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Title: Conflict Resolution in Bosnia and Herzegovina: assessing root causes, limits and possibilities of liberal peace-building

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September, 2023

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Abstract

The reemerging tensions in Bosnia and Herzegovina despite all the efforts and resources dedicated to rebuild the country after the war suggest a more thorough investigation and understanding of the peace-building process. Seeking to understand what can explain this resurgence, this research sets out to assess the process of peace-building and state-building and, more specifically, the extent to which the liberal approach to peace-building and state-building contributed to foster or nurture these tensions. Bosnia and Herzegovina case epitomizes a classical example of external-led liberal peace-building and thus an excellent case to discuss the limitations that are inherent to this approach. The main conclusion drawn from this research is that given the current threats of Republika Srpska to declare independence from Bosnia and Herzegovina, the liberal approach to peace-building in this case study has been unsuccessful in providing a long-term peace for the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Keywords: Conflict Resolution, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Peace-Building, State-Building, Negotiations

Resumo

Apesar de todos os recursos dedicados à reconstrução do país após a guerra, a recente reemergência de tensões na Bósnia e Herzegovina sublinham a importância de investigar de forma mais sistemática o processo de construção de paz e as suas limitações. Com o objetivo de compreender e explicar o ressurgimento das tensões, esta tese pretende avaliar o processo de manutenção da paz e reconstrução do Estado e, mais especificamente, investigar até que ponto a abordagem liberal adotada neste processo veio contribuir para fomentar as recentes tensões. A Bósnia e Herzegovina pode ser considerado um exemplo clássico do modelo liberal da construção de Estado em ação e, nesse sentido, representa um excelente caso para discutir as limitações inerentes a esta abordagem. A principal conclusão avançada pela tese é a de que, dadas as atuais ameaças da Republica Srbska em declarar independência da Bósnia e Herzegovina, se torna evidente que a abordagem liberal adotada neste contexto foi incapaz de assegurar uma paz sustentável a longo prazo.

Palavras-chave: Resolução de Conflitos, Bósnia e Herzegovina, Consolidação da Paz, Construção de Estados, Negociações.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina celebrated its 31st anniversary on March 1, 2023. 31 years after the declaration of the independence, and 28 years since the Dayton Peace Agreement ended the war in 1995, the country is witnessing a reemergence of ethnic and political tensions, threatening to further divide the country along ethnic lines, as Republika Srpska, representing the Serbs in Bosnia and Herzegovina, has been threatening to declare independence. As the High Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina declared at United Nations Security Council in a meeting held on May 10, 2023, about “the increased secessionist positioning and rhetoric in Republika Srpska.” As Bosnia and Herzegovina has been already divided along ethnic lines in terms of the administration and restructuring the economy, thanks to an external-led conflict resolution process, the reemergence of the tensions call for an urgent attention to investigate the conflict resolution process approaches used to build a long-term peaceful solution in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This research aims to investigate two main objectives of conflict resolution and state-building process in Bosnia and Herzegovina. First, I will investigate the liberal approach to peace-building, and secondly, I will explore the reemergence of tensions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, taking place almost three decades after the Dayton Peace Agreement was signed, with aim to understand the extent to which the liberal approach utilized in the process of peacebuilding and postwar reconstruction made possible the reemerging of tensions.

First, a common thread in a considerable size of literature is that at the center of the liberal approach to peacebuilding is the democratization of institutions and rule of law alongside with the market development or the liberalization of the economy. The development of a market economy and democracy, the two main components of the liberal peace concept, have been pursued through a set of reforms centered around economic and political liberalization, which in most war-torn countries are embarked on simultaneously (Newman, 2009:202). The democratization of institutions and democratic consolidation of a country is linked with protection of individual human rights, fair elections, separation of powers and open market economy.

On the other hand, the liberalization of the economy, according to the liberal approach, is linked with open market economy and competition, as a way to pull a society from violence and poverty to development. The open market economy exposes democracy and capitalism, encouraging societal competition as a means of achieving political stability and economic prosperity (Paris 1997:57). In our case, the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the liberal approach to peace-building was extensively utilized.

Second, the UN's Security Council meeting on May 23, 2023, on Bosnia and Herzegovina highlighted that "the international community must not allow divisive political tactics to endanger social cohesion in Bosnia and Herzegovina" after the president of the Republika Srpska threatened to declare independence from the Federation. Almost three decades after the Dayton Peace Agreement has been signed, there is a political unrest in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which may be driven by an unclosed conflict resolution process.

This thesis investigates Bosnia and Herzegovina as an entry point to understand the limits and contradictions of liberal peace-building and state-building approach. By looking into the liberal approach to peace-building and the current state of Bosnia and Herzegovina, I aim to explore the linkage between the two objects of my studies.

1.1 Objectives and research questions

The aim of this thesis is to analyze and understand the process, possibilities, and challenges of an externally-led conflict resolution in the context of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a case study of conflict resolution in modern Europe. As a study case, Bosnia and Herzegovina will give us the depth and impact of an external-led conflict resolution in bringing peace and establishing a socio-economic life afterward.

The thesis will focus on two major research objects that, albeit distinctive, are deeply intertwined. The first research objective will be the role of external third parties in mediating the conflict and negotiating peace terms. In exploring the external third parties role, I aim to investigate the roots causes of the conflict and war, assess the extent to which the approach adopted by the international community anchored to the principles of liberal peace-building

was able to take into account the sources of these tensions and the extent to which it was able to produce a long-standing and sustainable peace.

