disconnection between liberal peacebuilding and its subjects, reflecting negatively on the legitimacy, efficiency, local ownership, inclusivity and emancipatory nature of the peacebuilding efforts. These core points of criticism will be derived from research literature, as the critical turn is introduced.

As Bosnia has, indeed, served as an experiment or ‘prototype’ for peacebuilding and thus is a rather unique case, Chapter 4 will dig deeper into the criticism of liberal peacebuilding specifically in the context of the country (See Chandler 2000). The lack of efficiency, local-ownership, inclusion and legitimacy will be approached through examining the often too unquestioned concept of ‘ethnicity’, the political dynamics and the role of the ethno-nationalist elites in BiH. The difficulties encountered with regard to economic emancipation in BiH as a result of the neoliberal reform agenda will be discussed in-depth in the second part of Chapter 4. The transition from the unique Yugoslav brand of market socialism towards the free-market ideals of liberal peace was a precarious one, particularly evident in the birth of powerful patronage networks, corruption, stagnation, grey economy and the critical post-war privatization failures.

Due contextualization will serve to make meaningful also Chapter 5, which will focus on resistance emanating from everyday necessities. The concept of resistance serves as a bridge between the the-

oretical framework and the Bosnian Spring protests. However, the approach of the local-turn critics or hybridity theorists towards the concept will not be assumed, as the chapter will introduce a meta-level of criticism towards their position. Rather than depoliticizing resistance through reducing it to a means towards hybrid peace, this research will acknowledge the asymmetric power relations behind resistance and seek to provide a more accurate and concrete depiction of it. The assumed definition of resistance will also flow naturally into the adopted methodological approach of CDA. In the other half of the chapter, CDA, as understood and shaped by Norman Fairclough, will be introduced (See Fairclough & Fairclough 2012; Fairclough 2010; Fairclough 1992; Fairclough 1989). The approach will include analysis of discourse practices, texts and social practice that the discourses are part of. Before moving to the analysis, the research material and the research question will also be described and defined further.

In Chapter 6, the findings from the analysis will show that the 2014 protest movement can be described as partly a workers' movement, building on the socialist-era tradition, and partly a populist or civic movement, claiming legitimacy also beyond the working class. The movement constructed its proclaimed apolitical identity on the people-versus-elite dichotomy, positioning itself against the political establishment – that is, the political parties, elites and governments. Risk of manipulation by the establishment, years of experienced neglect and calls for common solidarity between different groups of protesters served to strengthen the collective identity. The movement focused its resistance particularly on political parties, elites and governments, administrative and political inertia and neoliberalism. The employed means of resistance included various physical means, but they more notably focused on setting collectively approved demands through the plena – most of all, focusing on social justice. In addition to various localized demands, the recurring and most common demands included taking away unjustified financial benefits from political party and government representatives and redistributing them to the society, replacing political governments with politically unaffiliated expert governments, reversing the failed privatization processes and ending the impunity of those illegally benefitting from them as well as state authorities guilty of violations against the protesters.

The findings will be brought together in a synthesis and a discussion of the results will follow in Chapter 7. The broad conclusion will be presented that the connections between the proclaimed ideals – and the eventual failures – of liberal peacebuilding and the identified discourse practices are evident. At the root of the protesters' criticism were the same issues that liberal peacebuilding seeks to achieve: democracy, rule of law, civil society and human rights and economic liberalization.

These connections will be disaggregated further in the chapter. At the same time, the results highlight the overpowering role of the ethno-nationalist parties and political elites in BiH. It is suggested that the success of similar civic movements that seek wide scale support and solidarity across ethno-national lines in BiH is conditioned on them being able to escape this domination and evade the risk of political manipulation and framing. Accordingly, the space for civil society actors to influence societal developments in the country and to act to bring upon positive change is highly restricted. In a more general sense, the results highlight a link between socio-economic factors and political instability, pointing out to interesting directions for further analysis. In the end, final conclusions will be drawn in Chapter 8.

2. Background and Previous Research

2.1. The Bosnian War 1992 - 1995

The characteristically multicultural country of Bosnia and Herzegovina served as a stage for a destructive conflict in 1992 - 1995, which left over 100 000 dead and around two million displaced, seeing carefully orchestrated policies of ethnic “cleansing”² and genocide³ (See Bennett 2016, 68-69; Pasic 2015, 79). The Bosnian war took place amid the wider context of the dissolution of Yugoslavia, where the *nomenklatura* society, controlled by the Communist Party through authoritative mechanisms for economic and social control and a comprehensive security apparatus, started withering first economically before igniting into a full political crisis (Bennett 2016, 33). The crisis was fuelled by ethno-nationalist politics, championed by the president of Serbia’s League of Communists, Slobodan Milošević. As a destabilizing wave moving through Serbia, Vojvodina, Montenegro and Kosovo, Milošević consolidated his grip over the Yugoslav state apparatus and power among ethnic Serbs. Secessionist tendencies arose as a result in the other Yugoslav republics, culminating in the year 1991, when Macedonia declared independence peacefully, a ten-day war was fought in Slovenia and a bloodier war broke out in Croatia. While the question of international recognition was easily answered in these cases by the Badinter Commission, or an arbitration committee established by the mediating European Community (EC), the “Bosnia question”⁴ turned out harder to solve (Bennett 2016, 15, 53-54, 59-60).

In the following year, pressure mounted on Bosnia, where the large ethno-nationalist parties took different positions towards sovereignty. The Bosniak or Muslim SDA (Party of Democratic Action), led by the president Alija Izetbegović, was positive towards the Slovenian and Croatian advocacy of confederalism in Yugoslavia and wished to exit the Serb-dominated remnants of the state. HDZ (Croat Democratic Union), as a branch of the ruling party led by Franjo Tuđman in Croatia, had a more complex position and supported a sovereign Bosnia, but demanded self-determination for Bosnian Croats. The only party wishing to stay within Yugoslavia and with Serbia was SDS (Serb Democratic Party), founded and led by Radovan Karadžić, who also insisted self-

² This research acknowledges the dark and euphemistic nature of this commonly used term, which hides behind it the reality of forced displacement, intimidation, mass killings and sexual and gender-based violence.

³ Criminal acts committed in Srebrenica 1995 were established as constituting *inter alia* the crime of genocide by the International Criminal Court for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) for the first time in the Krstić case in 1998 (see ICTY 2018; ICTY 1999).

⁴ “[H]ow some 2.2. million Bosniaks can live amid 4.5. million Croats and 8.5 million Serbs in the former Yugoslavia; and how some 750 000 Croats and 1.3 million Serbs can live together with 1.9. million Bosniaks within Bosnia itself” (Bennett 2016, 15).

determination for Bosnian Serbs in case other scenarios were to take place. To solve the question, a EC-supported referendum took place on 29 February and 1 March 1992, showing overwhelming support for independence while being boycotted by SDS and the Bosnian Serbs. However, before the final results of the referendum had managed to come in, the first shots were fired, and Bosnia spiralled slowly into war. (Bennett 2016, 40-43, 63-64.)

Notwithstanding attempts to reach an agreement between the Bosnian Muslim, Serb and Croat leaders in Lisbon (“Cutileiro Plan”)⁵, shortly after independence was declared, Serbian and Croatian paramilitaries began attempting to annex parts of Bosnian territory. Remnants of the Yugoslav National Army (JNA) and republic-based territorial defence units became the Army of Republika Srpska (VRS), closely affiliated with the parent organization and backed by Serbia. Launching an ethnic cleansing campaign, the Serb army advanced quickly, soon controlling almost 70% of Bosnian territory. Croatian forces who fought under the Croatian Defence Council (HVO) also began ethnic cleansing early in the conflict in 1992. While originally fighting together with Bosniaks, Croatian forces abandoned their alliance with them and started to grab land in 1993. Nationalists in south of Bosnia, led by visions of Croat leader Mate Boban, exhibited their separatist ambitions by establishing the proto-state of the Croatian Community of Herzeg-Bosna. The Bosnian army, on the other hand, was organized only two weeks into the war and faced difficulties in acquiring arms – its disarray was visible, for instance, in the besieged city of Sarajevo, which was at one point protected by a criminal group led by gangsters known as Caco and Celo, and in Tuzla and Bihać, where workers, mobilized as soldiers, fought under Bosniak Patriotic Leagues, acquiring their resources from “taxation” of humanitarian aid and local taxes. (Bennett 2016, 65, 69; Friedman 2004, 41-45; New York Times 1993.)

The bigger picture of the war was complex: according to a UN Security Council report from 1994, there may have been at least 83 paramilitary groups operating in Bosnia – 56 supporting rump Yugoslavia and the self-declared Republika Srpska (RS), 14 in support of BiH and 13 supporting Croatia (United Nations 1994). Moreover, the largest armies of the three factions occasionally included soldiers from the other ethnic groups as well (Bennett 2016, 68). All of the parties had blood on their hands: war crimes were committed by all of the warring factions and the 161 ICTY indictees, out of which 124 related to events in Bosnia, included the leadership of Serbia, Bosnian Serbs, Bosnian Croats, Croatian Serbs as well as individuals in the Croatian military and multiple Bosnian government military leaders (Bennett 2016, 133; Rosand 1998, 1092, 1099-1100). The single worst

⁵ The plan was rejected by HDZ and the Bosnian Croat leader Mate Boban as well as the Bosnian government and President Izetbegović (Bennett 2016, 65; Friedman 2004, 43).

atrocities of the Wars of Yugoslav Dissolution happened near the end of the Bosnian conflict in the UN-declared “safe area” of Srebrenica, where 7000-8000 Bosnian Muslim men and boys were massacred between 11 and 18 July 1995 by various paramilitary units and VRS forces which were operating under the command of Ratko Mladić and Radislav Krstić (Bennett 2016, 74; Kerr 2006; ICTY 2018; ICTY 1999).

The road towards peace was paved with continued atrocities against civilians, a promising peace plan (“Vance-Owen Plan”) turned down by the Republika Srpska National Assembly, a successful agreement to end the Croat-Muslim War in 1994 (“Washington Agreement”), repeated humiliations for the UN peacekeepers at the hand of the Bosnian Serbs and ultimately two massacres at the Markale market in the besieged Sarajevo that eventually led to a decisive NATO air campaign, which shifted the power balance away from the Bosnian Serbs. In the end, the Croatian army recaptured the Serb-held territory of Republika Srpska Krajina in Croatia, leading to the displacement of 150 000 to 200 000 Serb civilians, and HVO and the Bosnian Army went for one last advance in Western Bosnia before, on 10 October 1995, the thirty-fifth and last ceasefire of the conflict went into effect, and the negotiations could begin. (Bennett 2016, 70-76.)

2.2. End of the Violence – End of the Conflict?

The Bosnian War officially ended in the US-driven 1995 General Framework Agreement for Peace, also known as the Dayton Peace Agreement. The agreement was made between the Bosniak leader Alija Izetbegović, his Foreign Minister Muhamed Šaćirbeg and Prime Minister Haris Silajdžić, and presidents Franjo Tuđman of Croatia and Slobodan Milošević of Serbia who represented Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats respectively in the negotiations. The mediation process was initiated by the United States, with diplomat Richard Holbrooke acting as the chief negotiator and leading a negotiating team. The negotiations included also co-chairs of EU Special Representative Carl Bildt and First Deputy Foreign Minister of Russia, Igor Ivanov, as well as other representatives from the UK and US, witnessing the agreement. Notably, the Bosnian Serb-leader Radovan Karadžić and General Ratko Mladić were excluded from the negotiations on basis of their 1995 indictments by the International War Crimes Tribunal in the Hague on charges of genocide, relating *inter alia* to Srebrenica. (Donais 2005, 8-9; Paczulla 2004, 264.)

The DPA represented a typical power-brokering and consociationalist approach, which was led in a top-down manner, exclusively between state (and international organization) parties with external powers influencing the process greatly. The agreement mandated a wide range of international organizations, such as NATO, OSCE, UNHCR as well as the newly established Office of the High Representative (OHR), to take over the implementation of different areas of responsibility. The agreement begins with a short declarative part, which is followed by multiple annexes concerning military aspects, regional stabilization, borders, elections, arbitration, human rights, refugees and IDPs, national monuments, public corporations, civilian implementation, international police task force and, importantly, the constitution of BiH. (See General Framework Agreement for Peace 1995.) The latter, Annex IV of the DPA, has been considered as problematic, as its preamble cements and gives an official legitimization to the ethnic division among the three ‘constitutive peoples’ of Bosnian Croats, Bosnian Serbs and Bosniaks, or Bosnian Muslims. This ethnic divide reflects widely in the Bosnian state structure and political system as they are today. While the three largest ethnic groups of Bosnia carry their own distinctive religious identity – Bosniaks are mostly Muslim, Croats Catholic, and Serbs Orthodox Christian – the country is also home to groups that do not fall under this ethnic or religious categorization, such as Jews, Roma, Albanians, Ukrainians and those who choose to identify rather as ‘Bosnians’.⁶

People who do not belong to the constitutive peoples of Bosnia, including those with a diverse ethnic background, experience discrimination with regards to their political rights, as they have restricted access to governmental jobs (Lalić & Francuz 2016, 163). The ethnic divide reflects also in the political life of post-Dayton BiH where three powerful pre-war ethno-nationalist parties (SDA, SDS and HDZ) that represent each of the constituent peoples have retained an influential position, and an abundance of new ethno-nationalist alternatives have emerged since: for instance, SNSD, SBB BiH, DNS, HDZ 1990, A-SDA, BPS, NDP and PDP (Pugh & Cobble 2001, 45-46; Lippman 2015, 36-37). The problematic heritage left by the Annex IV of the DPA has raised attention particularly through the *Sejdić and Finci v. Bosnia and Herzegovina* case of the Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) from 2009. In this significant precedent it was ruled that the ineligibility of two applicants, of Roma and Jewish origin, to stand for elections to the House of Peoples and the Presidency of BiH was in violation to the European Convention on Human Rights and thus discriminatory in its nature (See *Sejdić and Finci v. Bosnia and Herzegovina* 2009). To the present, the Constitution of BiH has not been amended in line with the ECtHR ruling, causing diffi-

⁶ For further discussion on identity, memory and forced displacement in post-Dayton BiH, See Halilovich 2013.

culties particularly with regard to the EU integration process of BiH (See Majstorović et al. 2015, 662).⁷

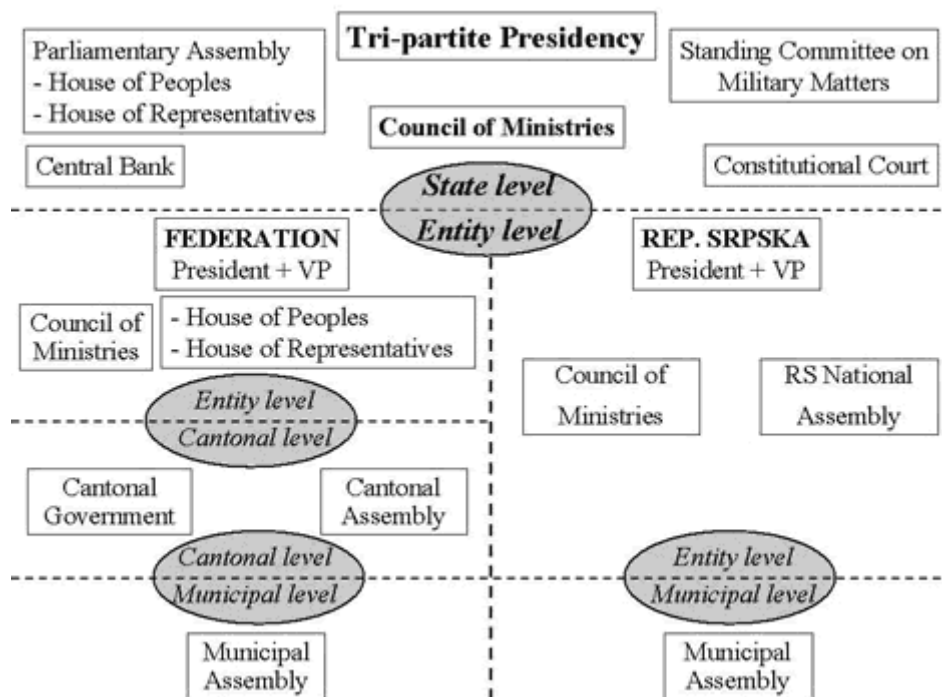


Fig. 1 Political System of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Domin 2001).

Based on the DPA’s heritage, the BiH political system is highly decentralized. Bosnia has multiple levels of governance: 1) the central state level; 2) entity-level comprising of the administrative entities of Republika Srpska (RS) and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH), along with the self-governing administrative unit of Brčko District; 3) cantons in the FBiH; 4) municipalities in both entities (See Fig. 1). While the structure is, indeed, complex and includes a high number of ministers and parliamentarians, it is by no means unique as similar and even more complex systems can be found elsewhere in Europe (See ESI 2017, 12-14). The central state level can be considered as weak, as more power lies at the entity or cantonal level. The most notable difference between the two entities of BiH is the existence of cantons in FBiH, which represent a second level of federalism. They carry significant authority over the powers, revenues and activities of municipalities and are responsible for health care, culture, education, social services, executive offices, courts and public administration. On the other hand, the structure of RS is more centralized, with no similar intermediate level existing. In RS, the entity level administration is responsible for performing the tasks that cantons carry out in FBiH. (Jokay 2001, 97-98, 113-114.) Following the ethnic division set in

⁷ Similar judgements related to discrimination, namely *Zornić v. BiH* (2016) and *Pilav v. BiH* (2014), have since been delivered by the ECtHR chamber.

place in the preamble of Annex IV of the DPA, ethnic quotas exist in the tripartite rotating presidency as well as state and entity-level governments.

Critics of the DPA argue that the agreement only transformed war into politics, creating an ethno-nationalist stalemate (Richmond & Franks 2009, 62). This research emphasises and follows the interpretation that the Dayton Agreement did not end, but rather transformed the conflict into a non-violent one – this notion is backed by different scholars describing the post-Dayton state of BiH as a frozen conflict (See Perry 2009; Aggestam & Björkdahl 2012). In their examination of BiH as a country in a state of frozen conflict Aggestam and Björkdahl (2012, 26) define a frozen conflict as “a conflict in which direct and immediate physical violence may have decreased, yet the root causes of the dispute and the underlying interests of the conflicting parties have neither been addressed nor abated”. Rather than a static situation, they argue that a frozen conflict includes continued negotiation, revisions of peace accords and incremental reforms, which prevent the conflict from escalating. Perry (2009, 42), on the other hand, states that the DPA ended the Bosnian war, freezing the warring parties to their territories and requiring that they develop a democratic system of governance together.⁸ This led to a period characterized by contradictions between the imperatives of peace implementation and the ideals of democracy as well as the interests of the elites and the people.