The second research object is the complex and multi-level process of conflict resolution in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the reemergence of tensions. The thesis will set out to assess whether and to what extent the current reemergence of tensions in Bosnia and Herzegovina is linked to the process of conflict resolution. Additionally, the case of conflict resolution in Bosnia and Herzegovina is heavily linked to an externally-led process, which happened in different phases and had a spiral effect on the entire Western Balkans region. Given how the country was emerging out of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, composed of three different ethnicities within its own borders, Bosnia and Herzegovina is a unique case study because, in itself, it adopted a model of mini-Yugoslavia they were desperately trying to get out of.

In sum, the thesis will study the external-led conflict resolution process of Bosnia and Herzegovina, its key features and dynamics, and its long-term effects on the society of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Based upon that, the main research question is:

1. To what extent did the strategies adopted in the external-led conflict resolution condition the development of a long-term, sustainable peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina?

The sub research questions are:

- 1.1. What are the root causes of the conflict between ethnicities in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the 90s?
- 1.2. What are the strategies of peace-building and state-building adopted by international community in Bosnia and Herzegovina?
- 1.3. How is the current reemergence of tensions conditioning the socio-economic development and the long-term peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina?

1.2 Why Bosnia and Herzegovina as a case study?

Since the end of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1995, the country has found itself many times in political turmoil, ethnic clashes, economic stagnation, and religious divisions that continue to question the ability of Bosnia and Herzegovina to function as a functional state. According to (Kasapović, 2016: 176):

There is a broad consensus on the fact that Bosnia and Herzegovina is a deeply ethnically divided postconflict society which needs politics of accommodation as the main form of interaction between the three co-constitutive ethnic communities, i.e. between their electorally legitimised political elites (Kasapović, 2016: 176).

Although the Dayton Peace Agreement facilitated and led by the U.S. and the European Union brought an end to war and the fighting between Serbs, Bosnians, and Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the reemergence of tensions has brought this approach of external-led intervention and its problems back into the table. The challenges of the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the liberal approach used to peace-building and state building is a case that has been thoroughly studied by scholars, as an example of international intervention and externally-led conflict resolution process. According to Paris, the September 1996 elections served to drive the parties further apart, not draw them together as was intended (Paris, 1997:73). In addition, the Dayton Peace Agreement created a state that lacked economic sovereignty, because it entrusted the central state with the minimum of prerogatives in the domain of economic governance (Newman, 2009: 206).

The Dayton Agreement was an acceptable post-war solution for Bosnia and Herzegovina, as it transformed the conflict into a settlement between the ethnicities, dividing institutional power and creating a co-existing environment for the parties involved in the conflict (Kapci, 2022:2). Rather than a large-scale social change, the Dayton Peace Agreement focused more on the governing side of the state, and how to ensure an effective institutional arrangement that would allow ethnicities who were in conflict to co-govern and have legitimate power over the existing resources. The division of the country into ethnic administrative regions, the power-sharing of institutions based on ethnicities, and the divided educational system based

on ethnicity have brought Bosnia and Herzegovina to an edge of stagnation economically and socially, hence risking remaining an area of instability and conflict inducing.

The conflict resolution approach in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been a significant success in ensuring immediate peace among ethnicities living in the country; however, on the other hand, this approach and narrative appear to be problematic because of socio-economic stagnation due to power-sharing between different ethnic groups, and political divisions. The recent events in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the leaders of the Serbian majority republic, Republika Srpska, “threatened to declare independence from the rest of the federation” (UNSC meeting on May 10), attest to the fragility of the peace that was built.

As the liberal approach to peace-building and state-building in Bosnia and Herzegovina focused mainly on the democratization of institutions and the open economy, we witness a lack of long-term vision for the stability of the country, as new tensions are reemerging. What makes Bosnia and Herzegovina a unique case to explore is also the fact that there was a massive political and financial investment by the international community, for various reasons, to reconstruct the country based on the liberal approach assumptions. Lastly, the war in Ukraine has contributed to political and ethnic instability of countries in the Western Balkans which are still undergoing a reconciliation process, including Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo, where the Serbian minority in both countries are potentially seeing the war in Ukraine, and the international order shift as a momentum to gain more governing rights and power over the different territories.

Given this context, the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina makes a perfect entry point to evaluate how the liberal approach to peace-building and state-building can contribute to perpetuate ethnic tensions. Hence, the entire conflict resolution process in Bosnia and Herzegovina requires further studying.

1.3 Thesis Outline

I structure the thesis into six chapters. This first chapter introduces the research and the thesis by outlining the research objectives, questions, and sub questions. In addition, chapter one briefly introduces the case study that will be carried out during the thesis and how this specific case study is relevant to understanding the advantages and limitations of the liberal approach to conflict resolution and peace-building.

Chapter 2 discusses the research methodology employed in this research. Briefly, the thesis is methodologically qualitative, based on a comprehensive review of existing literature, academic papers, reports, and historical documents related to conflicts and peace-building efforts in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The second part of the chapter discusses the limitations of this dissertation.

In Chapter 3, I investigate and assess the evolving practice of externally-led conflict resolution and its liberal underpinnings. Building on different literature available, this chapter outlines the historical evolvement of conflict resolution, specifically after the second world war and with the creation of the United Nations as a global actor. It analysis the evolution of the definitions of conflict resolution and how its importance evolved in ensuring a long-term peace in different regions of the world. The second part of the third chapter outlines the role of the external mediators in negotiations and conflict resolution processes. Looking through the case study, it analysis the preparations that the mediators' team go through to ensure their readiness to meet the parties to negotiate peace. Lastly, this chapter looks into some important challenges that mediators meet during the different phases of the negotiations and the techniques used to bring parties together when those challenges arise.

Chapter 4 will focus on the challenges of liberal peace and state-building and pathways that are normal taken to achieve both. It analyzes the assumptions, approaches, and dilemmas throughout the conflict resolution process, looking through conflict resolution beyond immediate peace and reconciliation but more in the context of long-term peace through democratization of institutions, open economy, state-building and socioeconomic development.

Chapter 5 analyzes the absence of the application of strategic peace-building in Bosnia and Herzegovina's case and how this process affected the current societal dynamic in a country that remains ethnically divided in peace. Chapter 5 presents how Bosnia and Herzegovina is a critical example of conflict resolution linked with long-term development. I start by providing an overview and assessment of the conflict, which broke with the fall of Yugoslavia in the early 90s, to then describe how external actors engaged with the conflict and the strategy of peace-building adopted, mainly looking into the Dayton Peace Agreement. Additionally, this chapter further assesses the steps undertaken by the international community to negotiate peace between the ethnicities in Bosnia and Herzegovina and what were the key actors involved in this process, including the President of Serbia, officials of the Croatian government, and the representatives of the Bosnian community in the country. Critically important to explore is the genocide in Srebrenica, which occurred during the negotiation process and while the international peacekeeping forces were already in the country. This chapter delves further into the importance of social and economic development of the country after the conflict and how the development is related to long-term peace, specifically exploring the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

I conclude the thesis in Chapter 6 by outlining the principal arguments and significant findings demonstrating the link between the conflict resolution process and long-term sustainable social and economic development, through the assessment of limits and possibilities of the liberal approach to peacebuilding, especially in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Chapter 2: Literature Review, Methodology and Limitations of the Study

In this chapter, I provide an overview of the literature employed on this research. I also discuss and introduce the methodology employed in my research, along with the case study correlation to the topic. Specifically, I discuss the methodology and the approach used for the research. Lastly, I provide an overview of the limitations of the study which mainly connected to the limitation of providing a single case study.

To do so, since the aim of this study is to analyze and understand the process, possibilities, and challenges of an externally-led conflict resolution in the context of Bosnia and Herzegovina, I adapted a post-positivist stance build upon qualitative approach.

2.1 Literature Review

The literature that utilized to understand the limits and possibilities of liberal approach to peace building presents a collection of academic work that has been made public in the history of conflict resolution, institutionalization of conflict resolution and peace-building, mediation and negotiation and the limits of liberal internationalism. Additionally, to understand better our case study, I have analyzed the historical context of the conflict and Bosnia and Herzegovina as a political entity, through literature on the devolvement of Yugoslavia, reports and article on the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the international intervention. Given the extensive literature on this topic of peace-building and state-building and the challenges of conducting interviews, my analysis relies predominantly on secondary literature but also analysis primary sources such as the Dayton Peace Agreement.

The Dayton Peace Agreement signed in 1994 was analyzed as the primary source because it remains the agreement which concluded the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, brought peace and established a framework for institutionalization of this peace in the country. The agreement outlines 11 important annexes to build sustainable peace among divided ethnicities

in Bosnia and Herzegovina, including annexes in military aspect, regional stabilization, inter-entity border line, elections, constitution, arbitration, human right, displaced persons, preservation of national monuments, public corporations, civilian implementation and the police task force. The Dayton Peace Agreement served as a critical source to understand the process of peace building based on liberal approach.

As secondary literature, I have analyzed Peter Wallensteen's (2009) book in *Understanding Conflict Resolution*, where he not only provides a historical overview the conflict resolution process, and approaches, but also introduces the concept of "agreement" as a tool that leads to peace. Ramsbotham, O., Woodhouse, T., & Miall, H. (2011), provide us with thorough overview of both the history of conflict resolution as well as the process of mediation and negotiation. Their book on *Contemporary Conflict Resolution* has been key in understanding the liberal approach to peace building, and what are the steps necessary that lead to a successful or unsuccessful negotiation process. Richmond, O., & Visoka (2021), G., were instrumental in helping me understand different aspect of state building besides the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Their book on "*Peacebuilding, Statebuilding, and Peace Formation*" offers and extensive overview of the link between peace-building and state-building, and how they go hand in hand. As part of historical development of conflict resolution studies, an important attention was paid on the institutionalization of this process through the establishment of United Nation and its agencies for peace. Iji, T. (2017), article on *UN as an International Mediator: From the Post-Cold War Era to the Twenty-First Century* was critically important to look at in order to understand the effects of the establishment of a global governance body in managing conflicts and the process of conflict resolution. The role of United Nations and its peace agencies, mainly through peacekeeping missions, has been utilized in many different cases around the world, including Bosnia and Herzegovina, hence the importance of analyzing as a secondary source. To analyze the limitations of the liberal approach to peace-building and state-building, I have paid careful attention to the *Peacebuilding and the Limits of Liberal Internationalism* by Paris, R. (1997), who assess critically the failures of this approach in bringing peace in different conflicts around the world, including Bosnia and Herzegovina. Paris argues that the attention on democracy, open economy and human rights has its limitations, as different conflicts around the world are rooted in values different from those that the liberal approach promotes.

To understand the root cause of the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the book on *Yugoslavia: Death of a Nation*, by Silber, L. & Little, A. (1996), was critical as it provided a thorough overview of how the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina is rooted far in the past, with the creation of Yugoslavia. The fall of Yugoslavia had a spiral effect in different parts of the region, and Bosnia and Herzegovina was left as the most affected country due to its demographical composition of Bosnians, Serbians and Croatian, the ethnic groups which composed the majority of the Socialist Republic as well. Additionally, Zahar's (2019) article on *When the Total is less than the Sum of the Parts: The Lessons of Bosnia and Herzegovina*, was thoroughly utilized to understand how the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina was ignited and what were the leftovers of such a conflict. The literature in the conflict and the root causes of the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina is extensive; however, a common thread across the main literature looks at this conflict from two perspectives. First is the rise of nationalism after the fall of Yugoslavia and secondly, the political and economic aspiration in the region, mainly led by the Serbian's leadership ideology of Greater Serbia expansion.