2.3. Twenty Years Onward from Dayton

2.3.1 International Community in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Soon after the DPA was successfully negotiated, the Peace Implementation Council (PIC) was formed to guide the implementation of the agreement. The PIC consists of 55 member countries and agencies who assist financially, directly run operations in Bosnia or provide troops for the country’s peacekeeping mission (OHR 2015). The future direction for Bosnia was set in the first conference of the PIC in London on 8-9 December 1995, where it was decided that rule of law and democracy would be the basis for a new political and constitutional arrangement; a climate of security and stability would be created; human rights and the early return of refugees and displaced persons would be promoted and protected; an open, free-market economy would be established; economic reconstruction would be kickstarted; and a close relationship between Bosnia and the EU built (Bennett

⁸ Discussing the victory of the nationalist parties in the first elections after the war in 1996, Søberg (2006, 49) states: “Those who had fought to break up the country would now be tasked with integrating it”.

2016, 92). Stemming from the DPA, peacebuilding in Bosnia was divided between two complementary aspects: a civilian side overseen by the OHR and a military mission originally led by NATO, whose responsibilities have since been transitioned to the EU (Durzun-Ozkanca 2010, 439, 443).

The international community in Bosnia is far from coherent, yet it revolves particularly around the agendas of UN, EU, OHR, OSCE, World Bank and other donors (Richmond & Franks 2009, 65). However, the UN's role was diminished in the early years of the peace process and in the DPA since it was perceived to have failed during the war to prevent atrocities from taking place in Bosnia (Bennett 2016, 92). In addition to the international community, hundreds of NGOs with different and often uncoordinated agendas also operate in the country. Regionally, Bosnia is heavily affected by Croatia and Serbia, as well as the influence of Russia, the US and actors from the Islamic world. (Richmond & Franks 2009, 65.) The latter include particularly Turkey, Iran, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf-states. Many of these actors have counterproductive aims, and they occasionally position themselves behind specific actors: for instance, Russia and Serbia have instigated the secession plans and threats by Republika Srpska; Croatia has supported the Bosnian Croats in their attempts to gain more autonomy; Islamic countries have contended in supporting different Bosniak communities and investing into Bosniak-majority areas; and the EU has strived to keep an integration incentive for Bosnia on the negotiation table.

2.3.2 Political and Socio-Economic Developments

According to Bennett (2016, 93, 96), lack of international financial support was not a problem in the early reconstruction process. On the contrary, the PIC as well as the European Commission and World Bank had managed to mobilize a high level of international aid to alleviate the country's dire condition. However, political challenges and the continuing significance of wartime divisions were clearly problematic from the start:

Reality in Bosnia at the end of the war was three ethno-national mini-states, each with its own armed forces, police, media, administration, official documentation and vehicle license plates. Separate currencies circulated in each ethno-national mini-state [...]. There were no telephone lines between the entities, let alone bus routes, postal services or other means of communication. (Bennett 2016, 93, 96.)

Describing the divisions as “three separate politico-economic units”, Bojicic-Dzelilovic (2009, 206) adds to the list restricted movement of people and goods and a lack of engagement in formal economic cooperation. She notes that informal and illicit economy thrived in the post-war situation. It involved a range of actors, such as paramilitaries, high-ranking politicians, state apparatus members, criminals as well as citizens trying to survive. This three-way divide was – and to this day has been – reflective of the conflict fault lines which have been kept at their place by the DPA (See Richmond & Franks 2009, 62; Perry 2009; Aggestam & Björkdahl 2012). Its longevity has been ensured by the incompatible aims of the opposing ethno-nationalist groups and their statebuilding trajectories: according to Keränen (2013, 356-357), Bosniaks have aimed for a strong central state authority, Bosnian Serbs have resisted the centralization attempts and sought to protect the autonomy of the RS entity, and Bosnian Croats have felt ignored by the current solution, at times calling for the creation of a third entity for Croats.

In the ten-year period after the war, implementation of the DPA was dragging and most of the major advances to create a functioning state were imposed by the international community. Nationalist parties used their economic and political leverage to prevent return of refugees and IDPs, counter economic reform and to hinder the functioning of the country’s central institutions and democratic development. (Donais 2005, 9-10.) A constraint for development of democracy was the extremely low level of respect for the political process and politicians, who were seen as self-serving figures. Distrust in the political process decreased citizens’ active participation in it. (Søberg 2006, 52-53.) The 1996-2006 period was characterized by wide-ranging and intensive international involvement in almost all aspects of political and economic life. This meant that the international community was involved in, for instance, supervising the local police, running elections, peacekeeping, taking part in the judiciary and managing the re-settlement and care of refugees. Foreign aid agencies were actively involved in the reconstruction process and administration reform, and the OHR exercised powers which are normally associated with the state.⁹ (Majstorović et al. 2015, 664.)

Similar challenges that were faced in the first ten years persisted in the 2006 to 2014 period as well. Both periods saw widespread political passivity and extensive impoverishment caused by economic restructuring.¹⁰ However, the period from 2006 to 2014 was also characterized by a reduction in international involvement and a more diminished role of the OHR, as the international community

⁹ The OHR carries so-called Bonn Powers, which allow it to impose legislative solutions and dismiss public officials. In the first ten-year period their use was more active, but more recently they have been rendered unusable due to political reasons. The latest use of Bonn Powers was in 2011, when the OHR suspended certain decisions made by the BiH Central Election Committee (See OHR 2011).

¹⁰ Economic restructuring will be discussed below in Chapter 4.

assumed a more indirect strategy to influence the country through EU conditionality. (Majstorović et al. 2015, 664.) Hence, in the latter period, accession to the EU functioned as an incentive for introducing political or economic reforms – the option has been multiple times on and off the table, culminating in the signing of the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) in 2008 (See Causevic & Zupcevic 2009; Džihic & Wieser 2011). Parallel to the change in the international strategy, the power of ethno-nationalist parties only increased, and their rhetoric became sharper (Majstorović et al. 2015, 664). The latter was evident, for instance, in the repeated calls of the RS Prime Minister Milorad Dodik – a previously pro-Western politician turned Serb-nationalist – for an independence referendum in RS.¹¹

The war had a huge impact on Bosnia's economy. To begin with, the physical devastation left by the war was enormous: 500 000 of the country's 1 295 000 housing units were subject to either partial or total destruction, with more damage being seen in the FBiH-entity (Kondylis 2010, 238). The war caused the country's Gross National Product (GNP) to decline down to 10 per cent and per capita income to 25 per cent of their pre-war size. Also, more than 70 per cent of Bosnia's industrial plants were destroyed. (Søberg 2006, 50.) This had a particularly striking effect on the country's economy since in the pre-war era its industrial core represented almost half of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and employment (Bojicic-Dzelilovic 2009, 205). In total, the Foreign Trade Chamber of BiH estimated that the wartime damage to personal and business assets ranged from 30 to 50 billion USD (Causevic & Zupcevic, 2009, 13). However, the difficulty of the socio-economic situation was not the only issue: Søberg (2006, 50) notes that, as with many other post-communist transitions, there was a gap between the actual political and economic results and the public's expectations of progress and prosperity.

¹¹ Since then, Milorad Dodik has served as the President of the RS and is currently in 2019 serving as the Serb-member of the BiH Presidency.

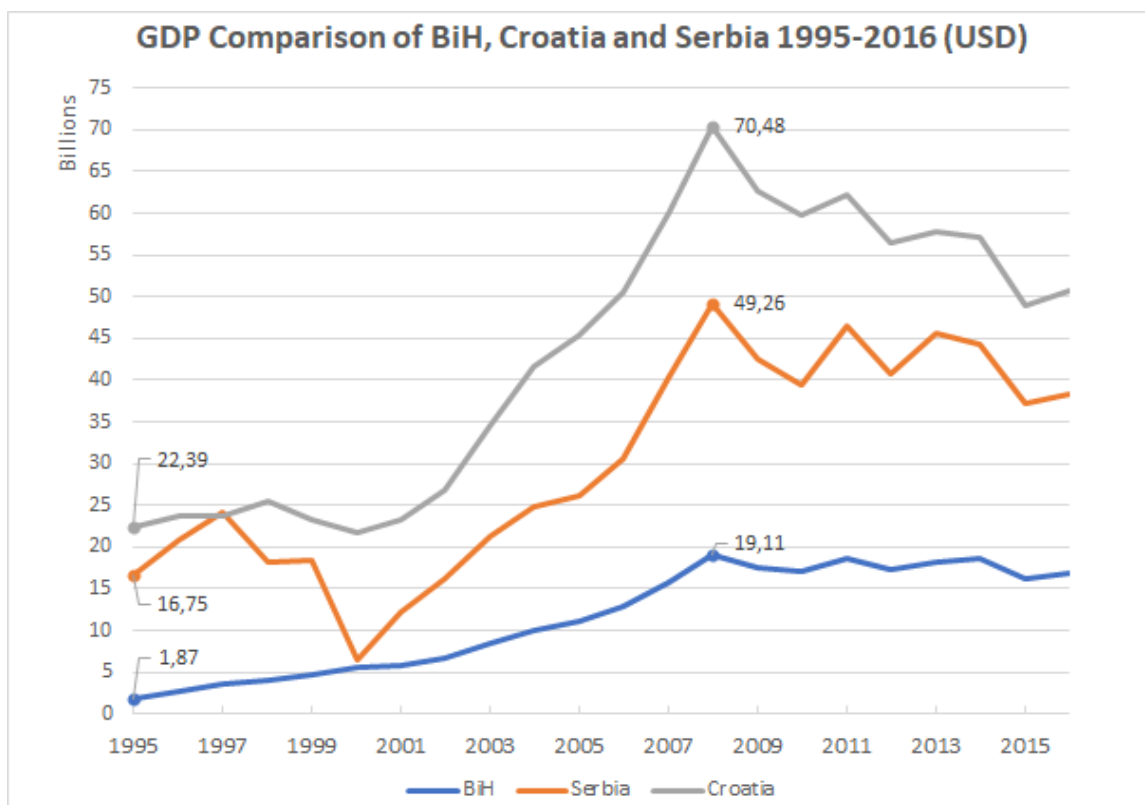


Fig. 2. GDP comparison based on World Bank (2018) World Development Indicators.

Compared to its neighbouring countries, the Bosnian economy followed a similar development in terms of GDP in the post-war years, yet it remained greatly below Croatia and Serbia. From 1995 until the global economic crisis of 2008, Bosnia's GDP raised promisingly from USD 1,87 billion to USD 19,11 billion. However, since 2008 the trend has been stagnating. (See Fig. 2.) Development has not treated different areas within BiH equally: what is often left ignored in socio-economic analysis of Bosnia are the huge disparities between different cantons and regions. For example, FBiH's ten cantons vary notably in their size and wealth, and there is clear disparity between the canton of the capital Sarajevo and other cantons, which is visible in per capita expenditure. (ESI 2017, 21-23.) Hence, issues such as unemployment and poverty have also been experienced to different extents in urban and rural areas.

By the end of the war, majority of Bosnia's population were dependent on humanitarian assistance, as wages and pensions were unpaid, and the social safety system had collapsed. Moreover, half of the country's workforce were unemployed. (Bojicic-Dzelilovic 2009, 205.) In post-war BiH, displacement affected access to employment: Kondylis (2010, 235) has argued that displaced Bosnians were less likely to become employed than people who stayed, with displaced men experiencing more unemployment and displaced women being more likely to drop out of the labour force. The

growth experienced until the 2008 economic crisis coincided with a reduction of poverty, as poverty was down to 17 percent in 2007.¹² Since then both the economy and poverty reduction have stagnated, and in 2011 almost half of BiH citizens were deemed at risk of social exclusion or poverty – more than anywhere else in Europe, except Bulgaria. Also, the effect of poverty ranges differently between cantons, entities and areas: RS has shown to suffer more from poverty and inequality than FBiH, and a rural dweller has been twice as likely to be poor compared to those living in urban areas. (Bisogno & Chong 2002, 70; Cojocaru & Davies 2015; Ceriani & Ruggeri Laderchi 2011, 16.)

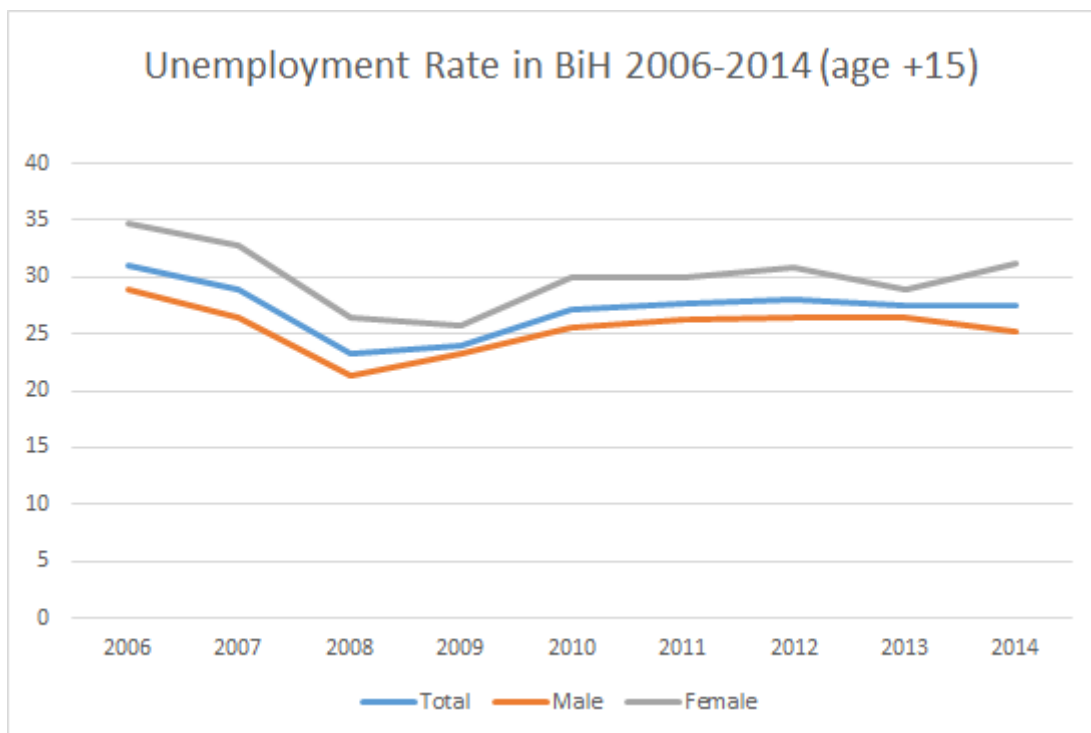


Fig. 3. Unemployment rate based on ILO (2018) data collected through Labour Market Surveys.

The unemployment rate of Bosnia stayed high persistently throughout the period of 2006-2014.¹³ Moreover, gender-disaggregated data (Fig. 3) shows that female unemployment has been particularly high. The data does not, however, capture the effect of informal economy or grey economy, which alleviates the problem of unemployment (See Divjak & Pugh 2008; Pugh 2002).¹⁴ Additionally, it should be noted that there has been a serious discrepancy between the registered unemployment rate and the unemployment rate as it has been defined by the International Labour Organization (ILO): the number of registered unemployed persons has been almost twice as large as the ac-

¹² Poverty threshold calculated on the basis of the cost of life essentials such as fuel for heating and cooking, transport costs and basic healthcare, as well as the minimum calorie requirement (Cojocaru & Davies, 2015).

¹³ Earlier ILO data is not available.

¹⁴ The issue of informal economy or grey economy will be discussed below.

tual number of unemployed.¹⁵ The Labour and Employment Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina explains this as the consequence of the social security system encouraging registration as a means to gain rights to health insurance and unemployment compensation. Combined with the prevalent unemployment, the issue of emigration has also affected Bosnian labour markets severely as both qualified and unqualified people have left to seek employment abroad. This has caused damage to the local human resource base, but at the same time cash remittances sent home by emigrants have contributed to the country's economy. (Labour and Employment Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina 2010, 9, 14.) As youth unemployment rates have shown to be constantly high, Bosnia has been faced particularly with a brain drain of educated young men and women, who are leaving for work in countries such as Croatia, Serbia, Germany and Austria (BiH Ministry for Security 2016, 61-64).

Positive achievements in the peacebuilding and reconstruction process of BiH have often been overlooked. While the DPA was far from a perfect solution to the conflict, nevertheless, it can be seen to have achieved its primary goal by managing to put an end to direct violence. Moreover, general living standards have recovered significantly, and for large parts of the population the war-inflicted destitution is but a memory (Bojicic-Dzelilovic 2009, 208). Other achievements include a single stable currency and a functioning central bank; improvements in the banking sector and the abolishment of socialist-era payment bureaus; measures for demolition of illegal parallel structures in FBiH; as well as basic labour and pension reforms (ICG 2001, i). The country's economy has also seen some recovery from the war-time levels of GDP towards today. However, notwithstanding the billions of dollars of international assistance, pre-war levels of per capita output have not been reached, well-paid and regular employment has not been generated and conditions for economic security and poverty alleviation have not been created (Bojicic-Dzelilovic 2009, 208). Moreover, the performance of the ethno-nationalist parties has been poor in alleviating the country's problems, and a high-level of dependency on the international presence has continued to this day (See Mukjić & Hulseley 2010, 144). While distrust in the formal political process has been high among BiH citizens, the socio-economic problems have not been witnessed and experienced passively.

¹⁵ ILO (2018) defines the unemployment rate as the number of persons who are unemployed as a percent of the total number of employed and unemployed persons (i.e. the labour force).

2.5. The Bosnian Spring of 2014

The events of the Bosnian Spring started on 4 February 2014 in the city of Tuzla, where factory workers protested as a response to the closure of several formerly state-owned companies. The failed companies included a detergent company Dita, furniture company Konjuh, gum company Resod Guming, chemical company Poliochem and a company producing salt for industrial use, Polihem. The new owners of the companies had sold their assets, dismissed their staff and filed for bankruptcy. The factory closings and unpaid salaries were in the focus of the protests which gathered more than 10 000 factory workers on the first day. (Guardian 2014; BBC 2014a; New York Times 2014; Balkan Insight 2014.) More localized protests transformed into fierce mass demonstrations against unemployment, widespread poverty, corruption and political inaction on 5 February. As violent confrontations between the protesters and the law enforcement ensued in Tuzla, by 7 February the protests had rapidly spread into other cities in the FBiH, including Sarajevo, Mostar, Zenica and Bihać. (Murtagh 2016, 154.) The protests were mostly confined to FBiH, but smaller protests were also reported in RS – for instance, a rally gathering 300 people in Banja Luka (Guardian 2014; BBC 2014a). The beginning of the protests can be described as intense: the burn-marks left on the presidency building can still be seen today in Sarajevo, as the protesters occupied or set ablaze many such public buildings. Rioters also targeted offices of political parties: both HDZ and SDA party headquarters in Mostar were torched (Reuters 2014).¹⁶ Clashes between the protesters and the riot police led to hundreds being injured, mostly police facing rains of stones thrown by the protesters (Guardian 2014; BBC 2014a; New York Times 2014).