Unfortunately, there is a lack of literature on the current raising of tensions in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The main source utilized to understand the reemergence of these tensions is meeting notes of United Nations Security Council in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the High Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina reported the increased public succession plans of Republika Srpska.

2.2 Methodology

To answer the research question of to what extent did the strategies adopted in the external-led conflict resolution condition the development of a long-term, sustainable peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, this research included a number of findings of liberal approaches to conflict resolution and an analysis of the historical, political, and social factors contributing to conflict in the Western Balkan region and the proposed strategies for peacebuilding and reconciliation by the international community. This research is built on qualitative methodology, based on a comprehensive review of existing literature, academic papers, reports, and historical documents related to conflicts and peacebuilding efforts in Bosnia and

Herzegovina. As stated on the literature review, the primary source to assess the conflict resolution in Bosnia and Herzegovina is the Dayton Agreement, followed by secondary sources on the history of conflict resolution and peace studies and historical context of the root causes of the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

To select the literature that was explored in peace and conflict resolution studies, I explored a combination of readings produced by the founders of peace studies as well as more recent scholars and think tanks. In addition to internationally known literature on peace-building, I paid an additional attention in including literature, views and sources driving from authors from the region of the Balkans, who studied peace and peace processes. To understand the legal functionality of Bosnia and Herzegovina, primary documents analyzed was the constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, along with the Dayton Peace Agreement, mandates of UN representatives in the country and declaration of independence.

In order to address objective one of the study, I explored historical facts, transcripts of meetings and articles related to the fall of Yugoslavia and raise of ethnic tensions that followed in Bosnia and Herzegovina. To address objective two, I delved into literature outlining the process of negotiations, the Dayton Peace Agreement and the constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Objective three was addressed through recent reports and journalistic pieces, since it is quite recent reemergence and there is not substantive academic literature on the topic.

Case study as research design was utilized to assess the limitation and possibilities of liberal approach to peace-building. Robert Yin (2009: 14) defines case study as “an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident.” Taking a case study to understand the limitations and possibilities of liberal approach to peace-building has its own advantages and disadvantages. The first allowed me to delve deeper into the historical context of the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina and root causes of the conflict. However, relying in one case study only increases the generalization of the argument on the limitations and possibilities of the liberal approach to conflict resolution and peace-building.

2.3 Limitations of the Study

This research may possess limitations on how the focus on a single case study limits the type of generalizations that can be made in assessing the limits and possibilities of liberal approach to peace-building. While the research seeks to investigate the root causes of the conflict and the conflict resolution process in order to understand the connection with today's reemergence of the tension, on the other hand, this research will not delve into Bosnia's inherited ethnic matters before becoming part of Yugoslavia.

Chapter 3: External-led Conflict Resolution: assessing and evolving practice

Conflict, as a social situation, bring two or more actors into a state of confrontation, whether ideological, physical, economic, political, or else. In the case of a conflict between two or more states, the confrontation can quickly escalate to fighting and wars, as we have seen quite often throughout history. It can be understood as “an expression of the heterogeneity of interests, values, and beliefs that arise as new formations generated by social change come up against inherited constraints,”(Ramsbotham, Miall, Woodhouse, 1999:8). In the context of the conflict between two states or parties, conflict occurs when both parties attempt or try to get an available set of resources at the same time.

The striving to acquire such resources may lead to a confrontation between the countries, and in some cases, it may escalate into a physical confrontation and fighting. However, in some cases, physical confrontation does not need to continue forever, as most conflicts are solvable and vary widely in their scale, motivations, and timeframe. What remains important is the way we deal with the conflict, as conflicts are a recurrent phenomenon in social and political relations, and the tools that are used to solve the conflict often condition the possibility of its re-emergence. Conflict is an intrinsic and inevitable aspect of social change (Ramsbotham, Miall, Woodhouse, 1999:8). However, as an inevitable aspect of social change, conflict in itself may not be neither negative nor positive. In fact, how it depletes is solely depended on the way that is handled - by the skillset, viewpoints, school of thinking and attitudes of those involved in the conflict. If a conflict results in destruction, such as the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina, it does not mean that that may have been the only way forward, and there may have been other options and alternative paths to the conflict, such as negotiation and dialogue. The other options, paths, and alternatives start to surface during the conflict as the parties assess their involvement, appetites, and capabilities.

“Conflict precedes conflict resolution” (Wallenstein, 2019:16) and a conflict resolution is a necessary tool within a world where conflict is a feature and not a bug; yet, there are different ways of addressing and resolving conflicts, each of which carries with them its own advantages and limitations. To stop a conflict from escalating and to help prevent the deaths

of many people and the devastating consequences of a conflict, the parties involved need third-party support to bring them to the table of negotiations and dialogue. The third party is usually considered to be neutral to the conflict. It gets mandated to facilitate a dialogue to help both parties involved in the conflict find common ground through dialogue and peace. However, navigating such a delicate situation requires fulfilling both parties' interests in negotiations while maintaining neutrality and credibility. This is an uneasy process and often takes a long time to produce the first tangible results.

3.1. The emergence of conflict studies

Conflict resolution began to be defined as a field of study in the 1950s and the 1960s, at a point in time where the dynamics of international relations and state to state relationships were shifting (Ramsbotham, Miall, Woodhouse, 1999:4). In this period, the world was at the peak of the Cold War and the superpowers had started to develop nuclear weapons that appeared to threaten the human species. The consequences of the two world wars, the number of deaths, and the damages that the occurrence of those events ignited also impacted the growth of the pacifist movements globally (Kriesberg, 2009). The pacifist movements took place in different shapes and settings, including protests and political cynicism (Kriesberg, 2009). Interestingly, since, as species, we have engaged in different conflicts throughout history, we also have engaged in various ways in figuring out how to solve those conflicts. Peace-building, as a concept, was introduced and integrated within the academic world prior to its widespread acceptance and usefulness in the policymaking. Johan Galtung, a Norwegian who is considered the founder of Peace Studies, first introduced this term in his 1976 article “Three Approaches to Peace: Peacekeeping, Peacemaking and Peacebuilding” (Cravo, 2018:10). Galtung, in fact, established the foundation for both the theoretical and practical investigations that would emerge a few years later and continue to thrive even today.

In the wake of these important world events, a group of pioneers from different fields and disciplines began to understand the importance of studying conflict as a general phenomenon,

from both the international relations perspective as well as domestic politics. Primarily in Europe and North America, a handful of people began to establish research groups to develop these new ideas (Ramsbotham, Miall, Woodhouse, 1999:4). The sole purpose of studying conflict resolution as a phenomenon would be to understand and study conflict, international crisis, internal and civil wars, and social conflicts to potentially explore the approaches on how to deal with those set of circumstances. As Ramsbotham, Miall, and Woodhouse suggest, these research groups, in fact, were not taken very seriously at the beginning, and they were considered the interlopers (Ramsbotham, Miall, Woodhouse, 1999:4). Up to this point, the international relations, as a field of study, had its own categories for studying and understand conflicts between countries, and therefore, was not very open and welcoming to other types of think tanks or other studying the inter-state wars or international crisis as such.

However, a few years later, the importance of the new ideas and approaches to conflict resolution started to increase, as they were making a difference in real conflicts globally. For example, the outbreak of the Cuban Missile Crisis was a frightening warning about the risks of a nuclear war, and its settlement was an example of effective negotiation (Kriesberg, 2009). In South Africa, the Centre for Intergroup Studies began to use and employ the different approaches that emerged in the conflict resolution field in order to develop confrontation between apartheid and its challenges, which started to deliver impressive results. Between 1957 - 1960, regular, high-level meetings took place between the United States and the Soviet Union, to negotiate about arms control. Examples like this took place all over the world, including Europe, Asia, and South America, where negotiators continued to play an exceptional role in negotiating peace and stopping wars and conflicts (Cravo, 2018:10).

To prevent future wars and conflicts or to help solve them with the lowest amount of damage and consequences, many governmental and nongovernmental actions were undertaken in building transnational institutions as joint global initiatives, laying the ground for the institutionalization of the conflict resolution field. Globally, this was evident in the establishment of the United Nations (UN), the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank

(Kriesberg, 2009). In establishing the above-mentioned transnational institutions, we witnessed wider global cooperation, even between former enemies. In addition to the global efforts regionally, in Sweden, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) began operations in 1966, followed by Swisspeace which was founded in 1988 in Switzerland to promote independent actions for peace research. In the African continent, the Centre for Intergroup Studies was established in Cape town, South Africa in 1968, to conduct academic research on relations between "racial" groups, with the goal of promoting mutual acceptance and co-operation (Kriesberg, 2009:7).

Conflict resolution as a practice to negotiate peace and peace-building was widely used in the Western Balkans as well after the fall of Yugoslavia. Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo are a few examples of the usage of conflict resolution practices to bring stop the wars and bring peace in the region.

Before proceeding, it is necessary to establish a preliminary definition of conflict resolution by looking through different definitions pointed out by scholars and ultimately finding the most suitable definition for our case study, Bosnia and Herzegovina. For example, in some cases 'conflict' is used to refer both to 'consensual' conflicts over interests (disputants want the same thing) and to 'dissensual' conflicts over values (disputants do not want the same thing) (Aubert, 1963). In this thesis, my main focus will be understanding the first case, when the conflict occurs, because the disputants want the same thing. The U.S. Institute for Peace defines conflict as "an inevitable aspect of human interaction (...) when two or more individuals or groups pursue mutually incompatible goals" (Colgan, Sturma, Ayazi, 2018:31). Human-needs theorists, such as the Australian professor of conflict resolution John Burton claim that conflicts occur when certain fundamental human needs and desires are unmet. Conflict proceeds conflict resolution.

Conflict resolution is connected with the processes of either stopping, densifying the tensions between parties or keep them at the levels where peace can still continue to be pursued.

Wallensteen defines conflict resolution as a situation where the conflicting parties enter into an agreement that solves their central incompatibilities, accept each other's continued existence as parties, and ceases all violent actions against each other (Wallensteen, 2019:8). Wallensteen's definition of conflict resolution is the closest definition that captures the essence of conflict resolution by bringing a formal agreement into the general picture of the process. An agreement, being normally a document that formalizes an understanding between parties, surfaces an element of 'desire to stop the conflict' by the parties involved, leading to another part of the process, which is solving the problem. The agreement's significance in this definition is that by signing a formal understanding, parties accept each other's existence as parties and express their desire to sit at the table, dialogue, and negotiate (Wallensteen, 2019:8).

Wallensteen's definition of conflict resolution is the most adequate to this thesis, and the case study, since the conflict resolution process in Bosnia and Herzegovina had the Dayton Peace Agreement at the center. The agreement not only enabled parties involved to sit on the table of negotiations and dialogue, but it served as an essential drive to stop the violence, build democratic institutions and draw a potential way of moving out of the conflict.