After the violent start, the protests took a different turn as the protesters turned to direct democracy and started organizing plena across FBiH (Murtagh 2016, 154). In the citizens' assemblies, the protesters formulated demands, to be drafted into lists by ad-hoc working groups and presented to local decision-makers, in a non-hierarchical and open-forum manner (YLE 2014; Reuters 2014). From the beginning, the movement was rather led and guided by informal citizens' groups and local associations than being formed around single leader figures. Plena were seen in cities such as Sarajevo, Tuzla, Zenica, Mostar, Travnik, Brčko, Goražde, Konjic, Cazin, Donji Vakuf, Fojnica, Orašje and Bugojno (Riding 2016, 31). The meetings took place in previously collectively owned and since fully or semi-privatized ("post-public") spaces, such as buildings whose construction had been funded by post-war NGOs or buildings of the former Houses of Culture, occasionally drawing in

¹⁶ During the war, Mostar saw fierce battles between Croat and Bosniak troops, and today it is physically and politically divided along the ethnic boundaries.

almost a thousand people at a time (Kurtović & Hromadzic 2017, 277). The demands of the protesters were focused on the high corruption and lack of accountability as well as social and economic rights – social justice, that is. Appeals were made, for instance, towards revision of allegedly corrupt privatizations, cuts to politicians’ salaries, government resignations as well as investigations to the treatment of protesters in the early demonstrations. (Murtagh 2016, 154.) Hence, the protests transformed from their more spontaneous, violent and organic form to an organized form of resistance, while more conventional, still uniquely connected to its post-socialist context (See Kurtović & Hromadzic 2017).

Previous research on the 2014 protests have included Sejfija and Fink-Hafner (2016) examining the events – referring to “a plenum movement” – from the perspective of political participation in consociational systems. They (*ibid.*, 190-192) remind, importantly, that protests as such are not something unseen and unexpected in the post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina as hundreds of cases of contentious political activities, such as strikes, peaceful protests, traffic blockades, petitions and roundtables focused on particular social and ethnic issues have taken part in the country since 1995. Protests have dealt with a range of issues such as police brutality and fragile security, the rights of physically impaired persons and infants’ access to health care. According to Sejfija and Fink-Hafner, the public condemnation of the initially violent protest helped change the form of the protest into plenums as a more institutionalized mode of citizen activity. Sejfija and Fink-Hafner’s observations¹⁷ are corroborated by a report by the International Crisis Group (ICG) (2001, i, 6-7) which notes that some 800 strikes took place already between 1997 and 2001. Only in the year 2000, 340 strikes took place, along with numerous demonstrations over late or unpaid pensions and common roadblocks by workers dissatisfied about a deep economic crisis. Hence, retrospectively it can be noted that signs of resistance are nothing new and unique in the context of Bosnia, and that the socio-economic problems have not been witnessed passively by the BiH citizens. However, in 2014 the resistance reached a level that was completely unforeseen in the country’s post-war period in terms of its intensity and scale.

Kurtović and Hromadzic (2017, 263-264, 267, 270-271) state that the significance of the protests derived, not from the scope of the violence they included, but from the plena – an experimentation of public discussion and political action, inspired by the country’s socialist history and the Yugoslav tradition of workers’ self-management. Their research assumes an anthropological scope, mirroring the plena against the socialist backdrop. As they argue, “the 2014 Bosnian revolt represents a

¹⁷ Kurtović and Hromadzic (2017, 273) also point out similarly that several strikes related to privatization have taken place in BiH since the end of the war.

grassroots effort to use historical materials to (re)imagine, evoke and activate a new kind of popular politics in Bosnia, which [...] seeks to rearticulate grounds for collective agency through socio-economic rather than identitarian forms of solidarity”. Hence, their analysis points out that the protesters put their socio-economic and biopolitical needs ahead of nationalist divisions. This was evidenced by the fact that the protesters targeted the whole political elite in their protests, and not a single party or office, and that polls after the first wave of protests showed high support for the protesters even in Serb-majority parts of the country. Particularly the latter spoke against the attempts of Serb-nationalist politicians, such as Milorad Dodik, to frame the protests as something orchestrated by Bosniak parties.

Similar observations regarding the political alignment of the protesters have also been made by Majstorović, Pepić and Vučković (2015, 663) who state that the protesters “bypass[ed] ethnic division in favour of a proto-civic sense of common citizenship and class solidarity”. Taking the argument even further, Kurtović (2015, 646) argues that by drawing attention to economic problems and refusing to fit to the ethno-political mould, the protesters produced a critique of the current order – the nationalism and networks of patronage dominating the daily life of BiH. Indeed, the common response from the political elites was to resort to demonising the protesters, and to dismiss them as merely representatives of a single ethnic group (Sejfića & Fink-Hafner 2016, 193; Kurtović & Hromadžić 2017, 271; Murtagh 2016, 159-160). Hence, it seems that the elites assumed a strategy of ethnically framing the incident – fitting it to the current consociationalist mould that works to benefit themselves. Nevertheless, Sejfića and Fink-Hafner (2016, 194) note that the plena represented political innovations, through which the protesters’ demands eventually triggered debates regarding the fundamentals of the Bosnian Constitution. Much of the previous research on the subject points out that the protesters managed to question the ethno-nationalist order frozen in place by the DPA.

Stefanovski (2017) compares the Bosnian Spring movement with the 2015 “Citizens for Macedonia” movement in the Republic of Macedonia, shedding light on the causal mechanisms between the articulated claims of the social movement organizations and their influence on – or failure to influence – specific policy outcomes. Stefanovski (2017, 27-28, 30, 46-47) notes that both of the processes were highly similar, and the countries shared a similar background as both had gone through a conflict and a direct elite transformation, where old communist officials rebranded and entered systems of multi-party democracy, holding high public and party positions again but under new labels. However, the political outcomes of the protests differed highly: in Macedonia, the pro-

tests showed clear signs of impact as the movement was better able to translate its claims into policy outputs, whereas in Bosnia merely small changes at the cantonal level were achieved. While the causal mechanism in Bosnia was activated by the claims-making and repertoires of action performed by the movement members and triggered by the shallow democratization of the country, it was eventually broken by the overt police repression and “the lack of friends and allies”. These factors, along with the distancing of the international community from the process, Stefanovski argues, disabled the protest movement from reaching the policy arena and finally being able to articulate their claims into policies.

While on a few occasions the demands of the 2014 plena were ultimately met, more generally, the governing political elites refused to reform the political system as demanded. Successes of the plena included the resignations of three cantonal prime ministers; electives of the Tuzla Canton Municipal Assembly (MA) and the city council of Goražde being denied their ‘white bread’¹⁸; Sarajevo Canton MA accepting a range of social reform demands related to social benefits, unemployment and pensions and health security; and the representatives of the Assembly of Sarajevo Canton accepting 20 percent reduction to their salaries. (Sejfića & Fink-Hafner 2016, 193; Murtagh 2016, 155.) In the end, the plenum movement tailed away slowly, losing its momentum and dissolving. In his election analysis of the General Elections of October 2014, Huskic (2014, 100-101) also confirms that the plena ultimately achieved very little but may have triggered an increased focus on the citizens’ needs by the international community, as oppose to the prior limited engagement with party leaders. Furthermore, what happened as expected was that the protests were utilized in the pre-election campaigning by politicians both supporting or condemning the events, as Huskic notes. To conclude, what the protests and the plenum movement ultimately revealed and brought to the limelight, was the problematic and highly politicized relation between identitarian or ethno-nationalist politics and the urgent socio-economic needs of BiH citizens.

¹⁸ “The right of executive and legislative electives to continue receiving high salaries even after their mandate has ended” (Sejfića & Fink-Hafner 2016, 193).

3. Defining Liberal Peace, Liberal Peacebuilding and ‘the Local Turn’ in Peacebuilding

3.1. The One-Size-Fits-All Paradigm of Peacebuilding

Liberal peace has been one of the central issues of debate in contemporary Peace and Conflict Research and International Relations since the 1990s. It has been described as “[a] one-size-fits-all paradigm” for bringing peace to post-conflict areas, “the currently dominant Western form of peace-making and peace support” and “the dominant critical intellectual framework” in post-conflict interventions (Richmond & Franks 2009, 2; Mac Ginty 2008, 139; Sabaratnam 2011, 13). Hence, depending on the adopted perspective different aspects have been emphasized, whether it be the inflexible nature of liberal peace, its Western, top-down led nature or its vast prevalence in critical literature. In the core of the paradigm, however, have been its constituent parts of democracy, rule of law, civil society and market economics or economic liberalization in the form of development and free-market reform (Richmond & Franks 2009, 3; Campbell et al. 2011, 1). These building-blocks have been derived from a Western, Northern or cosmopolitan state model, seen as the ultimate goal towards which to strive (See Richmond 2011). Nonetheless, as can be read from the list of constituent parts, the liberal peace paradigm is not only concerned with statebuilding but also more comprehensive yet often overlapping peacebuilding efforts.

Regarding the agency behind the liberal peace project, Richmond and Franks (2009, 2-3, 5) point out to the pronounced role of UN peacebuilding, humanitarian and donor assistance, the World Bank along with other international financial institutions (IFIs), the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and national institutions and experts in the project of “engaging conflict through the construction of the liberal state”. The actors behind liberal peacebuilding have in their multitude resembled an “alphabet soup” as they have delivered “peace-as-governance” (Sabaratnam 2011, 25). According to Richmond (2014, 104, 107, 109), liberal peacebuilding “aims at a positive peace by virtue of universal norms guiding representation and rights”. Richmond suggests that the universal nature of its claims counts out hybrid forms of peace as undesirable.¹⁹ The concept itself is delivered in the form of “universal blueprints” – the same effective standard operating procedures are applied as a readymade ‘package’ suitable to all type of post-conflict environments. Through these blueprints, local political structures are attempted to transform into “a democratic and human rights-oriented framework (framed by notions of good governance) with a legal and enforcement capaci-

¹⁹ The concept of ‘hybrid peace’ will be examined below.

ty". The idea is that the newly-created framework would be internationally and locally legitimate, with a top-down guiding authority "vested in global liberal governance, international law and norms", as Richmond notes.

Historically, promotion of liberal peace has been associated with the post-Cold War period, with a particular milestone being the publishing of the UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali's report *An Agenda for Peace* in 1992.²⁰ The report sketched-out a new role for the UN in the post-Cold War world and emphasised the use of preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and addressing of the root causes ("economic despair, social injustice and political oppression") of conflicts in order to renew its approach to fulfilling the UN Charter. Aiming for a more powerful *carte blanche*, the report reified the state as the central actor and recognizes the importance of respect for sovereignty but mentioned: "[t]he time of absolute and exclusive sovereignty, however, has passed; its theory was never matched by reality." (United Nations 1992, paragraph 3, 15 & 17.) Thus, an Agenda for Peace marked the adoption of a more interventionist approach to UN-led peace operations and gave a high-level approval for the integration of the central aspects of liberal peace (economic liberalization and development; human rights and civil society; democratization and rule of law) in peacebuilding as the corresponding remedies for the stated root causes of conflicts.

Nearing the end of the Cold War and in the years following it, the UN's activity in peacekeeping and humanitarian missions rose sharply, leading to operations in countries such as Timor-Leste, Sierra Leone, Haiti, Côte d'Ivoire, Kosovo, DR Congo, Nicaragua, Namibia, Bosnia, Rwanda and Somalia. However, the UN's failures from Srebrenica to Rwanda soon triggered a process of reflection within the organization and a search for a more comprehensive approach which eventually also rippled into academia (Sabaratnam 2011, 14-19). A main conclusion reached by those assuming a critical position was that liberal peace efforts did not lead to stable liberal states and polities, but rather to illiberal and fragile ones (See Richmond 2011; Mac Ginty 2011).

²⁰ The Dayton Peace Agreement can be seen as reflecting the interventionist approach, which the Agenda for Peace, as well as related agendas for democratization and development promoted (Chandler 2000, 34). However, it should be noted that the Bosnian peace process was not a UN-led effort, as the organization lacked legitimacy on the basis of its perceived failure in protecting civilians in Sarajevo and enclaves of Srebrenica, Zepa and Gorazde, and was therefore largely excluded from the process.

3.2. A Move Towards the Local

Since the early 1990s, a critical academic debate on liberal peace has been shaping. In its current form, it has become more distant from the concerns of the policy discourse and formed into a kind of meta-critique of contemporary conflict management projects (Sabaratnam 2011, 25). Roberts (2011, 410) provides a disaggregation of the different points of criticism which have emerged in an easily approachable manner. In general, criticism has been directed at the nature and limit of liberal peace (See Sorensen 2002). The ontological model of liberal peace has been seen as narrow (See Richmond 2008); its methodologies as non-emancipatory (See Fuller 1992); and the role of the local in contemporary peacebuilding as neglected (See Mac Ginty 2008). Finally, a failure of liberal institutionalism has been explained by its lacking relevance and legitimacy for sizable parts of the population in post-conflict areas (See Boege, Brown, Clements & Nolan 2009). The questions of legitimacy as well as local ownership and inclusion rise as the core points of criticism in Roberts' view. The response of the advocates of liberal orthodoxy to this criticism, on the other hand, has been "more of the same, ordered differently and more firmly applied", as Roberts (2011, 410) sums it.

Although the concept of 'do no harm' has been held to high esteem and the fragile balance of post-conflict situations and integrity of the liberal peace framework have been protected by many of the involved international actors, priority of the liberal peacebuilding approach has often been more on the international and regional implications of the liberal peace and not its local quality (Richmond & Franks 2009, 5). Indeed, this is what connects all criticisms of liberal peace and liberal peacebuilding: the undermined role of the local, that is "the use of countless everyday practices that transmit critical local agency through a diversity of spheres from the very personal to the transnational level" or "the everyday acts of a diversity of individuals and communities that go beyond elites and civil society normally associated with liberal peacebuilding" (Leonardsson & Rudd 2015, 833). Examining the development of peacebuilding, a clear 'local turn' can even be identified in the literature. In their thorough literature review concerning the local turn, Leonardsson and Rudd (*ibid.*, 826) identify two distinct dimensions in the literature. In the first dimension, effectiveness of peacebuilding is the core issue, with an emphasis being on the role of sub-national governments in peacebuilding and statebuilding as well as the concept of local ownership and local capacity building. The second dimension, on the other hand, focuses on issues of emancipation and "voices from below", criticising the current interpretation of the local in peacebuilding and arguing for the inclusion of local agency.

The formation of a local turn in peacebuilding literature does not entail that ‘the local’ has not been a common point of discussion in the practice of peacebuilding already for years – rather that its actual value has so far been largely rhetorical (See Richmond 2010, 667).²¹ In the UN context, the importance of building local capacity and “reformed systems of governance that are responsive to people’s basic needs at the local, regional and national levels’ was recognized by Secretary-General Kofi Annan in 2001 (United Nations 2001). This marked a change in peace interventions, concerned with overseeing ceasefires, towards the inclusion of capacity building and promotion of governance measures in their toolkits in order to bring peacebuilding closer to the local (Leonardsson & Rudd 2015, 827). Yet, the lack of an actual impact beyond the words is evidence by a steadily growing amount of criticism aimed at the success of the UN’s peace operations. The UN’s recognition of the importance of the local also coincided with a pronounced interventionist tendency – one that had only grown from the days of the *Agenda for Peace* due to the adoption of the *Responsibility to Protect* (R2P) doctrine in 2001 (See ICISS 2001). The growing interventionism did not help in countering criticism towards the top-down led nature of liberal peace.

What has been proposed as ‘a cure’ to the shortcomings of liberal peace by Roberts (2011, 412-413, 421-422), is a form of ‘popular peace’, or a peace, which is still led by the liberal institutions but with an emphasis on the relevance to the everyday life of the population rather than to the elite actors of the North and the South. The ‘everyday’ itself refers to “routines of life that empower people to manage their existence to the best of their abilities without reference to the formal regulation of the private sphere by the biopolitical state” as well as the “sanctioned ways in which, to secure their being, people outsmart their environmental limitations and manage the gaps between constraints and aspirations in the face of inadequate, disinterested and incompetent authority and power”. The type of peace that takes the everyday aspects into account, as Roberts argues, would be more democratic, participatory and representative, without a reliance on the type of “universal blueprints” approach which liberal peacebuilding assumes. Hence, legitimacy would be tied with the everyday in a potentially emancipatory manner.

In addition to the concept of popular peace, other names for alternatives to liberal peace have emerged. These include the concepts of “emancipatory peace”, “post-liberal peace” or “hybrid peace” which all draw from the same emancipatory influences as “popular peace” (See Richmond 2011; Roberts 2011). Hybridity is a term, often used to refer to the relation and interactions between the interveners and local society as well as their mutual transformations (See Belloni 2012; Mac

²¹ This criticism is particularly evident in the second dimension of ‘local turn’ literature identified by Leonardsson and Rudd (See Leonardsson & Rudd 2015, 832-833).

Ginty 2010 & 2011). According to Richmond (2011, 187, 189, 194, fig. 6), peacebuilding based on both liberal and local aspects of peace “would be constructed by its subjects, not merely by often well-intentioned external actors and internationals”. A post-liberal form of peacebuilding would ultimately be the “[o]utcome of dynamics of mutual acceptance, co-option, resistance, rejection; differing in each context” and would lead to a post-liberal or emancipatory peace based on hybridity. This form of peace would rather recognize difference, needs and cultures than aim for compliance. Including the local at the centre of peacebuilding would not necessarily cause a displacement of power, however, it would bring critical agencies in rights, needs and institutional terms out of the periphery, enabling them. Finally, Richmond notes that this would not be dissonant with the way liberal peace already focuses on the civil society and its emancipatory groups, but rather bring an emphasis on the components of local alterity, identity, custom and culture as sites of critical agency.

To counter criticism towards the ideas advocated by the supporters of the local-turn in peacebuilding, Richmond (2010, 667-669) raises two vital points. Firstly, approaching hybridity and moving beyond liberal peacebuilding would not entail abandoning liberal peace, but rather reconnecting it with its subject while recognizing the diversity of post-conflict contexts. Hence, Richmond acknowledges the complexity of conflict situations and the necessity of conventional frameworks for promoting peace, i.e. ‘the peacebuilding machinery’ which brings in the resources and navigates the high-level political sphere. Secondly, he gives a gentle reminder that the intention is not to romanticize the capacity, resistance or agency of the local (See Mac Ginty 2008). Vice versa, the everyday or the local is not equated with non-liberalism, illiberalism or liberalism, and essentialist assumptions regarding its inherently ‘peaceful’, ‘conflictual’, or anything in between, nature are to be avoided in Richmond’s view. As Jarstad and Belloni (2012, 4) point out, it may even be possible that hybrid peace governance serves to strengthen “patriarchal, feudal, sexist, and violent political and social systems” – or on the other hand, it may create truly legitimate domestic institutions and stabilize the peace process ensuring that its rooted in the domestic reality.

To conclude, the core argument of the alternatives offered by the local turn advocates is that there seems to be a rupture and a disconnection between liberal peacebuilding and its subjects. This highly affects its *legitimacy*, *efficiency*, *local ownership* and *inclusivity* as well as its *emancipatory nature*, and does not lead to a lasting state of peace which would go way beyond mere cessation of hostilities and direct violence.