3.2 The role(s) of external actors as mediators in negotiating peace

In the last few years, external actors such as other states, international organization and even non-governmental organizations have assumed a central role in conflict resolution. Usually, to bring two conflicting parties to the table of negotiations and dialogue, mediators are assigned to help facilitate the process, as a third party. The third party is usually considered to be neutral to the conflict. It gets mandated to facilitate a dialogue to help both parties involved in the conflict find common ground through dialogue and peace. Depending on the case, the third party could either be assigned by the United Nations, such as in the case of the Cold War regional organizations, such as the Arab League in the case of the Syrian war (Tetsuro, 2017:83), or by a political union such as European Union in the negotiation

between Kosovo and Serbia. However, navigating such a delicate situation requires fulfilling both parties' interests in negotiations while maintaining neutrality and credibility. This is an uneasy process and often takes a long time to produce the first tangible results.

According to Simon A. Mason, various phases are central to the analysis of mediation and facilitation in peace processes, such as pre-negotiation phase, a negotiation phase and the implementation phase (Mason, 2007:6). In each of these phases of mediating a conflict, different people may be assigned both specific and different roles. In all these phases, the mediation team is central in ensuring a safe space for conversations, sharing of ideas and aspirations, and in understanding what each party is looking to get out of the negotiation process.

Depending on the conflict being mediated, the role of mediators may differ: however, as a first step, the role of mediators is to facilitate the parties in entering into the pre-negotiation phase. "Pre-negotiation begins when one or more parties considers negotiations as a policy option and communicate this intention to other parties. It ends when the parties agree to formal negotiation" (Zartman, 1989:4). This step is crucial for the mediators as it prepares the way for negotiations by gauging on the willingness of the conflicted parties to sit together and dialogue.

The role of mediators continually changes and reshapes, depending on how the talks between parties develop and the willingness of the conflicted parties to dive deeper into the process (Sidbe, 2020:46). After the parties have agreed to talk, the second phase of the process surfaces: negotiation. This phase is crucial for the negotiators and the most difficult phase, as the conflicted parties will use bargaining to take advantage of the negotiations, while the negotiators' main focus is on solving the problem that the parties are facing. Bargaining gets into the heart of many negotiations, as parties may use manipulation, total destabilization, or any other approach to achieve their goals in the negotiations (Sidbe, 2020:48). The role of the

negotiators at this point is to drive the negotiation toward a problem-solving paradigm and not allow the process to shift toward a bargaining approach.

As we can see, from ensuring that the parties agree to sit together, dialogue, and negotiate, the role of negotiators becomes more difficult as the interests of the parties involved begin to surface. However, assuming that the negotiations are successful and the conflicted parties have agreed on a legally binding deal, the third phase of the process begins: implementation (Molloy, Bell, 2019:1).

The implementation phase often needs a great deal of “muscle”, often external military power in the form of peace support operations, to enforce what has been agreed to in the peace agreement (Mason, 2007:5). For example, the UN peacekeeping operation (UNPROFOR) which were sent to Bosnia and Herzegovina, or the KFOR mission in Kosovo. However, peaceful military interventions are not always the case. Peace agreements can support their own implementation by establishing or mandating implementation bodies. Implementation bodies, broadly understood, involve established bodies or ad hoc bodies and actors, mandated by peace agreements to support efforts to translate peace agreement provisions from paper to practice (Molloy, Bell, 2019:2). For example, in Mozambique in 1992, the General Peace Agreement for Mozambique established a commission which was mandated to take on necessary steps, within a specific timeline for proper implementation of the agreement (see art.5). The role of the negotiators in the process is again crucial, as they serve as the third party who is in charge of ensuring that what conflicted parties have previously agreed, is in fact being implemented. For example, in Bosnia, a Police Task Force was established at the London Conference in 1995 to monitor the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement.

It is important to note that the specific roles played by external actors as mediators can vary depending on the context of the conflict. Moreover, the role of mediators and negotiators as external actors is pivotal in ensuring a successful process of mediation, all the way from pre-negotiation to the implementation of the agreement. While maintaining credibility and

building trust with the conflicted parties, mediators possess a range of skills, including diplomacy, problem-solving, and in some cases, cultural sensitivity.

3.3 Challenges of external-led conflict resolution process

Externally led conflict resolution process is a complex process, facing a range of challenges and obstacles. The complexity of the process varies, depending on the case, but it is safe to say that the assigned mediators to facilitate the conflict between two parties “are in for a long run” in addressing each challenge carefully. The process of mediation centers on the identification of incompatibilities and is about not only understanding the stated incompatibility between the parties, but also seeking alternative solutions to it (Eriksson, Kostić, 2013:13).

To do so, the externally-led conflict resolution process faces challenges such as lack of trust, limited influence, complex dynamics and multiple actors, power imbalances, cultural and contextual sensitivity, complexity in duration, and resource constraints. A critical example to showcase the complexity of the process is the process the current process of negotiations between Kosovo and Serbia, which officially begun in 2011, led by the European Union. To date, this process has only produced one legal agreement which both parties implement only partially and continue to refuse the full implementation. The process required a reengagement of the European Union to continue the dialogue on the implementation of the agreement.

A conflict resolution process generally faces a number of challenges. First, many conflict resolution processes suffer from a lack of trust. The lack of trust can be between the conflicted parties, or directed towards the mediator and their team. Whatever the case may

be, when mistrust surfaces, the hardship of conflict resolution process increases. Trust is fundamental in the success of the conflict resolution process, and many external-led conflict resolution processes spend much time and effort at the beginning to build the trust among the conflicted parties, and show clear impartiality (Diudbe Sadibe, 2020:45).

Second, an external-led conflict resolution process may begin to show first tangible results when the assigned mediation team has the ability to exert influence on the conflicted parties. The exertation of influence may vary, depending on the institution that the mediators team are representing, or country. The most common way of exerting influence is through sanctions, such as the case of economic sanctions imposed in Kosovo from European Union during the Kosovo-Serbia dialogue in 2023. When exerting influence over the conflicting parties is not possible, the mediators' ability to compel the parties to engage in negotiations and agreement may be limited. When the mediator has no leverage towards the conflicted parties, they may easily be losing legitimacy by one or both parties, and at the same time the conflicted parties may receive no interest in engaging in this type of negotiations (Reid, 2017:1403). For example, as the Report of Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Center from 2013 states that, in 2012 the Norwegian government offered 60 million Euro of development funds for the Karen people (Burmal), which bolstered the negotiations between Kareni guerrillas and the Burmese government.

Third, an essential element in the conflict resolution process is the involvement of many different actors, interests, and agendas in that particular conflict, as they bring a different set of perspectives, interests, possibilities and challenges. In some cases, all the actors involved may be looking for the same thing, in some cases they may be looking for different outcome. An external-led process may struggle to engage all the different actors, stakeholder and interests in the process, which may lead to disagreements among the actors involved that in one way or another may have an impact on the overall process of conflict resolution. This challenged is also referenced as “coherent dilemma” (Paris, Sisk, 2007:6).

Fourth, power imbalances. It goes without saying that the conflict resolution process becomes extra hard when the conflicted parties are imbalance in terms of the power (Qtaishat, 2018:77). This can pose a significant challenge to the conflict resolution process and the mediators. Parties with greater power, such as military, economy, and other resources, may be less interested and motivated to engage in a negotiation process. In some cases, bigger powers may use the conflict resolution process to their advantage as they can assert dominance through leverage, such as the example of Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962 between the United States and the Soviet Union. Ensuring the power balance in conflict resolution process is in check, is an extremely difficult but an important factor that the external-led conflict resolution process needs to take into consideration in each process.

Fifth, some conflict resolution processes have to carefully navigate the complexities of cultural and contextual sensitivity, and this may pose a significant amount of challenge to the mediators' team, if they are not much aware of the cultural differences in this particular context. The lack of cultural sensitivity in the conflict resolution process can hinder effective communication and have a significant impact on the trust-building process. A great example of this is Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the conflicted parties were coming from three different cultural and religious backgrounds, so the inability to understand those cultural and religious contexts can limit the mediator's ability to find mutually acceptable solutions.

Sixth, a threat to a successful externally led conflict resolution process may be the duration of the process itself. Given that conflict resolution processes are inherently complex and in most of the cases they take a long time to achieve the first meaningful results, the external actors involved in mediation need to be prepared for a full engagement throughout the entire duration. In addition to being prepared in such long process, the mediators face another important challenge which is to sustain engagement and momentum among the conflicted parties over the time of the conflict resolution process (Zartman, 2008:1). Lastly, conflict resolution require a significant amount of resources invested in the process, such as human, financial, time, and logistical support. As some of the conflict resolution processes are long in duration, the external actors may face resource constraints over time, which impedes the

effectiveness of the process, hence posing a significant challenge for the mediators team in the process. As Paris suggests, “Few donor countries or international organizations are willing to “sign up” for more than a few years of statebuilding in any given country (Paris, Sisk, 2007:5).

Addressing the challenges outlined above requires an adaptive approach from the external factors in order to overcome the obstacles that arise. While the conflicted parties navigate their interests into the negotiations process, the challenges of the externally led conflict resolution may go beyond that. Apart from finding a suitable and acceptable solution for the parties involved, the mediators also have to tackle each and every challenge that arises at the spot.

Chapter 4: Liberal peace – challenges and possibilities in state-building

Following the end of the Cold War, peacebuilding operations were intimately associated with liberal foreign and international policies (Richmond, Visoka, 2021:32). The philosophy that was mainly followed in working with conflicted areas around the world was based on liberal principles and practices, which focus on democratization of the society and institutions, rule of law and the open market economy. However, the assumptions that the best way to consolidate peace is to transform war-shattered states into market democracies – has been more problematic than anticipated (Paris, 1997:73).

As for the liberal approach to peace, democracy and rule of law may seem to be the most sensible solution to countries which are facing conflict or experiencing unrest and installing a democratic system of governing within a society can help organize a political, social and economic life. Establishment of democratic institutions, which are led by political entities chosen by majority, and are in power to demonstrate commitment in policing fairness, justice and equality for every member of society are of utmost important for the liberal approach to state-building. In addition, country’s ability to organize fair and democratic elections which would lead to the establishment of democratic institutions play a crucial role in ensuring that the country is on the right path of ensuring power-sharing and power-transition between

political entities, hence providing the political freedom for changes and decision making. The essence of democracy is linked to individual human rights, and by providing all individuals and groups rights and peace, we foster development in a country, such as the case of Albania, Romania, Bulgaria, Poland and many other Eastern and Southern European countries which transition to democracy in the last century. Ensuring individual and group human rights, is also linked to the ability of the society or individuals within the society to choose and be chosen, to express opinions freely, possess freedom of religion, citizenship, voting rights, personal property, and more. In contrast, according to liberal approach, dictatorship, generates political resistance among population (Richmond, Visoka, 2021:32). Based on the liberal approach to state-building, the introduction of democracy promises conflicted countries with peaceful means to express their differences and prosper, as individuals gain more rights and the power among political entities is clearly divided.