4. Criticism of (Neo)Liberal Peacebuilding in Bosnia and Herzegovina

4.1. Political Elites, Internationals and the Unquestioned 'Ethnicity'

Stagnation is the word that best describes the success of the liberal peacebuilding project in BiH. Indeed, Richmond and Franks (2009, 56-57) point out that the process, as envisaged by the international community, has not led to the desired outcomes: Bosnia has been left with a virtual and conservative form of liberal peace, an unresolved conflict, a fragile security situation and a socio-economic crisis. One of the core reasons for this has been the lack of cooperation between the polarised and nationalistic political elites²² and the international community. The political elites have opted out of the process in order to maintain the upper hand, as it can be argued that a liberal democratic state would ultimately impair their political, social and cultural power bases. (Kappler & Richmond 2014, 272; Donais 2005, 13.) The main lesson of this is that the liberal peacebuilding process in BiH has not reached a complete or ideal stage: while some constituent parts of liberal peace have been adopted (such as free elections as a part of democratisation), others have been resisted by the political elites (such as the ECtHR rulings on the Sejdić and Finci, Zornić or Pilav cases) or even ignored by the international community (such as the eventual shortcomings of internationally imposed privatization schemes).

Criticism of post-conflict liberal statebuilding reveals the paradox between international and local ownership of the statebuilding process in BiH. This refers to the apparent desire of the international community to hand over direct control and ownership of the process to the local actors, while simultaneously ensuring compliance to their liberal agenda. (Richmond & Franks 2009, 57.) Although some progress has certainly been made in some individual fields such as elections, the rule of law and civil society, and the role of the OHR has diminished with the use of the so-called Bonn Powers being in practice inconceivable, the hand-over is far from complete, and the international community remains a force that in its part maintains the status quo in the country. From its perspective, the political elites have been unwilling to cooperate, repeating the same antagonistic rhetoric that renders all attempts towards reform futile, especially during times when general elections are looming. As Mukjić & Hulsey (2010, 144) note, while the leaders and set of parties change from election to election, the rhetoric of the victorious politicians has remained the same.

²² This research uses the definition of Burton & Higley (1987, 296): "Elites are simply people who are able, through their positions in powerful organizations, to affect national political outcomes individually, regularly, and seriously. Elites thus constitute a nation's top leadership in all sectors-political, governmental, business, trade union, military, media, religious, and intellectual-including both 'establishment' and 'counterelite' factions."

Peacebuilding is torn between two different versions of liberalism: a conservative version – as has been actualised in Bosnia – which focuses on the state as the vehicle of security and regulation, underpinned by territorial sovereignty, as well as a version which sees peacebuilding as a more emancipatory and empathetic activity and is more concerned with a sophisticated order of justice and everyday equity. While the aim of both of these approaches, included as a part of the imaginary of ‘global governance’, is positive peace²³, they have led to top-down, elite-led and official peacebuilding processes, and at best only a negative hybrid peace. A key problem has been the inability of liberal peacebuilding to recognize difference and deliver a peace dividend at the grassroots level, as oppose to its normative and cosmopolitan goals. In the end, the peace dividend and power have stayed in elite possession. (Richmond 2014, 113-115.) The central role of elites applies particularly to Bosnia, where the peace process has been highly elite-led from the beginning.²⁴ Moreover, the top-down mentality is evident in the criticism of the international community holding a “protectorate”-like quality, particularly manifested through the early use of the Bonn Powers to impose legislative solutions and dismiss public official (See Chandler 2000; Pugh 2002; Dursun-Ozkanca 2010).

The inability of liberal peacebuilding to recognize the ‘difference’, as was described by Richmond (2014, 113-115), is manifested in Bosnia through arguments aiming to reinforce the legitimacy of the intervention in the form of certain commonly repeated clichés or assumptions. One of these is to understand Bosnian party politics as a direct extension of the war to the extent that it is completely dominated by wartime elites at the level of persons. To prove this claim false, one need only consider the results of the 2014 elections, where 15 of the 22 parties who made it into entity or state parliaments were founded after the war and none of the 22 actually had a leader who was already in charge before 1995 (ESI 2017, 16). The big wartime political parties, on the other hand, still play an important role and even contentious figures convicted of war crimes occasionally appear at different governmental levels. Yet, there often seems to be a lack of critical disaggregation when the elites are pinpointed as a source of troubles. More importantly, ethnic polarization and identities are other central issues, which tend to be targets of simplifications and generalizations. Ethnicity is often described as *the* central issue: even Richmond and Franks (2009, 69) mention that “the main barrier to

²³ ‘Positive peace’ is a classic concept in Peace and Conflict Research, coined by Johan Galtung. He defines the concept as an opposite to negative peace, which he uses to refer to mere absence of direct personal violence. Positive peace, on the other hand, encompasses in addition to absence of direct violence also the absence of structural violence, i.e. the prevalence of social justice. (Galtung 1969, 183-186.)

²⁴ However, there have also been signs of international actors readjusting their efforts towards the local in some fields when the elites have shown hostility towards reform. For instance, according to Perry and Keil (2013, 379-380) the OSCE Mission to BiH increased its engagement with the local level in education issues after the will to reform started deteriorating at the political level from 2006.

progress in human rights is the discrimination inherent within *the society based on ethnicity*, which is of course reinforced by the structure of Dayton”.²⁵ However, is Bosnia really a society based on ethnicity? While there certainly is truth to the issue of ethnic polarization as Bosnia is, indeed, seeing even more of it, a more relevant question would be at what levels of society does the polarization actually concern and how does it affect the everyday?²⁶

At the level of party politics, Bosnia does have a political climate where ethnicity is one of the central issues and parties mostly compete for votes within their own ethnic constituencies. However, to claim that there are no compromises being made and that the system is utterly inflexible would be unfounded, as coalition building and concessions are encouraged by a flexible approach towards ethnic identities and quotas as well as the federalism and proportional representation components (ESI 2017, 20; See Lippman 2015, 36-37).²⁷ On the other hand, the entity-voting veto mechanism of the Parliamentary Assembly has proven to make inter-ethnic non-cooperation more advantageous rather than compromise for those benefiting from the status-quo (Bahtić-Kunrath 2011, 918). Moreover, ethno-nationalism is in fact a defining ideological feature of most of the political parties currently represented in the state-level Parliament today. The performance of the nationalist parties has been poor, as evidenced by the unemployment rate consistently exceeding 40% and the incredibly slow pace of passing much needed legislation to improve the situation (Mukjić & Hulsey 2010, 144). Hence, it seems that in forming coalitions and maintaining their power position the political elites are willing to compromise over questions of ethnicity, but when it comes to agreeing on political issues there is less cooperativeness between the parties.

The ethno-nationalist parties’ rise to power in the elections leading to the breakup of Yugoslavia has been explained in simplified arguments pointing to a process of “unmediated democratization”.²⁸ ²⁹ Claims of the inability of Eastern European or Balkan countries to elect ‘the correct’ leaders because of their unpreparedness for democracy, ethnic culture or mere irrationality have been used to justify international interventions and liberal democratization efforts (See Chandler

²⁵ Italics added

²⁶ Richmond (2014, 57) verifies that ethnic polarization has only increased in Bosnia.

²⁷ For instance, the structure of civil servants in civil service should reflect the country’s demographic/ethnic structure, yet public employees are not required by state-level law to declare their ethnicity – it is based on voluntary self-identification (ESI 2017, 6-10).

²⁸ For instance, Chua (2004, 174-175) states that in the events leading to the breakup of former Yugoslavian it was unmediated democratization that triggered the release of suppressed ethnic hatred and caused nationalist demagogues to rise to power, while economic and political liberalization instigated the ethnic polarization.

²⁹ In the 1990 elections, the three leading ethnic parties gathered won most of the seats in the two-chamber legislature: 35.8% or 86 seats for the (Muslim) Party of Democratic Action (SDA), 30% or 72 seats for the Serbian Democratic Party (SDS) and 18.3% or 44 seats for the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) (Friedman 2004, 35). The same ethno-nationalist parties still play a vital role in the political life of today’s Bosnia.

2000; Friedman 2004). For this reason, such claims should also be viewed through a highly critical lens. Chandler (2000, 30-32) notes relating to the beginning of the international intervention in Bosnia, “[t]he war was held to have demonstrated the problems of unrestrained democratic autonomy in a society where often both the electorate and its leaders were alleged to be without civilised values or morality”. However, a more likely explanation for the success of the ethno-nationalists lay in the collapse of the Yugoslav state and the security void it left as the question of security became an essential one amid a lack of the counterbalancing mechanism of the federal state. Given that ethnic or nationalist factions did exist in Bosnia despite a generally peaceful multi-ethnic coexistence at the everyday level, they became the point of reference for security guarantees and equal treatment for each of the three ethnic groups amid growing secessionism in the surrounding Yugoslav republics, Chandler explains.³⁰

Paradoxically, the repeated victories of the ethno-nationalist parties, which have continued to the present, do not necessarily entail that all of their voters subscribe to their views. Mukjić and Hulsey (2010, 145-152) explain this argument by examining Bosnian politics through the Prisoner’s Dilemma and Assurance Games which produce similar results: Bosnian voters may prefer a change to the current state of affairs and wish to remove ineffective politicians but still vote for the ethno-nationalists believing that the voters belonging to other ethnic groups will do the same. The zero-sum perception of voters has its roots in the country’s political climate, which is shaped by incumbent ethno-nationalist parties who maintain high influence over different media outlets. Hence, advocating for zero-sum policies, such as the Croat calls for a third entity, Republika Srpska’s secession or the abolition of the entity system, is the most profitable approach for ethno-nationalist politicians. Ultimately, citizens see voting for a nationalist party as the less risky option and serving their interests better than voting for a non-nationalist party, Mukjić and Hulsey argue. Their claim is corroborated by the wide gap of distrust between politicians and the citizens. The gap is visible in surveys by United States Agency for International Development (USAID) (2017, 18, 21-22) covering the year 2016, which point out that 74% of BiH citizens believe that political parties are only working for their own interests and not those of citizens. Furthermore, a mere 6% in FBiH and 7% in RS believe that they are represented by political parties. The prevalent distrust and feeling of not being represented give a signal of a notable weakness in the legitimacy of the policies of ethno-nationalist political parties who, regardless, keep on succeeding at the polls.

³⁰ The same also applied in the first elections after the war in 1996: “In a tense post-war setting a certain logic then applies, where it is portrayed as dangerous for one group to divide its votes across a larger number of parties, for this will potentially weaken the group vis-à-vis the others, assuming they are united behind their own parties. Voting thus turns into a game of chicken.” (Søberg 2006, 49.)

In contrast to the dominant role of ethno-nationalist political parties, flexibility towards ethnic identities at the local level has a long history in Bosnia. Prior to the nationalists' victory in the elections of 1990, Bosnia was internationally seen as a model of multicultural co-existence and a symbol of Yugoslavia's progressive minority policies (Chandler 2000, 29).³¹ Moreover, the system was different in terms of understanding rights: in the pre-war period, emphasis was based on collective rather than individual rights (Richmond & Franks 2009, 68). Yet the breakup of Yugoslavia and the war of 1992 - 1995 can be seen to have caused a disruption and a division in the entire fabric of Bosnian society. Before the war, multi-ethnicity was very deeply enmeshed at the lowest level and commonly existed within families, but in developments similar to the situation in Iraq (where the Sunni and Shi'a distinction did not matter highly within families before the conflicts) the conflict highlighted ethnic difference, problematising the issue for the first time and causing serious difficulties³² within families (*ibid.* 69). Hence, the war did cause major divisions also at the everyday level particularly in "mixed-marriage" families and increased distrust between communities.

As Tolomelli (2015, 94) points out, the war, indeed, was a breaking point in the peaceful multi-ethnic and multi-religious coexistence. Furthermore, an aspect where ethnic polarization has influenced everyday life is the country's education system, where segregation according to ethnicity is a daily reality. A system referred to as 'two schools under one roof' was originally put in place as an interim measure to allow children from different ethnic groups to use the same school facilities at different allocated times and be taught a number of different subjects such as language, history and religion (See Tolomelli 2015). However, the education system reform has been extremely slow, and signs of backsliding have been evident. As a consequence, the system has held its place in many areas despite the fact that it was intended to be temporary. This has been particularly problematic for children from "mixed-marriage" families, as belonging to the "others" of the DPA's Annex IV, they have had to assimilate into one of the three available ethnic boxes. Hence, in fields such as education, the DPA functioned as the final touch to exclusion and division – not only dividing the sys-

³¹ There existed a viable civic or multi-ethnic alternative to the nationalist road prior to the elections in Bosnia. This is supported by the fact that 74 percent of the population were in favour of a ban on nationally or confessionally based parties only six months from the 1991 elections – the ban was later overturned by the Constitutional Court (Bougarel 1996, 99). Mukjić and Hulsey (2010, 155) note that a Prisoner's Dilemma-like situation started developing in the year leading to the elections as the nature of the campaigning changed and the election outcomes from the other republics showed success for nationalist parties.

³² "The conflict not only turned neighbours against each other but also divided families under the same roof, while individuals with parents from different ethnic groups were forced to choose allegiances and families were irreparably divided" (Richmond and Franks 2009, 69).

tem of governance, but likewise ensuring that the society stay divided after the war in a constitutional straitjacket.

Richmond and Franks (2009, 68) point out that one of the major flaws of the international liberal peacebuilders has been to take the ethnic 'sides' culturally as given. Thus, the peacebuilders' misunderstanding of the fluidity and flexibility of identities shows a lack of understanding of 'the everyday' and related differences. There are a variety of answers to the question as to whether Bosnia is a society based on ethnicity: it may be based on ethnicity in terms of the Annex IV of DPA, political influence of ethno-nationalist parties, the education system and the deterioration in multi-ethnic coexistence caused by the war, but more importantly it is not *permeated* by ethnicity. Ethnicity is not the sole defining factor for identities and the ethno-nationalist cleavages do not necessarily dominate the everyday realm as much as they do in the legislatures. Hence, to claim that Bosnians would somehow be irrational or be living amid 'an everyday apartheid' mentality regarding ethnicity would be unfounded and a major simplification. To bring the actual significance of the issue at the everyday level into perspective, in the 2016 USAID survey, BiH citizens rank unemployment (58%) and low salaries, pensions and standard of living (12%) as major development problems, rather than inter-ethnic distrust and political irresponsibility (2%) and see economic affairs as the first priority which the government should focus on (59%) (USAID 2017, 19-20). Hence, the view from the top-down seems to have become somewhat distorted and the issues that actually matter for the everyday have not been distinguished and addressed well.

All in all, the cooperation between the international community and the political elites has been unsuccessful and is reflected in the type of dysfunctional liberal peace left in Bosnia. Following the local-turn criticism of liberal peacebuilding, three core aspects where liberal peace has seen failures in Bosnia are *the lack of local ownership or inclusivity* (as manifested by the elite-led nature of the peace process, the failed hand-over and the 'protectorate'-like quality of the top-down international intervention), *legitimacy* (as manifested by the uncooperativeness of the political elites and the citizens' high distrust towards political parties and feelings of not being represented by them) and *efficiency* (as manifested by the poor performance of political parties and common legislative gridlocks, the unresolved conflict, fragile security situation, socio-economic crisis and the virtual and conservative form of liberal peace which has developed). In addition to these points of criticism, there is a fourth one, that of *economic emancipation*.

4.2. Neoliberal Implications of Liberal Peacebuilding

The case of Bosnia-Herzegovina demonstrates how neo-liberal economic reforms and the shortcomings of formal democracy combine to create a kind of 'perpetual transition' characterized by unstable, socially divisive developmental patterns and low-level democracy, which obstruct progress to meaningful 'peace' (Bojicic-Dzelilovic 2009, 214).

While the leaps from multiethnicity to institutionalized ethnic segregation and from the emphasis of collective rights to universal and individualistic human rights certainly shaped Bosnia as it is today, an evenly large transformation concerned Bosnia's whole economic system. Pre-war Yugoslavia had its own brand of market socialism which emphasized markets to guide international and domestic production and exchange but had socialist elements stemming from "social ownership" and workers' self-management of enterprises (Estrin 1991, 187). Yugoslavia was already draggingly transitioning just before the conflict, but more effectively a neoliberal economic paradigm was laid down for Bosnia at the first two donor conferences in 1995 and 1996 by the World Bank, EC and European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. The external agencies and aid donors declared that the economic and development strategy would be governed by the private sector with employment to be generated through small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and policies of economic liberalization. (Divjak & Pugh 2008, 380-381.) Typically, the building blocks towards economic transformation, as assumed by liberal peacebuilding, have been macro-economic stability, reduction of the role of the state, squeezing of collective and public space, a quest for private affluence and a high reliance on privatization, exports and foreign investment to stimulate growth (Pugh 2005, 25). Hence, the expected road to transformation for Bosnia was to be long and winding – and eventually the process turned out to be anything but unproblematic.

Richmond (2014, 79-80) argues that neoliberal democracies, as a product of a liberal statebuilding process, are characterized by a weak civil society as well as a limited capacity to engage in global markets and provide basic services. These states would fail without international support, and their citizenship tends to be polarised around elite preferences which also depend on international support. Moreover, a weak civil society, property and boundary-focused security and, altogether, a weak state give the local elites control over the neoliberal state along with its assets. Thus, neoliberal democracies benefit the local elites and 'the trickle down' justifies their economic positions and control of power. In the end, as Richmond notes: "[t]he post-conflict state is held together by a material and ideological alliance between international personnel and local elites". What is left ignored by liberal peace is that the neoliberal approach neglects realities of everyday life and the immediate

nature of the needs of the locals: even when it does work, waiting for a ‘trickle-down wealth’ can take years and cannot provide a solution to the actual and urgent popular needs (Roberts 2011, 412). Furthermore, it has been noticed that neoliberal influence over peacebuilding misunderstands how markets in post-conflict situations work: those versed in their practice and circumvention are allowed to undermine democracy, human rights and rule of law, rather than to support them (Richmond 2014, 118; See Bojicic-Dzelilovic 2009, 203).

Pugh (2002, 469-470) joins Richmond and Roberts in his criticism of the neoliberalist approach adopted by the international community in BiH, which he along with Chandler (2000) refers to as “a protectorate”, examining the first six years after the war. According to him, the neoliberal approach did not benefit the bulk of the entities’ citizens who were living in poverty, unemployed and lacking proper pension, while the cost of living was high. The heritage of pre-war and wartime political economy made clientelism, corporatism, prebendary elites and nationalist acquisition also defining features of the post-war situation, Pugh discovers. More than two decades after the conflict, these features are still well and alive in BiH: for instance, clientelism – or *quid pro quo* exchange of goods, services or benefits for political power – is a lifeblood to the political elites. According to Pugh’s (2002, 470-471) description, clientelism also partly determined the distribution of assets and access to economic gains in the early years after the conflict, or as he notes: “[v]ertically integrated enterprises, controlled by political parties and patrimonies, link[ed] the welfare of supporters to economic empires encompassing hotels, casinos, restaurants, banks, tobacco, forestry, telecommunications, energy, and water companies”. Furthermore, Kurtović and Hromadzic (2017, 269) suggest that clientelism, as a form of coercion and political intimidation towards alternative forms of political belonging and engagement, has also contributed to the continuing electoral success of the ethno-nationalist parties throughout the years.

While constitutional accountability and legal norms and processes mediated the common clientelism weakly, another aspect which was left under the radar was the growing significance of informal or illegal economies. In the Bosnian grey or “survival” economy, many people relied on diaspora remittances, foreign aid, barter, pay back for demobilized soldiers or undeclared earnings. (Pugh 2002, 472.) Divjak and Pugh (2008, 381-383) argue that illiberal informal economy – not to be confused with organized crime or corruption – supports sustaining resistance towards the socially alienating neoliberalism. It has become even more resilient along the way when transition benchmarks in the neoliberal reform process have been reached. At the same time the unemployment rate has grown, and more and more young women and men aspire leaving the country, Divjak

and Pugh finally add. The role of corruption³³ in deterring foreign investment and making Bosnia a difficult environment to run a business has also been evident and stood in stark contrast to the country's aid dependency. BiH citizens' perceptions paint a solemn picture of the phenomenon: 96 % believe that corruption is present in public sector employment and 92 % in public procurement (USAID 2017, 28-30).

Another poorly regulated aspect was the national privatization process of BiH (See Pugh 2002, 274). Donais (2002, 4, 13) describes that the planning of the process was incoherent from the beginning: the transition from humanitarian relief to economic reform was intended to be staged and orderly, but privatization was driven forward on its own tracks. The BiH privatization programme was developed under the guidance of USAID, largely detached from the economic reform process overseen by the OHR. Moreover, it had a completely different timeline: USAID had envisaged the privatization to be completed already within two years from its inception in 1997. Hope was optimistically pinned on an increase of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) as a result of privatization, and the involvement of foreign investors was seen as a way to counter the risk of ethnic privatization. However, the prompt tempo designated for the process ultimately clashed with what Donais identifies as a serious problem, that is, "the absence of an appropriate institutional framework – including those institutions underpinning the rule of law, functioning and well-regulated capital markets, an efficient tax-collection regime, and an effective banking system". In the end, the process progressed in a slow and stalling manner because of the lack of institutions and attractive companies as well as due to the prevalent political obstructions (Bojicic-Dzelilovic 2009, 207).

Consequently, amid a lack of well-functioning institutions to regulate the privatization process, the obvious happened: those already "versed in the[...] practice and circumvention [of markets in post-conflict situations]" and the "resourceful, agile and well connected few", namely those holding powerful positions in the wartime political economy, were the ones to profit (See Donais 2002, 4; Richmond 2014, 118). Aiming to depoliticize economic life and to provide a basis for growth and recovery, privatization failed on both accounts, ending up as a corrupt, ethnicized and protracted struggle for power. The country's complex institutional set-up created along the DPA only increased the difficulty of regulating the process properly: Bosnia had 10 cantonal and two entity privatization agencies, and while a Privatization Monitoring Commission was formed, it did not prevent the conflict fault lines from extending to privatization as well. Particularly the voucher privatization carried out in the early post-war years was exploited by the wealthy, corrupt and well-

³³ Following Divjak & Pugh's (2008) narrow political definition: "abuse of public position for personal or factional gain" (Divjak & Pugh 2008, 373).

connected to consolidate their power.³⁴ The voucher-approach was taken up to transfer state assets – particularly more marginal companies – quickly into private hands and to liquidate citizens claims against the state (e.g. unpaid salaries for soldiers and frozen foreign currency accounts), but it did not prevent asset-stripping and selling of the certificates for fractions of their full face value by their new, desperate owners. (Donais 2002, 2, 5-6, 10.)

Hence, the immediate everyday necessities and realities of the common Bosnians were not met – how was one to develop a business, unemployed and without proper social welfare? In such situations where actual options are limited, the short-term gain of selling the shares quickly forward would naturally outweigh the long-term. On the other hand, it must be noted that the premises for running a business were not optimal either from the perspective of the buyers: the new owners, often so called PIFs (Funds for Privatization Investments), lacked fresh capital for needed investments and restarting of production but also had to deal with the inherited debts of the privatized enterprises (Simić 2001).³⁵ This meant that the prevailing situation only encouraged short-sighted solutions. Controversially, there was also a lack of privatization of companies run by political elites themselves, more for their personal benefit rather than that of the state. In the end, the situation functioned to deter the expected FDI and to make domestic investment less tempting and beneficial. (Divjak & Pugh 2008, 377.)

The imposition of an advanced economic system which assumes that unemployed and poor individuals can contribute to economic growth extensively, while a lack of a well-functioning welfare system ensures that they have no stake in the economy, democracy nor the state, is at the core of the ambivalence of liberal peacebuilding in Bosnia (Richmond & Franks 2009, 75-76). Moreover, as Bojicic-Dzelilovic (2009, 202) argues, the socially polarizing growth has increased economic insecurity which in turn halts the progress towards more constructive and inclusive democratic politics and interest-based political participation, away from divisive issues such as ethnicity. The end result of the process has been more than two decades of stagnation, grey economy, corruption, clientelism, economic exploitation, predatory elites and a dependency on a long-living international presence. The ones who have had to bear the most expenses have been the poor, unemployed, badly connect-

³⁴ Donais (2002, 8) on voucher privatization: “This strategy, adopted most comprehensively in [post-socialist] Russia and the Czech Republic, involved the free distribution of vouchers to the general population, which individuals could then convert into shares of privatized enterprises, either directly or through managed investment funds. While offering a relatively quick fix to the problem of transferring state assets into private hands, as well as helping to secure public support for privatization, this solution meant abandoning any hope of generating badly-needed revenues for the state through the sale of public enterprises.”

³⁵ Simić (2001) depicts a situation where the PIFs were against FBiH authorities insisting them to write off the inherited debts in order to protect the companies’ employees. The authorities claimed that PIFs were exploiting the employees as a pretext and as an attempt to “rob the state” and were well aware of the debt before buying the companies.

ed and those not willing to dig themselves into the ethno-nationalist foxholes and take part in the patronage networks. All in all, Richmond's (2014, 117) reality check is validated by the shortcomings of liberal peacebuilding in Bosnia: "[T]he liberal peace framework has been aimed at reforming or creating social democracies open for international trade rather than social democracies created to reconcile and support their citizens' welfare".

5. Resistance Emanating from the Lack of Everyday Necessities

5.1. Resistance in Hybridity Literature and its Criticism

It is not a truism that top-down approaching, autonomy deferring and compliance demanding liberal peacebuilding efforts are always happily received by their beneficiaries in different post-conflict spaces. Peacebuilding can be seen as a political process which establishes the distribution of economic and political goods, such as privileges, rights and access to material resources and decision-making power, continuing and altering the pre-conflict distribution mechanisms (Iñiguez de Heredia 2017, 1). For this reason, resistance is often seen from those simultaneously constituting and taking part in the process. However, the concept itself has not been completely unambiguous, and there have been different understandings of it in the theoretical literature. Some, like Richmond (2014), Mac Ginty (2011; 2012) and Mitchell (2011) approach resistance from the perspective of hybridity, seeing it as a component in the construction of hybrid peace. From Richmond's (2014, 121) perspective, resistance towards liberal peace has happened at times overtly through demonstrations and violence but more often behind the scenes in a careful way not to undermine peace efforts, rather to guide them. Hence, external demands and implications may be resisted both materially and discursively, often in more marginal, fragmented and hidden manner yet still effectively. Kappler & Richmond (2011, 274) disaggregate the different forms of resistance further:

Resistance can occur in different ways, such as operating in hidden spaces provided by cultural or customary frameworks; creating small civil society advocacy organizations for identity, needs or rights purposes; vocal and physical resistance; discursive deconstruction or co-option of institutional frameworks for governance; and through a process of negotiation over the nature of the peace that is being laid down. [...] This produces hybrid forms of peace, representative of local forms of agency and their unexpected capacities. (ibid.)

Richmond (2014, 13) additionally argues that political mobilisation for peace constructs legitimacy, be the mobilisation in a mass grassroots scale or in a more hidden and fragmented way. In this manner, resistance and critical agency can be seen as a solution to the shortcomings of liberal peacebuilding, making it more aware and sensitive towards the everyday and therefore more effective for tackling issues faced by the local. Accordingly, resistance at the local level is seen by Richmond (2010, 671, 686, 669) as a way to build a new form of peace, constructed on contextual and everyday terms. The everyday, itself, he describes as a site of dynamics, which include resistance and politicisation, solidarity, local agency and hybridity, but also depoliticization and pas-

sivity. These visions are in line with Richmond's aim of not romanticizing the local. Hence, while local resistance towards liberal peace can be seen as a move towards hybrid peace, it should also be understood as potentially having a counterproductive effect towards it.

Other hybridity theorists adopt definitions of resistance with a varying degree of sophistication and precision. For Mac Ginty (2011, 78), resistance is broadly "the ability of local actors, networks, and structures to resist, ignore, subvert, and adapt liberal peace interventions". He (2012, 167-168) attempts to expand the hybridity theorists' debate on resistance by questioning the equation of everyday actions – including mundane actions, such as farming land and going to school – with compliance to liberal peace. This he does by unpacking the concept of non-participation and hinting: "[a]n over-emphasis on the liberal peace and orthodox forms of development amounts to another means of ignoring subaltern voices". Mitchell (2011, 31), on the other hand, deepens the definition of resistance as "a mutual dynamic in which all parties feel capable of (at least to some degree) controlling, shaping or intervening in the acts, powers or logics that shape their lives", understanding both "the powerful" and "the weak" as subjects and objects of resistance. Hence, she brings the issue of power relations to the discussion yet ends up leaving some crucial questions unanswered: for instance, what would resistance from the powerful towards the weak actually mean in this context (See Iñiguez de Heredia 2017, 6)?

Importantly, it should be noted that critical voices have risen regarding the common way how the hybridity theorists approach resistance as a constituent part in hybrid peace. For instance, Nadarajah and Rampton (2015, 51, 71) argue that hybrid peace ignores the importance of historical co-constitution of the local, national and international as well as the power relations connected to them. They advocate for a context sensitive and historically informed scholarly engagement with a focus on the "interwoven and often violent dynamics of domination and resistance" in which explicit positions should be taken. From Chandler's (2013, 27, 31) perspective, hybrid or non-linear views lack understanding of the social and economic structures inaccessible to local agency. He notes that these approaches see the gap between asserted aims and policy outcomes as a product of hidden, "dark matter-like" agency in its whole – not actually providing genuine understanding of the limits to liberal peace or giving emancipatory alternatives to it. Finally, Iñiguez de Heredia (2017, 3) points out that placing resistance on the international-local contention has only reified binaries and depoliticized the 'locals' by vaguely connecting their resistance agency in account of local culture, not in power relations along class, gender and race lines. She summarizes the main problems of this association as follows:

'Who' is the subject of resistance has been seen as an undefined 'local'. 'What' is the object of resistance has been theorised as 'the liberal peace', whereas the extent to which these interventions follow liberal values or locals reject liberal values is questionable. 'How' resistance is undertaken has been seen as hidden and ungraspable without due explanation. This has resulted in a vague account of resistance, in a drift away from the original framework of everyday resistance and in a limited politicisation of peace operations. (ibid., 8.)

While this research adopts the lens of criticism of liberal peacebuilding, these important points of meta-criticism will be reflected in the analysis and the chosen methodological approach. Moreover, this research assumes the definition adopted by Iñiguez de Heredia (2017, 17): “[r]esistance is the pattern of acts undertaken by individuals or collectives in a subordinated position to mitigate or deny the claims made by elites and the effects of domination, while advancing their own agenda”. Hence, resistance will not be examined in the context of hybridity or as a way towards hybrid peace in Bosnia, but rather as potentially having roots in the outcomes or failures of the liberal peace project. As Iñiguez de Heredia (*ibid.*, 3, 179-180) notes, after all, resistance is not aimed at the liberal nature of the interventions nor their externally imposed nature, but rather the recreation of an extractive and coercive order through reconstitution of state authority or the means of war. This entails that examining patterns in power relations and different types of context-specific acts should be in the focus. All in all, building her analysis of everyday resistance based on the ‘everyday framework’ by James Scott and Michel de Certeau, Iñiguez de Heredia argues that resistance has been an undertheorized part of PCR, and therefore peacebuilding has been viewed as monolithic and overpowering.

While this research underlines Iñiguez de Heredia’s observations of the shortcoming of hybrid peace theorists in explaining local resistance, in one important aspect it diverges from her approach. The everyday framework utilized by Iñiguez de Heredia (*ibid.*, 55, 183-184) places an emphasis on everyday forms of resistance in addition to more visible and explicit forms of resistance. These forms considered by her range from very mundane acts such as “insults”, “mockery”, “tax evasion” to more subversive form such as “redefining the ideals embedded in the peacebuilding discourse” or “using armed groups to protect oneself”. However, acknowledging the limited scope of this research and that the topic, the Bosnian Spring protests, exhibits overt public and more or less organized forms of resistance, the hidden or infra-political forms of resistance are out of the scope. Hence, rather than examining *everyday resistance*, this research focuses on more overt and formally organized *resistance emanating from the lack of everyday necessities* – that is, experienced precon-

ditions for life that one is willing to stand up and demand for. Noting Iñiguez de Heredia's points of criticism, resistance will not be reduced to a part in the construction of hybrid peace, but focus will rather be on the subjects and practices of resistance.

When it comes to resistance by elites, some constituent parts of liberal peace can be identified as the object of resistance more justifiably. As described in Chapter 4, the political elites of BiH have embraced certain aspects of liberal peace when it has not jeopardized their power base or benefits while resisting others. Thus, their opposition has taken more of a form of noncompliance or stagnation rather than active resistance, as they have shown to be reluctant to progress forward from the constraints of the DPA by working towards constitutional reform or cooperating to build national unity (Richmond 2014, 26-27, Richmond & Franks 2009, 76-77). This type of resistance by political elites, which can be considered as separate from the type connected with the everyday, has been researched by Keränen (2013), who examines different internal and external statebuilding trajectories in Bosnia, and Zanotti (2011), who focuses on resistance in the context of UN peace interventions. As the issue of elite resistance has been well covered in the literature on liberal peace and Bosnia, here it is only be emphasised that the resistance by Bosnian political elites towards some aspects of liberal peace and embracement of others may be seen as one of the core reasons for the failures of liberal peace (See Richmond & Franks 2009; Kappler & Richmond 2014; Donais 2005). However, the primary focus of this research is on the resistance exhibited by the protesters and in doing so, Iñiguez de Heredia's understanding of local resistance is followed.

5.2. Critical Discourse Analysis, Research Material and Research Question

Critical social science differs from other forms of social science in that it aims not only to describe societies and the systems (e.g. political systems), institutions and organizations which are a part of them but also to evaluate them in terms of ideas of what societies should be like ('the good society') if they are to cultivate the well-being of their members rather than undermine it. (Fairclough & Fairclough 2012, 78-79.)

In line with the theory of criticism of liberal peacebuilding and the overt normative nature of PCR, this research can be categorized more generally as a part of critical social sciences.³⁶ Critical social analysis can be disaggregated into two different constitutive forms of criticism: normative and ex-

³⁶ On the normative nature of PCR, see for example Pureza & Cravo (2007) and Atack (2009).

planatory criticism. Whereas the former “evaluates social realities against the standard of values taken as necessary to a ‘good society’”, the latter “seeks to explain why social realities are as they are, and how they are sustained or changed” (Fairclough & Fairclough 2012, 79). This research relates to both types of critical stances. With regard to the former, the utopian “good society”, against which a normative evaluation is to be made, is embedded in the ideals of liberal peace – that is, economic liberalization and development, human rights, civil society, democratization and rule of law.³⁷ However, the research does not only stay at the level of normative critique but rather aims to uncover the underlying casualties of why the social reality in Bosnia and Herzegovina has reached its current state and how it is being sustained.³⁸

These forms of criticisms are closely connected with Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which has a clear political dimension. CDA has a goal of shaking systems ridden with inequalities in power by uncovering their workings and effects, ultimately also altering the unequal distribution of different political, cultural and economic goods. Potent cultural objects, or texts, are the object of analysis, through which this goal is reached. (Kress 1996, 15.) The specific type of CDA utilized here is one developed by Norman Fairclough (1992, 62-64; 1989, 20-23). In this regard, also Fairclough’s narrow definition of *discourse* is followed: he uses the term to refer to spoken or written language use. Fairclough proposes to regard language use as a form of social practice, implying that discourse is a mode of action and representation. Second implication is that discourse and social structure are in a dialectical relation, as there also is such relation between social practices and social structures. In order to bring clarity to Fairclough’s idea, it is useful to look at the general levels of social reality that he is referring to.

Fairclough & Fairclough (2012, 82) offer a disaggregation for analysing social life through three different levels of social reality. Firstly, *social events* are individual and concrete instances of, for instance, people acting, behaving in different ways or things happening. Secondly, *social practices* offer a higher analytical level: they are durable and somewhat stable ways of being associated with particular identities and ways of representing. Practices include *genres* as ways of acting, *discourses* as ways of representing and *styles* as ways of being. Thirdly, the highest and most abstract level of

³⁷ See Chapter 3.1 above.

³⁸ Acknowledging my subject position as a researcher, I can only note that this choice is a personal preference: I see that the amount of research literature emphasising normative criticism, particularly with regard to liberal peace, is very sufficient. Hence, as oppose to creating another purely normative criticism, I rather wish to provide a deeper understanding of the casualties behind the situation. While this research does not focus on giving policy advice, only by reaching a sufficient level of knowledge of oppressive social structures, meaningful and impactful social change can be achieved (See Fairclough 1989, 4).

analysis are *social structures*, which are structures, systems and mechanisms, such as capitalism, that are often seen as the basis for explaining events and practices. It can be understood that structures may shape practices directly, practices may shape events, but structures cannot shape events in a similar manner – this simplification does not, naturally, capture the complex interaction between these levels but gives nevertheless a rough guidance to understand them better. Fairclough (1992, 65-67) argues further that a discourse, as a political practice, “establishes, sustains and changes power relations and the collective entities (classes, blocs, communities, groups) between which power relations obtain”. In this regard, there are power relations behind discourse and power is enacted and exercised in discourse. What this means, is that discourse is a site of power struggles, where power, itself, is at stake. (Fairclough 1989, 73-74.)

As power relations are an integral part of the definition of resistance adopted by this research, CDA may be seen as a highly suitable methodological tool for conducting analysis on the Bosnian Spring protests. More generally, critical social sciences may also support the fight against oppressive social structures. As Fairclough (1989, 4) notes, a critical consciousness of domination and its forms is a condition for the effectiveness of resistance and ultimately the realization of change. Here it is necessary to note my subject position as a person who has for many years actively travelled to Bosnia to study or to work as part of the international community in the country. In my personal capacity, I explicitly and openly support the social struggle towards a more equal, peaceful and prosperous society in BiH. In line with the normative nature of PCR, assuming such open and transparent stance can be seen as a better practice than carrying an illusory mask of “neutrality” or “objectivity”.³⁹

Following Fairclough’s (2003, 205; 1992, 231-234) general approach, the analysis involves three different yet in practice overlapping facets: the analysis of discourse practices, texts and social practice that the discourse belongs to. Discourse practice includes three dimensions with corresponding analytical distinctions: text production (‘interdiscursivity’ and ‘manifest intertextuality’), text distribution (‘intertextual chains’) and text consumption (‘coherence’). In the analysis, also social and institutional aspects (‘conditions of discourse practice’) should be taken into account. At the text-level, the relational analysis approach of Fairclough, focuses on semantic, grammatical, vocabulary and/or phonological relations. This level of analysis is descriptive in its nature and acts as a link and justification for the interpretations presented at the level of discourse practices. The analysis of social practices is similarly interpretative in its nature. Social practices can be seen to include the following different but often interconnected or overlapping elements: activities, subjects and their so-

³⁹ As an example, Fairclough proclaims his political alignment and position as a researcher openly in *Language and Power* (1989, 5).

cial relations, instruments, objects, time and place, forms of consciousness, values and discourse. Fairclough's CDA, in its core, is the analysis of the dialectic relationship between discourse and the other elements of social practice listed above.

The primary research material of this research is compiled on a blog titled *Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files*.⁴⁰ According to its own description, “[the blog] is an initiative by an open network of activists and academics collecting and translating texts being produced by BiH citizens during the ‘Bosnian Spring’”. The blog consists of statements, declarations, demands, minutes from meetings, news reports, videos, opinion pieces and commentaries as well as other types of documents, most translated from Bosnian to English by the authors – at times under pseudonyms and at times named. (Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files n.d.) As its proclaimed political alignment, the blog states:

We are motivated and inspired by the initiative and creativity of those protesting on the streets in Bosnia and nascent attempts at practicing direct democracy. We believe that the words of ordinary people at moments of revolutionary change and upheaval are important and should be part of the conversation. They are also a refreshing antidote [to] the nationalist fear-mongering, political spin and ‘expert opinion’ about current events in the region. (Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files n.d.)

The document translations available on the blog site serve as the primary material of the research, depicting the point of view of the protesters themselves.⁴¹ As the research data is relatively diverse, an initial classification, prioritization and reduction was conducted. The original material consisted of 110 documents of different lengths and types. These documents were numbered and disaggregated into six different categories: 1) meta, or material produced by the administrators of the blog; 2) material produced directly by the plena, including lists of demands, proclamations, social media commentary and press releases; 3) responses by non-BiH actors; 4) responses by BiH actors; and 5) commentary and opinions published on the media. As from the perspective of the research objective the experiences and voice of the protesters can be considered the most interesting, the material produced by the plena, a total of 33 documents, were chosen as the final material. These documents were further grouped by the location of the plenum and notes were taken after each reading of the material as the discourses were identified from the text. After that, the text was coded further by

⁴⁰ <https://bhprotestfiles.wordpress.com/>

⁴¹ As language is at the focus of CDA, it is important to note and acknowledge the power of the translator over shaping discourses. As I am not a speaker of Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian (BSC), this is an inescapable limitation that the research faces. However, when presenting direct quotes, in line with good scientific practice, the name or pseudonym of the translator will always be proclaimed if available.

discourse in an in-depth reading. Documents belonging to the meta-category were also used for providing background information to support and contextualize the analysis.

The material included in the blog is analysed in order to answer to the following research question, which has been partly derived from the theoretical framework of this research:

How is the resistance manifested in the Bosnian Spring protests connected to the failures of liberal peacebuilding seen during the peace process of Bosnia and Herzegovina?

Following the criticism towards hybridity theorists, the analytical framework is built around the questions of ‘who’, ‘what’ and ‘how’ posed by Iñiguez de Heredia (2017). More specifically, these sub-questions are:

1. Who are the subjects of resistance?
2. What are the objects of resistance?
3. How is the resistance undertaken?

These questions are prioritized in the CDA-approach, forming through them the necessary understanding for the first component of the research question (“...resistance manifested in the Bosnian Spring protests...”). The second component (“...failures of liberal peacebuilding seen during the peace process of Bosnia and Herzegovina...”) has been elaborated upon earlier in Chapter 4. Hence, these components are ultimately brought together, and the research question is answered – or following Fairclough’s approach to CDA, the identified discourses are connected with the wider social practices. A textual analysis provides the necessary justification to the interpretations presented at the level of discourse practices. At the end, the findings of the analysis are compiled in a synthesis to facilitate discussion (Chapter 7). The discussion includes a critical evaluation of the validity, reliability and quality of the results. While the theoretical discussions typically tend to speak past the local, through the analysis of the material, the voice of the protesters is given the centre of the stage.

6. Results: Hungry in Three Different Languages⁴²

6.1. In the Name of the Citizens

The question of identity is answered by the protesters of the Bosnian Spring in a manifestly populist manner, building their common identity as an obverse to the current political establishment. Hence, a populist *we the people*-discourse can be identified from the research material. This discourse is greatly in line with the aspirations of the protesters to bypass the political machinery, deemed inefficient and corrupt, through resorting to means of direct democracy. The protesters are most commonly identified simply as “the people”, “citizens” or “workers”, and what they aim for is not only seen to represent something valuable to the protesters or the plena, but also “for the society as a whole”.⁴³ Their current position is reflected in references to themselves as “oppressed workers”, “ordinary citizens” and “disempowered citizens” or in their requests towards other peers as “fellow sufferers”.⁴⁴ This type of argumentation that depicts the protesters as the subordinate masses is widely present in the material and demonstrative of the identified populist discourse.

Throughout the material there are a number of references to more specific groups under the abstract “people” or “citizens” umbrella term. At times, a disaggregation of “men and women” is added to specify the gender inclusiveness of the protesters’ identity.⁴⁵ In Sarajevo Canton, a petition is signed by “intellectuals, advocates of/for human rights, cultural workers, journalists, [and] citizens of Sarajevo”, reflecting the support of many highly educated to the plena.⁴⁶ The protests also seemed to gather support not only from those in Bosnia but also from the large Bosnian diaspora and people from nearby ex-Yugoslav republics where smaller solidarity protests were organized. However, for

⁴² The ethno-nationalist political framework was commented by the protesters in a creative and ingenious way: a placard carried by protesters in Zenica read “Gladni smo na tri jezika” (“We are hungry in three languages”) (Kurtović & Hromadžić 2017, 280-281).

⁴³ Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014a). Declaration of Sarajevo Protestors #1; Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014d). 2nd Declaration of Sarajevo Citizens’ Plenum (Sarajevo #4); Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014e). Sarajevans Invited to First Meeting of Citizens’ Plenum; Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014f). The First Plenum of the Citizens of Sarajevo has taken place; Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014j). The Position of the Plenum: the Sarajevo Cantonal Assembly Must Pay Serious Attention to the Citizens’ Problems; Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014m). Demands of the 13th Plenum of Citizens of Sarajevo; Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014n). Tuzla’s Declaration of Citizens and Workers (Tuzla #1).

⁴⁴ Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014a). Declaration of Sarajevo Protestors #1; Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014m). Demands of the 13th Plenum of Citizens of Sarajevo; Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014af). Third Meeting of the Plenum of Citizens of Brčko District BiH; Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014ag). Second Bugjno Citizens’ Plenum: Declaration.

⁴⁵ Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014e). Sarajevans Invited to First Meeting of Citizens’ Plenum; Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014r). Announcement of the Citizens Plenum in Tuzla; Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014ae). Reportback from First Brčko Plenum; Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014af). Third Meeting of the Plenum of Citizens of Brčko District BiH.

⁴⁶ Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014l). Petition to Support Plenums and Protests in Bosnia-Herzegovina - Return Our Own!

sake of convenience and due to lack of representative and sufficient data, these groups have been delimited from the research scope. When it comes to active participants within Bosnia, for instance in Brčko, the attendees of a plenum meeting are described as “the oppressed workers of Tesla, Bimex, Velma, unemployed professionals, students, workers and tradespeople without a job, business owners, and even children”.⁴⁷ Consequently, the dominating description of the protesters’ identity appears to be the abstract concept of “the people” or “citizens”. However, the role of the working class arises as an equally significant element in the collective identity of the movement.

Particularly at its roots in the industrial city of Tuzla, but also in other locations, the protests and plena are, indeed, portrayed as a workers’ movement. This is evident already in the title of the first declaration, which specifically distinguishes workers as its own central group: “Tuzla’s Declaration of Citizens and Workers”.⁴⁸ Indeed, the declarations, statements and demands often include use of language which transmits intertextual impressions traditionally associated with the workers’ movement or the country’s socialist past. This is seen especially in the beginning and opening phrases of the texts. For instance, the Sarajevo Plenum starts its first declaration with the capitalized words: “IN THE NAME OF THE PEOPLE ON THE STREETS OF SARAJEVO”, and ends a later press release: “For a society based on solidarity and social justice”.⁴⁹ Furthermore, an allusion towards the days of Yugoslavia and workers’ self-organization is seen in the beginning phrase of Tuzla Plenum’s first declaration: “Today in Tuzla a new future is being created!”.⁵⁰ Calls for solidarity between citizens and workers as well as plena from different cities are also common, bearing resemblance to the socialist ideology. Ultimately, it seems that the nature of the protests and plena can be best described as partly a workers’ movement, building on the socialist-era workers’ tradition, and partly a populist or civic movement, claiming legitimacy also beyond the working class.

The mandate to represent “the people” as a whole, is derived by the movement through the argument that direct democracy is the only possible way to accurately capture the people’s will:

A plenum is the real, and the only, democracy. [...] Everybody stands behind the declarations, because they are the words of us all and the demands of us all. All other modes of activity towards the institutions of state power are a continuation of corruption, party-political thievery,

⁴⁷ Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014af). Third Meeting of the Plenum of Citizens of Brčko District BiH.

⁴⁸ Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014n). Tuzla’s Declaration of Citizens and Workers (Tuzla #1).

⁴⁹ Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014a). Declaration of Sarajevo Protestors #1; Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014j). The Position of the Plenum: the Sarajevo Cantonal Assembly Must Pay Serious Attention to the Citizens’ Problems.

⁵⁰ Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014n). Tuzla’s Declaration of Citizens and Workers (Tuzla #1).

and the pursuit of personal benefit and enrichment at the expense of a robbed people. (Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files 2014p, added by pseudonym “bakercatherine”)

In the above quotation, a scholar affiliated with the protests and the Tuzla Plenum describes what a plenum is. The current approach to democracy, as it is being practiced in BiH, shows as fake, pretentious and elitist as compared to the “real” democracy of the plena. While a debate and discussion precede voting at the plena, what the plenum ultimately decides is approved not only by its participants, but all citizens, leaving no room to hesitation or questioning of its decisions. Accordingly, the work of the plenum is described as happening “for the good of us all” by the Tuzla Plenum.⁵¹ Throughout the research material, if a single document has not been prepared collectively by a plenum, the authors are careful to voice their position and role to ensure that their views are not confused with the decisions of the plena – or the people’s will. This is the case, for instance, if the author represents a temporary and informal administrative party, acting for a purpose such as convening a meeting.⁵² This shows that the neutrality and representativeness of the plenum as a forum for democratic decision-making is protected and held to the utmost value.

Single-handedly, all other means to pursue decision-making are seen as inherently undemocratic as they only contribute to maintaining the unwanted status quo and supporting the corrupt political elites. Hence, the plena are depicted as an imperative, as there is no third way to capture “the real” will of the people. For instance, in Sarajevo, the plenum is described “as an authentic and most legitimate form of citizens’ democracy”.⁵³ The significance and representational effectiveness of the plena as a form of direct democracy are highlighted even when turnouts do not seem to be as high as expected. This is seen in Brčko, where a plenum attracted “less than 50 people”, but it is nevertheless noted that “behind every person present are more than 250 unemployed, given all those registered with the unemployment bureau”.⁵⁴ While the number of attendees did vary from city to city, with many meetings drawing in attendees by hundreds, regardless of the actual number of representatives of “the people” present at the plena, the means were seen to justify the protesters’ claims towards representation. The “people-versus-elite” dichotomy and solidarity argumentation, on the

⁵¹ Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014q). Proclamation of the Plenum of Citizens of the Tuzla Canton; Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014r). Announcement of the Citizens Plenum in Tuzla.

⁵² See Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014e). Sarajevans Invited to First Meeting of Citizens’ Plenum; Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014ad). Announcement: First Meeting of the Brčko District Citizens’ Plenum.

⁵³ Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014l). Petition to Support Plenums and Protests in Bosnia-Herzegovina - Return Our Own!

⁵⁴ Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014af). Third Meeting of the Plenum of Citizens of Brčko District BiH.

other hand, served to strengthen the claims and to build a feeling of community and coherence amid the protesters, as the representatives of the people and, particularly, the working class.

6.2. Against the Establishment

A broad *anti-establishment*-discourse can be identified from the research material, shedding light on the object of the resistance by the protesters. The abstract “establishment” in this case refers to political parties, elites and governments but is connected more generally to anyone associated with the state power, including the law enforcement. This discourse can be seen as a wider umbrella discourse, covering the following sub-discourses: *administrative and political inertia*, *political parties and elites* and *neoliberalism*. Identifying these objects of resistance is particularly important, as the identity of the protesters is constructed largely on the foundation of the described people-versus-elite dichotomy. In this dichotomy, the protesters, or “the people”, are seen as the weaker party, oppressed by the political elites, parties and governments. Indeed, political elites, parties and governments, are the most concrete objects of resistance of the protesters. Previous and current governments are described as negligent, irresponsible and corrupt.⁵⁵ The ruling elite is also seen as highly corrupt.⁵⁶ What is taking place by the establishment, is described as “larceny of the society”.⁵⁷ However, direct democracy is presented as a means to re-empower the people and show that they carry the “true power”.

The divide between the citizens and the political parties and elites is pronounced in the material. It is described that the plena demonstrate how “the citizens take their job more seriously than the politicians do”, and that those in power “represent people but don’t know how to be people”.⁵⁸ Reflective of the divide, an interim group announcing the first meeting of the Brčko Plenum makes an emotionally charged plea:

This is our space, you have yours in your parties. Behind us stand no parties or organizations. [...] LET’S SHOW THOSE WHO HAVE SHAMELESSLY CHEATED US FOR YEARS

⁵⁵ Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014c). Declaration of Sarajevo Citizens’ Plenum (#3); Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014d). 2nd Declaration of Sarajevo Citizens’ Plenum (Sarajevo #4); Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014ae). Reportback from First Brčko Plenum.

⁵⁶ Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014k). Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Sarajevo Canton Doing Everything to Break the Revolt - Even at the Cost of Public Safety.

⁵⁷ Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014a). Declaration of Sarajevo Protestors #1.

⁵⁸ Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014f). The First Plenum of the Citizens of Sarajevo has taken place; Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014af). Third Meeting of the Plenum of Citizens of Brčko District BiH.

THAT WE ARE NOT INCAPABLE AND THAT WE CAN MAKE DECISIONS ABOUT OUR LIVES OURSELVES. (Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files 2014ad, added by pseudonym “kolekili”.)

Consequently, the protesters depict themselves as independent and apolitical – in the conventional party-political understanding of the word “political”. However, this is where different understandings can be noted. Whereas the group calling for the Brčko Plenum outright declares: “[...] all welcome EXCEPT MEMBERS OF POLITICAL PARTIES!!”, another person affiliated with the Tuzla Plenum comments that politicians can attend and that the ideas and demands of political parties can be expressed at the plenums. However, it is clarified that these ideas and demands cannot take their official form and that politicians carry only one vote as anyone else.⁵⁹ Hence, the plena are faced with the challenging question of whether the politicians’ party-political background, deemed corrupt, outweighs their rights as individual citizens to take part in democratic decision-making. While the anti-party-political stance is prevalent, this question is clearly a difficult one to answer, particularly at an early phase of the development of something seen as a new political innovation. In the end, distancing completely from the conventional political structures and organizations remains as the proclaimed position of the movement, yet not an unambiguous and easy choice.

In addition to displaying resistance towards parties and elites, the protesters also raised up the issue of administrative and political inertia. This refers directly to the inefficient combination of incompatible political interests of the three main ethno-nationalist parties and the complex political structure set in place in the early statebuilding years as the heritage of the DPA. One of the organizers of the Tuzla Plenum describes that the sizable state machinery “reinforced by nationalism, corruption, nepotism and opportunism” presents a threat to the realization of the protesters’ demands due to its tendency to resist all changes.⁶⁰ The incompetence of the political parties to agree on issues which are vital to the everyday lives of the citizens is one of the core justifications for the protest movement’s existence. However, it is not just the parties and the government, which require complete reform, but also the administration and state structure.⁶¹ Also in this sense, the plena are seen by the protesters as a more efficient means of political decision-making than the conventional parliaments and assemblies of BiH, reinforcing the justification for resorting to them. As the apolitical nature of the plena is at least seemingly guaranteed, there is no risk that similar inertia due to incompatibility

⁵⁹ Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014s). Nedžad Ibrahimović: FAQs about the Tuzla Plenum; Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014af). Third Meeting of the Plenum of Citizens of Brčko District BiH.

⁶⁰ Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014s). Nedžad Ibrahimović: FAQs about the Tuzla Plenum;

⁶¹ Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014y). The Government of Zenica-Doboj Canton (ZDC) Will Be Composed of Citizens.

of interests would affect them. After all, a decision made by a plenum is seen as the ultimate people's will, which is approved by all.

The third sub-discourse, which is identifiable from the research material, concerns resisting neoliberalism. Given that socio-economic issues are at the heart of the protests, the ideology driving the political elites and causing the socio-economic distress is criticized heavily and resisted by the protesters. Resistance of the privatization of public resources is a key point, which is shared by the plenum across the country.⁶² Several companies are named where the privatization process was deemed as illegal or failed, or where the companies were even deliberately “destroyed”. It is made clear that the political parties, elites and governments are the ones to be held accountable for this. Nevertheless, it is often noted that the new owners of the privatized companies or anyone profiting from the unjust process should be held accountable as well. In this sense, the new owners are seen as criminals whose actions have been left deliberately ignored by the establishment. Surprisingly, the connection of political elites or parties as ones partaking and benefiting directly from the privatizations is not explicitly established. In addition to the privatizations, it is mentioned that the whole economic model of Bosnia “favours the rich” and is therefore unjust, and that the related “grotesque” financial arrangements have “killed all hope of social justice and prosperity of [the] society”.⁶³ Hence, the choices guiding the privatization of public resources have not been transparent, just and made to the best interest of the citizens.

Legitimization for the physical violence and injuries as well as the damage to property done by the protesters is derived from the anti-establishment umbrella discourse. One of the main arguments used for this is a comparison between the short and long-term periods: it is argued that the damage caused by the protesters is a direct result of the actions of those holding the power and is little compared to the experienced injustices of the previous two decades. The protesters assume an apologetic stance yet see the violence as an imperative: facing mistreatment by the political elites and authorities, the protesters had no choice but to choose violence.⁶⁴ Hence, pressure had been building

⁶² Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014a). Declaration of Sarajevo Protestors #1; Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014c). Declaration of Sarajevo Citizens' Plenum (#3); Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014n). Tuzla's Declaration of Citizens and Workers (Tuzla #1); Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014u). Tuzla Citizens' Plenum Discusses Demands of Workers from Bankrupt Firms; Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014x). Zenica Protestors Deliver their Demands; Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014ac). Demands of the Citizens Plenum of Mostar; Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014af). Third Meeting of the Plenum of Citizens of Brčko District BiH; Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014ag). Second Bugjno Citizens' Plenum: Declaration; Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014ah). Demands of the Citizens of Zavidovići.

⁶³ Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014a). Declaration of Sarajevo Protestors #1; Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014c). Declaration of Sarajevo Citizens' Plenum (#3)

⁶⁴ Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014a). Declaration of Sarajevo Protestors #1; Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014n). Tuzla's Declaration of Citizens and Workers (Tuzla #1).

up since the end of the war and finally a tipping point had been reached. The final straw appeared to be the violence directed towards the initially peaceful protests by the law enforcement in Tuzla, which caused the chain reaction of solidarity-protests to begin. In this way, violence towards the protesters acted as a fuel to the protests initially, while when the change to the plenum-format happened, the protesters denounce themselves from its use. Repression by the law enforcement continued, nevertheless.

There is no party or organisation behind us whatsoever. We know best that behind us there are only many years of humiliation, hunger, helplessness and hopelessness on all of our parts. And so we say NO to political brokering! There are no deals behind closed doors, no chosen ones. Only a plenum where citizens, men and women, will make agreements together about how to solve the problems we all face. Let no-one take our civic revolt away from us! (Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files 2014e, added by pseudonym “kolekili”)

The anti-establishment discourse is further strengthened by claims that the parties, elites and governments – which the movement distances itself from – are trying to intentionally manipulate the events to their best, as the above quotation suggests. The ongoing “deals behind closed doors” are reflective of the networks of secretive clientelism that the protesters also denounce themselves from. The manipulation, which presents a risk to the movement’s existence, is claimed to be done also by the media, which has been harnessed to serve the interests of the political establishment.⁶⁵ The organizers of Sarajevo Plenum ask the citizens of Sarajevo to refrain from direct contact and dialogue with the government, “in order to prevent political brokerage”, that is, the unity of the protesters being compromised.⁶⁶ Arrests of and legal actions against the demonstrators made in the course of the protests are described as a “witch hunt of people”.⁶⁷ The claims of manipulation are summarized well in a petition to support the Sarajevo Plenum:

It is necessary to suppress by any means all free expression of thought and demands of the citizens. It is necessary to return the citizenry into the discipline of collective nationalist fear. It is necessary to buy rubber bullets, and to proclaim dissatisfied citizens vandals and terrorists. It is necessary is [sic] for the six leaders to be front page news again and everything will be back to normal. This shall no longer pass. (Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files 2014l, added by Margareta Kern).

⁶⁵ Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014a). Declaration of Sarajevo Protestors #1; Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014z). Prijedor Citizens’ Demands (Prijedor #1).

⁶⁶ Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014d). 2nd Declaration of Sarajevo Citizens’ Plenum (Sarajevo #4).

⁶⁷ Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014a). Declaration of Sarajevo Protestors #1;

The manipulation described above further emphasizes the asymmetrical power relation between the establishment and the citizens, even to an Orwellian extent. However, what is particularly important to note, is the “discipline of collective nationalist fear”, which is seen as the prevalent status quo in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The protesters clearly recognize the risk that may follow with initiating such wide scale political actions: the protests may be discredited and attempted to dissolve by the establishment by spreading misinformation or framing them in the ethno-nationalist mould. This would effectively translate into a return to the status quo. The possibility of such cases or actual attempts to divide the protesters are mentioned several times in the research material.⁶⁸ An example of this is given by the Brčko Plenum:

We are aware of the current political and media situation in Brčko and across Bosnia and Herzegovina, but we will not fall for the usual and already seen mechanism of manipulation such as ‘divide and rule’. We will not let anyone rob us of our citizen’s [sic] uprising. (Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files 2014af, added by Margareta Kern.)

It is notable that in the research material the issue of ethnicity is discussed very carefully, or it is completely avoided. This may be explained by the protesters trying to avoid becoming victim of the “divide and rule”-tactics mentioned above. From this perspective, their goal of portraying themselves as apolitical is strategically vital – even the slightest unwanted connection to the political parties could cause the movement to fall apart fast. Hence, acting and resorting to the plena is seen even more as an imperative, as due to the asymmetric power relations the protesters voices would otherwise never be heard. In this way, the actual manipulation or risk of manipulation further entrenches the people-versus-elite dichotomy between the protesters and the establishment, acting as yet another reason for the movement to distance itself from conventional means of democratic decision-making or political organization.

⁶⁸ Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014n). Tuzla’s Declaration of Citizens and Workers (Tuzla #1); Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014o). Manifesto of the Plenum of the Citizens of the Tuzla Canton (Tuzla #2); Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014t). Tuzla Citizens’ Plenum Calls for ‘Warning Walk’, Calling for Public Renunciation of ‘Golden Parachutes’; Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014ad). Announcement: First Meeting of the Brčko District Citizens’ Plenum.

6.3. Demanding Social Justice for All

In terms of employed means of resistance, the plena stand in contrast to the street protests. Whereas on the streets the employed means were physical, such as mass demonstrations, “warning walks”⁶⁹, blocking traffic and attacking property or the law enforcement, the plena showed a completely different side as they denounced violence. At the core were direct democracy and setting demands to the decision-makers, the key demand being a general call for social justice. This demand for *social justice* can be seen to form another umbrella discourse, which covers four more specific discourses depicting how a socially just society would be achieved: *Robin Hood*-discourse, *meritocracy*-discourse, *reversing neoliberalism*-discourse and *ending impunity*-discourse. For the purpose of this research, the demands and the discourses mentioned above are more interesting than the physical means of resistance. In addition to the discourses or the general shared pattern between the plena that can be identified from the research material, a variety of localized demands can be distinguished as its own category. These include such context-specific demands as opening a public kitchen for the poor in Bugojno, forming a committee to normalize the status of the city of Mostar, finalizing construction of a veteran’s building in Bihac, revising the budget of a dog shelter in Prijedor or providing students with free transportation to school in Zavidovići.⁷⁰ Similar to the physical means of resistance, these ungeneralizable demands are not the main priority of the analysis.

The so-called Robin Hood-discourse refers to the repeating demand of the protesters to level the socio-economic and political playing field by taking away from the establishment and giving back to the citizens and general public. An example of this discourse is visible in the Sarajevo protesters’ demand to sell the government’s new car pool and re-invest the funds into developing factories that have gone bankrupt. In the same list of demands, the protesters also call for lowering of politicians’ salaries and state that the damage caused by the protests should be covered directly from the revenue intended for compensation to government representative.⁷¹ In a similar manner, towards the final days of the movement before its dissolution, the Sarajevo Plenum demands for the funding of political parties to be redirected to provide assistance to people and communities affected by the subsequent widespread floods.⁷² The Tuzla Plenum, on the other hand, calls for an equalization of

⁶⁹ Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014t). Tuzla Citizens’ Plenum Calls for ‘Warning Walk’, Calling for Public Renunciation of ‘Golden Parachutes’.

⁷⁰ Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014ag). Second Bugjno Citizens’ Plenum: Declaration; Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014ac). Demands of the Citizens Plenum of Mostar; Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014aa). Bihac Citizens’ Demands (Bihac #1); Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014z). Prijedor Citizens’ Demands (Prijedor #1); Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014ah). Demands of the Citizens of Zavidovići, February 11, 2014.

⁷¹ Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014b). Protestor Demands from Sarajevo (#2).

⁷² Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014m). Demands of the 13th Plenum of Citizens of Sarajevo.

the salaries of government representatives and workers in the public and private sectors, and an elimination of “irrational and unjustified forms” of compensation to them, including the so-called golden parachute or white bread.^{73 74} Similar demands are also presented in Zenica, Bihac, Mostar, Bugojno and Zavidovici, making the Robin Hood-discourse one of the most frequent in the research material.⁷⁵

Another common discourse is the demand for governments consisting of “experts” without political affiliation, or the meritocracy-discourse. The protesters show high trust in the solution that such expert-led governments could offer, giving another signal of their high distrust of conventional party politics and current governments in BiH. The identity of the experts is clarified as “professionals with relevant backgrounds, who through their work and achievements have proven themselves to be professional and successful individuals with moral integrity”.⁷⁶ They are also described as “non-political”, “non-partisan”, “uncompromised”, and as citizens “without a history in politics”.⁷⁷ The reason for demanding this solution, according to the Sarajevo Plenum, is the “negligence and irresponsible work of the previous government”. The selection process of the experts is clarified further by the Plenum:

The Plenum [...] insists that the composition of the Government be determined through an open process, to enable the public to view the biographies of the proposed candidates. The selection must be based exclusively on the professional capacity and knowledge of the candidates. The influence of political parties during the selection of candidates must be eliminated. (Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files 2014j, added by pseudonym “Zora Kostadinova”)

In this regard, the role of the public, or the plena as representing the public, is seen as an unbiased watchdog. This safeguard mechanism is referred to often in the research material, emphasising the

⁷³ Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014n). Tuzla’s Declaration of Citizens and Workers (Tuzla #1); Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014q). Proclamation of the Plenum of Citizens of the Tuzla Canton; Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014w). Report from the 11th Session of the Tuzla Plenum of Citizens, 15 March 2014.

⁷⁴ See footnote 18.

⁷⁵ Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014y). The Government of Zenica-Doboj Canton (ZDC) Will Be Composed of Citizens; Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014aa); Bihac Citizens’ Demands (Bihac #1). Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014ab). Mostar Citizens’ Demands (Mostar #1); Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014ag). Second Bugjno Citizens’ Plenum: Declaration; Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014ah). Demands of the Citizens of Zavidovići, February 11, 2014.

⁷⁶ Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014j). The Position of the Plenum: the Sarajevo Cantonal Assembly Must Pay Serious Attention to the Citizens’ Problems.

⁷⁷ Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014n). Tuzla’s Declaration of Citizens and Workers (Tuzla #1); Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014r). Announcement of the Citizens Plenum in Tuzla; Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014y). The Government of Zenica-Doboj Canton (ZDC) Will Be Composed of Citizens.

protesters trust in the people's will.⁷⁸ As the above quotation mentions, the selection process should be protected from any influence by political parties, giving another signal of the protesters' complete distrust towards them. Interestingly, while the role of international actors is discussed only on a few occasions, when they are mentioned, they are placed in the same category as the neutral experts. For instance, the help of foreign auditors is requested to audit the work of public enterprises and institutions in Bugojno, and the OSCE is invited to act as an independent observer to the Tuzla Plenum's meetings with the cantonal government.⁷⁹

The third identified discourse reflects the protesters' wish to remedy the negative socio-economic developments and to reverse neoliberalism, cancelling the already implemented privatizations and bringing those who have illegally benefitted from them to justice. In Sarajevo, an audit is demanded from the Cantonal Privatization Agency, for instance, for the privatizations of "Feroelektro, Holiday Inn, Sarabon, Zora, Kljuc, and all other enterprises where suspicious privatization has taken place, including enterprises of federal significance".⁸⁰ In Tuzla, a list of demands is set to the local government with regard to the privatization of Dita, Polihem, Gumara and Konjuh – the companies whose bankruptcy or economic difficulties sparked the initial workers' demonstrations. The list includes ensuring secure health insurance and recognizing the seniority of employees; processing economic crimes and punishing those involved; returning illegally obtained property; and finally, annulling privatization agreements of the companies and preparing a revision of the privatizations.⁸¹ Later, it is further specified by the Plenum's Legal Team:

[T]he future expert government of Tuzla Canton [should] establish an independent professional body to conduct an audit of the privatisation of public companies [...] and the commercial operations of the companies after privatisation and to initiate legal proceedings [...] in accordance with the results of the completed audits. (Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files 2014v, added by pseudonym "dbaplanb").

In Zenica, the plenum requests the Cantonal government to "[r]esolve the status of all workers from companies destroyed in the process of privatization, whose rights were denied" and to ultimately

⁷⁸ Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014g). Citizens' Demands to the Sarajevo Cantonal Assembly Adopted; Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014j). The Position of the Plenum: the Sarajevo Cantonal Assembly Must Pay Serious Attention to the Citizens' Problems; Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014n). Tuzla's Declaration of Citizens and Workers (Tuzla #1); Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014aa). Bihac Citizens' Demands (Bihac #1).

⁷⁹ Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014ag). Second Bugjno Citizens' Plenum: Declaration; Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014w). Report from the 11th Session of the Tuzla Plenum of Citizens, 15 March 2014.

⁸⁰ Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014g). Citizens' Demands to the Sarajevo Cantonal Assembly Adopted; Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014h). These are the First Demands of Sarajevo Citizens to the Parliament of Sarajevo Canton.

⁸¹ Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014n). Tuzla's Declaration of Citizens and Workers (Tuzla #1).

revise the privatizations.⁸² Similar resolving of rights or status of workers from “destroyed” or “failed” companies is demanded also in Prijedor and Mostar.⁸³ The Mostar Plenum also demands for the “removal of the statute of limitations of the prosecution of criminal acts of war profiteering and post-war privatization”.⁸⁴ In Zavidovići, a municipality that has relied on and been connected closely with the wood industry, the bankruptcy privatization of the wood processing company IP Krivaja is emphasized in separate lists of demands. The Plenum states that in the course of the privatization a total of 172 employees were illegally fired and sets demands to remedy the experienced injustices.⁸⁵ All the above examples reflect the central importance of socio-economic hardship as the foundation for the protest movement.

The final discourse, which is highlighted by the protesters, is ending impunity. This discourse is partly overlapping with the demand of reversing neoliberalism in the sense that it also refers to adjudicating the persons illegally benefiting from privatizations. However, the discourse, which is highlighted particularly in Tuzla and Sarajevo, is also related to the demands for the law enforcement to end their use of force towards the protesters and for their witnessed wrongdoings to be investigated.⁸⁶ For instance, in Sarajevo the establishment of an “independent committee of experts” is requested for the purpose of conducting fact-finding and “verif[ying] the responsibility of the police services for excessive use of force and mistreatment of arrestees”.⁸⁷ While calling for an end to the impunity of the law enforcement, the protesters also demand for the suspension of all criminal procedures against those who participated in the demonstrations.⁸⁸ At the same time, the demand to end violence concerns both the law enforcement and the protesters: the plena are evidently trying to distance themselves from violent means which could bring the protest movement under unfavourable light.⁸⁹ Demands to end impunity reflect the protesters’ negative view on the state of rule of law in Bosnia and Herzegovina and their understanding that political power or state power equals *carte blanche* at the face of law.

⁸² Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014x). Zenica Protestors Deliver their Demands; Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014y). The Government of Zenica-Doboj Canton (ZDC) Will Be Composed of Citizens.

⁸³ Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014z). Prijedor Citizens’ Demands (Prijedor #1). Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014ab). Mostar Citizens’ Demands (Mostar #1)

⁸⁴ Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014ac). Demands of the Citizens Plenum of Mostar.

⁸⁵ Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014ah). Demands of the Citizens of Zavidovići.

⁸⁶ Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014g). Citizens’ Demands to the Sarajevo Cantonal Assembly Adopted; Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014i). Sarajevo Citizens’ Plenum Demands to sit at the Next Sarajevo Cantonal Assembly Session; Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014k); Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Sarajevo Canton Doing Everything to Break the Revolt - Even at the Cost of Public Safety; Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014z). Prijedor Citizens’ Demands (Prijedor #1).

⁸⁷ Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014g). Citizens’ Demands to the Sarajevo Cantonal Assembly Adopted.

⁸⁸ Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014w). Report from the 11th Session of the Tuzla Plenum of Citizens, 15 March 2014.

⁸⁹ Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files (2014aa). Bihac Citizens’ Demands (Bihac #1).

In a similar manner as the varying localized demands, the common and shared discourses that are visible throughout the material are always shaped according to the local context. Hence, similar types of arguments are raised for reaching an ideal state of social justice around BiH, but with different angles and targets. Situating almost purely in FBiH, the plena raise criticism and demands that are mostly focused on local cantonal governments, rather than the relatively weak central government or the FBiH entity government. At the same time, the abstract concepts of “establishment” or “politics” are often addressed in a rather holistic manner, seeing anything related as undesirable or contaminated. In this way, the described corruption and misuse of power are also seen to penetrate all levels of governance – comprehensive reforms are required to provide a remedy and to create a socially just order. The described discourses depict the vision envisaged by the plena for reaching this sought-after end state.

7. Synthesis of the Findings and Discussion

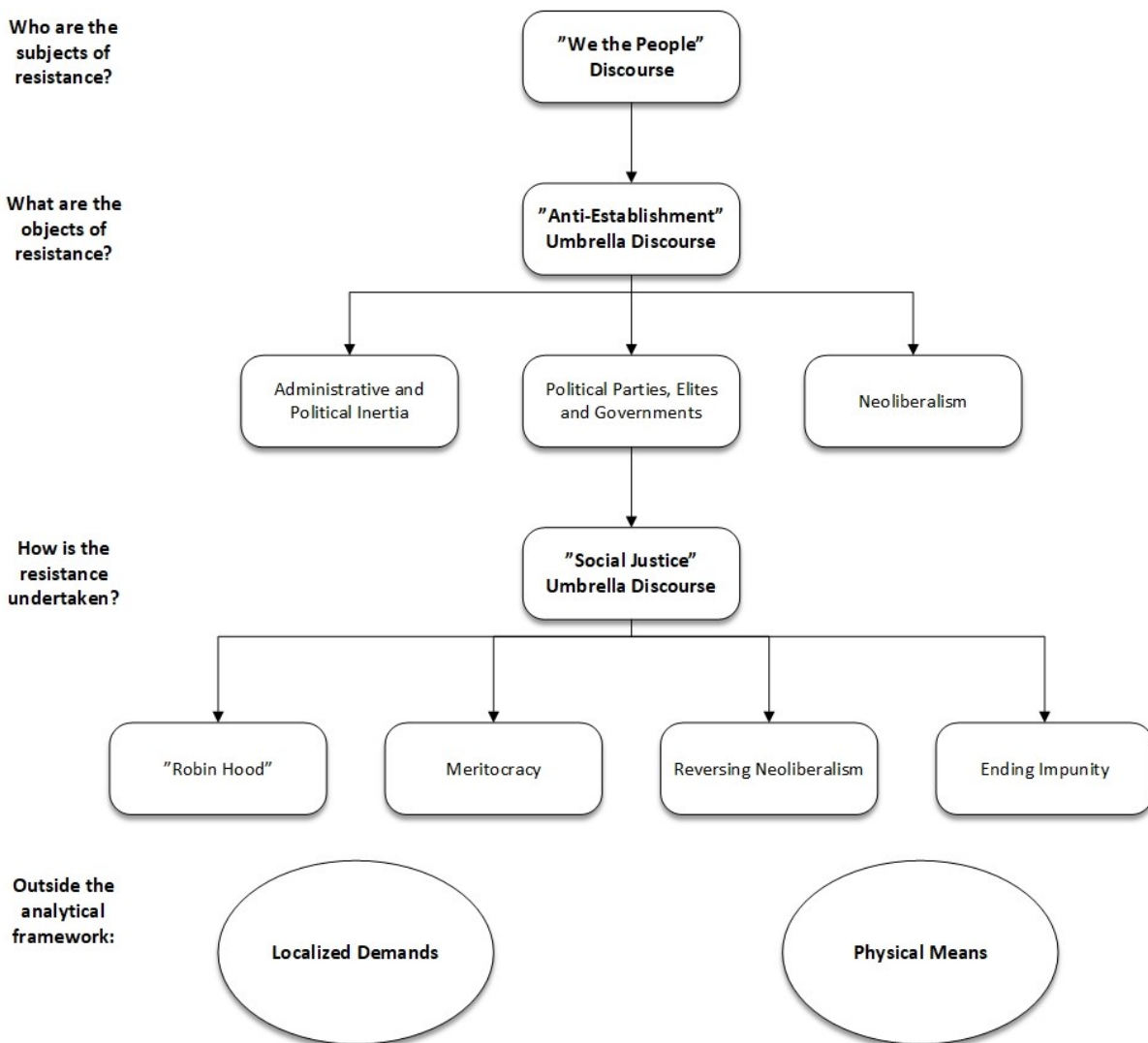


Fig 4. Synthesis of the research findings

The synthesis (Fig 4.) of the research findings shows the 2014 protest movement as partly a workers' movement, building on the socialist-era tradition, and partly a populist or civic movement, claiming legitimacy also beyond the working class. The movement constructed its proclaimed apolitical identity on the perceived and pronounced people-versus-elite dichotomy, positioning itself against the political establishment. The protesters' collective identity was further reinforced through common calls for solidarity between the participants and plena across BiH. The protest movement focused its resistance particularly on political parties, elites and governments, administrative and political inertia and neoliberalism. The years of the neglect and wrongdoings as well as the deliberate manipulation by the political establishment seeking to dissolve the movement further entrenched

the dichotomy, strengthening the protesters claims towards representation and collective identity. While also using different physical means, the movement undertook resistance primarily by resorting to direct democracy and setting collectively approved demands. In addition to various localized demands, the recurring and most common demands included taking away unjustified financial benefits from political party and government representatives and redistributing them to the society, replacing political governments with politically unaffiliated expert governments, reversing the failed privatization processes and ending the impunity of those illegally benefitting from them as well as representatives of state power guilty of violations against the protesters.

Returning to the research question, the key aspects where liberal peacebuilding has experienced failures, as were derived from the local-turn criticism, can be easily reflected against the issues highlighted by the protesters. Lack of local ownership, inclusivity, legitimacy, efficiency and economic emancipation were noted as these aspects in Chapter 4. Looking firstly at the question of local ownership and inclusivity, the Bosnian Spring protests demonstrate in a very clear manner the common discontentment at the local level towards the high power position held by the political elites and the prevalent inequality. Acknowledging the elite-led nature of the peace process in BiH, this can be seen as an indication of the exclusion of the issues relevant to the local and the everyday from the peacebuilding agenda (see Richmond 2014; Richmond and Franks 2009). This observation is particularly present in the overt resistance towards political elites, parties and governments, who all were seen as self-serving figures (See Mukjić & Hulsey 2010; USAID 2017). The protesters demand to level the playing field, taking away from the establishment and giving back to the general public was one of the most common discourses in the research material. This Robin Hood-discourse reflects the experienced inequality, as the peace dividend, described by Richmond (2014), has stayed purely in elite possession. Notably, the findings did not highlight criticism towards the ownership of the peace process in terms of the international/local-dichotomy, but focus was rather on the asymmetric ownership and power relations between the elites and the citizens within the framework of the non-inclusive process.

Secondly, the rejection of conventional means of democratic decision-making and political organization by the protesters signals of a lack of legitimacy of the outcomes of the peacebuilding and statebuilding process. Their proclaimed apolitical stance can be read as another sign of distrust, as difficult or impossible reaching the complete political isolation may in the end be. Lacking legitimacy of the existing political parties to represent the citizens culminates in the meritocracy-discourse – in the idea that only neutral, professional and politically unaffiliated experts can guide the country

forward as it should be done. Along with the Robin Hood-discourse, this was another very common discourse visible in the research material. Thirdly, the heavy criticism towards the wide administrative and political inertia is telling of the core inefficiencies of liberal peacebuilding and statebuilding. The inertia can be traced to the complex state structure and the straight-jacket-like political heritage left by the DPA, which served as the entry point to the liberal peacebuilding process. While signalling about lack of legitimacy, the protesters' choice to abandon the state machinery and form their own channels of democratic decision-making emphasizes also the evident inefficiency of the system. The incapability of liberal peacebuilding to guarantee adherence to rule of law by the representatives of state power, on the other hand, is evidenced by the impunity-discourse.

Finally, at the root of the protests were unarguably socio-economic issues and the lack of economic emancipation. The protesters set their priorities clear by raising criticism on the overemphasized questions of ethnicity and nationalism, sending a message that socio-economic issues are more urgent and relevant to them at the level of everyday. This is reflective of the inability of liberal peacebuilding to recognize difference and to identify and address the issues significant to the everyday (See Richmond 2014). The protesters were outspoken in their resistance towards neoliberalism, pointing to the entire economic system in Bosnia but more specifically the failed privatization processes, the success of which had been demonstrably poor (see Pugh 2002). Privatizations were not only a key issue in the birthplace of the protests, Tuzla, or the capital Sarajevo, but they were as commonly highlighted in more rural areas. The central role of certain local companies and the high socio-economic dependency of smaller municipalities on them was visible in the research material. This applies, for instance, to the case of IP Krivaja in Zavidovići – smaller municipalities such as Zavidovići are highly affected in the case of a bankruptcy of such company vital to the local economy. Zavidovići, Tuzla, Sarajevo and other stages of the Bosnian Spring demonstrate how such collapse can create a fruitful ground for unrest. In the face of such immediate loss, waiting for the trickle-down cannot provide a solution to urgent socio-economic needs for those left outside the networks of patronage (See Roberts 2011; Pugh 2002).

Connections between the proclaimed ideals – and the eventual failures – of liberal peace and the identified discourses are evident. At the root of the protesters' criticism were exactly the same issues that liberal peacebuilding seeks to achieve: democracy, rule of law, civil society and human rights, and economic liberalization. The protesters showed a complete lack of trust towards the conventional democratic processes in the country, instead, isolating themselves from party politics and choosing and creating their own means of democratic decision-making. At the same time, their opposition

towards perceived impunity of the representatives of state power pointed to the poor state of rule of law in the country. Their fear of manipulation and attempts to divide the movement evidenced the narrow space that exist for the civil society and the overpowering position of the ethno-nationalist political parties in BiH. Finally, as the core driver for the protests, socio-economic hardship and the failed privatizations directed the protesters' attention towards the failed economic restructurings, raising demands to revert the privatization and return public ownership of the businesses. The example of the Bosnian Spring protests reaffirms the conclusion of the critics of liberal peace that the ideal has merely led to illiberal and fragile outcomes (See Richmond 2011; Mac Ginty 2011).

The findings are in line with the previous research on the topic, as social justice and socio-economic issues arose as the core demands of the protesters (See Murtagh 2016). They suggest that the low level of trust towards the political process and politicians, which was seen during the first ten-year period after the war, has not changed much in reality (See Søberg 2006). The observation on the protesters' attempt to distance themselves from violent means is complemented by Sejfiija & Fink-Hafner's (2016) remark that public condemnation towards the violence helped to transform the protests towards a more institutionalized form, that is, the plena. The research also noticed similar allusions towards BiH's socialist history and the Yugoslav tradition of workers' self-management, as Kurtović and Hromadzic (2017) noted. As much of the previous research emphasised, the findings also suggested that the protesters distanced themselves from the ethno-nationalist political debate, setting socio-economic and biopolitical needs before nationalist divisions (See Kurtović & Hromadzic 2017; Kurtović 2015; Majstorović et al. 2015). Like Kurtović (2015) noted, the protesters produced a critique of the patronage networks and central role of ethno-nationalism by raising socio-economic issues to the limelight (See Kurtović 2015). Within the theoretical framework of this research, this can be also read as a critique of the overemphasis of the significance of inter-ethnic distrust at the level of everyday, setting the actual priorities of the citizens clear. The threat and risk of manipulation of the protests was also in accordance with the way political parties and elites aligned themselves against the movement, as described by previous research (See Sejfiija & Fink-Hafner 2016; Kurtović & Hromadzic 2017; Murtagh 2016).

While the results were much in compliance with previous research on the subject, the analysis also pointed out to a number of previously underemphasized issues, mainly, the lack of power relations as a part of the analysis. The findings painted a particularly overpowering portrait of the role of the political parties and elites in BiH, which manifested as a high distrust and an abandonment of all conventional means of democratic decision-making and party politics by the protesters. Anything

related to politics was seen as rotten, and for this reason, alternative means had to be sought. By forming the plena and setting demands, the protesters advanced their agenda, mitigating and denying claims made by elites and the effects of domination (See Iñiguez de Heredia 2017). While short-lived, this way the plena acted to re-empower the protesters, who in their claims towards representation identified with the working class and the citizens of BiH. Verifying Iñiguez de Heredia's (*ibid.*) argument, the resistance by them showed not to be aimed at the liberal nature of peacebuilding or its externally imposed nature, but the coercive order set by the state. In addition to making the power relations more visible, the analysis also provided a clearer disaggregation of how resistance was structured in this case: who the protesters claimed to represent, what did they resist and how did they undertake the resistance. In this way, the research reiterated the criticism towards the way hybridity theorists have approached resistance: forgetting power relations, mystifying agency and ultimately reifying binaries and depoliticizing the local (See Nadarajah and Rampton 2015; Chandler 2013; Iñiguez de Heredia 2017).

The results can be seen to elucidate the dynamics between the civil society and the political elites in the context of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The plena were clear to denounce violence or alternatively downplay its effects and depict violent acts as something that the protesters were forced to commit. This change from fierce street protests to peaceful democratic decision-making and the decision of the protesters to distance themselves from violence, seemed to be explained partly by the risk of manipulation by the political establishment. For this reason, the movement appeared to also opt for an apolitical identity as their ideal. Hence, the protest movement tried to escape being labelled or framed politically and to avoid the elite domination, yet ultimately fell victim to it. It can be argued that a potential stumbling block for similar civil society movements that seek wide scale support and solidarity across ethno-national lines in Bosnia and Herzegovina is such risk of political manipulation and framing. Repression by state authorities presents another risk: violence acted as a fuel to the protests initially, but as Stefanovski (2017) noticed, the violent repression by the law enforcement eventually contributed to the movement's demise. The "straight-jacket" of Dayton and the following domination of ethno-national parties with incompatible interests can be seen as a key failure of liberal peacebuilding and statebuilding in Bosnia. As a consequence, the room for civil society actors to influence societal developments and to act to bring upon positive change in the country is highly restricted.

In a more general sense, the results suggested towards a potential link between socio-economic factors and political instability. Combined with an atmosphere of repression and a lack of effective

channels for citizens to voice their opinions and to influence democratic decision-making, lack of livelihood, social safety networks and services vital to everyday life appeared to be a significant destabilizing factor. It seemed that when taken far enough, the lack of everyday necessities was enough to break the zero-sum perception and the influence of clientelism which acts to sedate the public to adhere to the status quo (See Mukjić & Hulsey 2010). A spark, or a triggering event such as a violent and oppressive reaction by the law enforcement was only needed, and a nationwide state of crisis was ignited. While the results were theoretically aligned with the criticism of liberal peacebuilding, they can be seen to share ground with research on the link between socio-economic factors, such as economic inequality or social mobility, and political (in)stability (See Baten & Mumme 2013; Boix 2008; Houle 2019). For instance, Houle (2019, 106) has discovered that countries with a low level of social mobility are more likely to experience unrest, such as anti-government demonstrations, riots, revolutions, general strikes, guerrillas and political assassinations. In addition to the socio-economic factors, the results of this research point out to other interesting aspects whose influence on the incidence of unrest could be assessed further: for instance, distrust towards conventional democratic means of decision-making and political organization, poor state of rule of law or perceived impunity of state authorities.

From the perspective of validity, the methodological approach and analysis managed to capture exactly what it sought to capture. Nonetheless, from the perspective of reliability, some limitations or observations should be acknowledged. Firstly, the quantity of research material was relatively light and weighted towards the cities of Sarajevo and Tuzla. In this regard, a difficulty was the availability of material in English, as incorporating B/S/C material could have provided a more balanced selection also towards other cities and rural areas. However, Tuzla and Sarajevo were, indeed, central stages for the protests, and the analysis produced interesting findings, which were sufficient acknowledging the limited scope of a master's thesis. The findings of this research should still be understood as general connecting lines between the plena, and local variance between them should be acknowledged. Secondly, and as always, there may be a gap between what actors proclaim and what the reality is. This research is based solely on material produced by the protesters and not verified directly, for instance, through personal or third-party accounts. Nevertheless, as the research is concerned with the voice of the protesters – how they portray themselves and what issues they raise as important to themselves – the type of material was also suitable to its aims. Moreover, the findings of this research were greatly in line with previous research on the subject, ultimately ensuring a sufficient level of reliability.

As a final observation, importantly, it should be noted that the protesters did not at any point direct their resistance towards the international community in Bosnia but specifically political parties, elites and governments. On the contrary, third-party international assistance, akin to the protesters' neutral meritocratic ideal, was requested, for instance, for conducting the requested audits or monitoring meetings between the representatives of the plena and cantonal government officials. In this regard, the finger was not being pointed at the international community – yet the question is: could it have been? While the cemented power position of the ethno-nationalist political elites and parties has been at the heart of preventing positive developments in the country, the international community has not been uninvolved. The paradox of local and international ownership, as Richmond & Franks (2009) noted, refers to the internationals' wish to hand over ownership of the statebuilding process to local actors but to simultaneously ensure that their liberal agenda is being adhered (See Richmond and Franks 2009). Indeed, a handover has been happening slowly and the international community is not the same that it was in the early post-war years. The protesters were correct in emphasising the responsibility of the political parties and elites, acknowledging that there are more limitations to how the international community can influence the situation than there were earlier, as the erosion of the Bonn Powers shows. Nevertheless, going to the root of the problems, the international community was – and still is – a major driving force in the peacebuilding and statebuilding process of Bosnia, and in this way, as accountable as the political parties and elites for its outcomes.

8. Conclusions

The purpose of this research was to give a comprehensive understanding of how Bosnia and Herzegovina had come to such state that its people were willing to raise up on the barricades in 2014. The research juxtaposed criticism of liberal peacebuilding against a thorough analysis of the protest movement, mapping out their identity and claims towards representation, object of their resistance and their means of resistance. Connections between the failed ideals of liberal peacebuilding witnessed along the peace process in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the resistance manifested during the Bosnian Spring protests were made visible and pinpointed, highlighting the observation of the local-turn critics that liberal peace has only led to illiberal and fragile outcomes.

Aligning with criticism of liberal peacebuilding, the research pieced together a portrait of the peace process in Bosnia and Herzegovina which has been characterized by stagnation, grey economy, corruption, clientelism, economic exploitation, an emphasized role of predatory elites and a dependency on a long-living international presence. While the poorly performing ethno-nationalist parties have dominated the legislatures, their success in repeatedly winning their seats has been contrasted by an overwhelming distrust towards them, prevalent among average Bosnians. At the same time, the importance of basic socio-economic issues for the everyday lives of Bosnians has been overlooked parallel to a disproportionate emphasis of inter-ethnic distrust. The Bosnian Spring protests fitted this narrative expectedly, as the protesters' criticism of the status quo of ethno-nationalist parties and elites sent out a message that hunger weights more than political fault lines. The links between the failures of liberal peacebuilding and the witnessed resistance were deemed evident, as at the root of the protesters' criticism were the same issues that liberal peacebuilding seeks to achieve: democracy, rule of law, civil society, human rights and economic liberalization in the form of free-market reform and development.

The research provided a fresh and multidisciplinary perspective of Peace and Conflict Research to complement previous research on the Bosnian Spring protests. Acknowledging the variance between localized demands of different plena, it sought to identify the general connecting characteristics between them. While the research joined the theoretical literature on criticism of liberal peacebuilding, it also parted from its common understanding of resistance which was seen to ignore the central importance of power relations, to create a blurry account of agency, to reify binaries and to depoliticize the local. Accordingly, the overpowering role of the ethno-nationalist parties and political elites in Bosnia and Herzegovina was highly visible in the results. Based on the example of the Bosnian Spring protest movement, the research suggested that the success of similar civil society

movements that seek wide scale support and solidarity across ethno-national lines in Bosnia and Herzegovina is conditioned on them being able to escape domination by the political elites and to evade the risk of political manipulation and framing, which only aim to guarantee a return to the status quo beneficial to the central ethno-nationalist parties themselves. It was argued that the space for civil society actors to influence societal developments and to act to bring upon positive change in Bosnia and Herzegovina is highly restricted.

In a more general sense, the results emphasized the link between socio-economic factors and political instability, pointing out to interesting directions for further research. The research gave a gentle reminder of the importance of employment, social welfare, pension, standard of living and other socio-economic factors that form the foundation for everyday life. When this foundation crumbles, the results can be seen in uprisings such as the Bosnian Spring protests or, most recently, the *Gilets Jaunes* movement in France. There are no standard operating procedures to how such movement is formed and sustained – it may be spontaneous and become fuelled by repression by the law enforcement, as was the case in Bosnia, or it may form around central leading figures in a more coordinated manner. However, in order to reach such critical mass that the Bosnian Spring protests managed to momentarily reach, it needs to be based on common and shared necessities that are urgent to the everyday. Whether the movement can retain its momentum and eventually reach its proclaimed goals is always another story.

In the years after the Bosnian Spring protests, only a few things have changed from the perspective of the international community, political elites and civil society in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The EU-integration process of the country has progressed in small steps, as the bilateral SAA-agreement entered into force in 2015 and the country formally applied for EU-membership in 2016. Soon after the protests, the EU initially shifted its approach from political to economic, prioritizing economic reforms over constitutional reforms, such as implementing the Sejdić and Finci ruling. However, the EU's 2018 strategy for Western Balkans lifted rule of law again higher on the list of priorities. Meanwhile, the centrifugal forces tearing the country apart have only intensified as the separatist ambitions of Serb-nationalist Milorad Dodik have reached a higher platform in the BiH Presidency, and the Croat-nationalist party HDZ's claims of marginalization and calls for a third entity have simultaneously become louder and louder. The economy has not shown serious signs of recovery, and the emigration of the young and educated still remains a growing trend. At the time of writing this, the protest movement "Justice for David", as a latest example of the citizens' efforts to demand social justice and accountability from the state authorities, has retained its momentum for the tenth

month despite attempts by the RS law enforcement to suppress the movement.⁹⁰ As many of the problems underlined by the Bosnian Spring protest movement in 2014 have been left unaddressed, Bosnia and Herzegovina remains a fertile ground for civil unrest.

⁹⁰ The "Justice for David" movement was formed around the death of the 21-year old David Dragicevic, whose father accuses the RS police of lying and covering-up his son's murder. The EU Delegation (EUD) and EU Special Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUSR) have commended the outcry against lack of rule of law and impunity that the movement has managed to raise, calling for due explanation for the way the RS authorities have handled the protests and commenting that the events in Banja Luka send an alarming signal of the state of rule of law in Bosnia and Herzegovina. (Balkan Insight 2018; EUD/EUSR 2018.)

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