Secondly, the liberal approach to peacebuilding is connected to open market, as a foundation for peace and economic growth. Relying on free trade, competition and open market economy, post-conflicted countries are exposed with an opportunity to fight poverty, increase economic growth and material satisfaction. The opportunity to compete in an open economy opens many doors to prosperity, development and growth, both on the individual and the societal level. This is true for both nationally and internationally. Through open economy and free trade, individuals and groups are able to extend their access to wider societies, in some cases pushing the boundaries of borders through economic exchange. The opportunity to extend the reach of free trade across borders provides with further growth, which in return, reduces the interest of countries and societies to initiate or participate in international wars or conflicts, as they destabilize the trading, hence impacting the economic growth. An important example of this policy are members of the European Union, who benefit from the union's policies of free trade and economic exchange in order to export their products and services to a way bigger market and an increased competition. In the European Union members' case, the open economy beyond borders facilitated both economic growth and a reduced interest for conflicts and political unrests, which may disturb those channels of exchanges. On the other hand, poverty produces social unrest and conflicts over scarce resources (Richmond,

Visoka, 2011:32). The inability of the country to prosper economically, may lead to different societal dissatisfactions, lack of quality services, and poverty. An example of a successful peace-building and economic growth is Rwanda with an increased GDP by nearly 70 percent between 1994 and 2007 (UNDP Report on Crisis Prevention and Recovery, 2008). Fighting poverty with economic growth, according to liberal approach, fosters development, therefore, decreasing the interest for conflicts.

Thirdly, the liberal approach to state-building and peace-building is connected to human rights and the rule of law within a country or society. By recognizing individual human rights, such as the right to life, freedom of expression, freedom from discrimination, freedom of religious expression, freedom of movement, equality, security and more, democratic societies address individual and group needs, and thus ensure respect for all individuals. The recognition of civil and political rights in liberal states ensured respect for all individuals, and the rule of law provided a peaceful avenue for addressing grievances and instilling respect for all human beings (Boutros-Ghali, 1996). In contrary, the lack of respect for human rights and rule of law may fuel internal conflicts, as individuals and groups may be target of violation and hence create situations of unrest within a society. For example, the conflicts in the Global South were often fueled by traditional cultures based on religious, ethnic, and political hatred vilifying and dehumanizing enemies and thus paving the way for brutality, violence and war (David, 1992-1993:136-138; Haass, 2003:145). The codification of the above-mentioned human individual and group rights, ensuring individual freedoms and rights are crucial to liberal approach to state-building and peace-building, as they provide a platform for the individuals and groups to thrive, be respected and protected within a society, hence, incentivize development.

However, the challenge of this approach is connected to the results which it has produced in the past, such as the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina, where tensions seem to be reemerging almost three decades after the war, and the country is economically underperforming with some big migration crises. Although the process of state-building and peace-building in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina was rooted in the principles of liberal approach, the current reemergence of tensions in the country highlight important elements where the liberal

approach to peace-building may be limited in relation to some cases. As Paris argues, it is important to gain a better understanding of why the existing peacebuilding paradigm has generated destabilizing side effects in war-shattered states (Paris, 1997:73). To understand this better, the next chapter will dive deeper into the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina, by providing an overview of the conflict, the international intervention using the liberal approach, the conflict resolution process and the affects that this entire process had in today's socio-economic development of the country.

Chapter 5: The long-term impact of conflict resolution in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Since the 1995 Dayton Peace Agreement, Bosnia has been undergoing a process of internationally imposed democratization. This process has been implemented by the major international powers, including the US, Britain, France, Germany and Russia, under the co-ordination of the Peace Implementation Council. The plans drawn up by this body have then been implemented by leading international institutions, such as the UN, NATO, OSCE, Council of Europe, IMF, World Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, under their own mandates, creating a network of regulating and policy-making bodies (Chandler, 2007:10).

The impact of the conflict resolution process in Bosnia and Herzegovina can be viewed from different perspectives, such as timing, approaches, institutions and countries involved, resources invested and the caliber of mediators who became involved in the process. In addition, the complexity of conflict resolution process may depend also the historical order of events and how they unfolded within a specific context. In the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina, my main focus will be to investigate and understand the liberal approach that was utilized during the conflict resolution process. To better understand the challenges and possibilities of liberal approach in peace-building and state-building, I will dive deeper in our case study, Bosnia and Herzegovina. As mentioned in chapter one, Bosnia and Herzegovina is a unique case in investigating how focus on democratization of institutions, rule of law and open economy has had an impact in the present state of development of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and if this process is in anyway linked with the current rising tensions in the country.

5.1 Brief overview of the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and root causes

Bosnia and Herzegovina is a country located in the Western Balkans, which is still recovering from the war that broke out in 1992 and ended with the Dayton Agreement signed in the United States in 1995. Surrounded by Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia, the history of Bosnia and Herzegovina extends back to the Roman conquest of the region, and later on, the area of Bosnia and Herzegovina would become part of the Byzantine Empire in the sixth century. In the 14th century, as the Ottoman Empire extends its conquest in the Balkans, the area of Bosnia and Herzegovina became part of the Turkish rule, until late 19th century. With the fall of Ottoman Empire, in 1878, Bosnia and Herzegovina was placed under the Austrian-Hungarian rule, until the beginning of the World War I. The beginning of World War I is marked in Sarajevo, when Gavrilo Princip (a Bosnian student) assassinated the Austrian Franz Ferdinand in 1914. During the World War II, Bosnia and Herzegovina was annexed by pro-Hitler Croatian state, to later join the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

In the aftermath of the World War II, six republics from the Balkans, including Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia and two autonomous regions, Kosovo and Vojvodina became part of the People's Republic of Yugoslavia, a communist Republic that was led by Josip Broz Tito. Tito has half Croatian and half Slovenian.

Although the communist federation was composed by six republics, and two autonomous regions that were ethnically, historically and religiously different, Tito's regime was able to hold them together under one communist republic. In Yugoslavia, Bosnia and Herzegovina symbolized ethnic mix, coexistence, and a multiculturalist stance and was promoted as an example of so-called 'brotherhood and unity', a highly endorsed slogan and ideology, which was related to the construction of a multi-ethnic Yugoslavia (Lozic, 2015:312). Following Tito's death in 1980, and the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and in the Balkans,

the republics of Yugoslavia begun their journeys of independence. In the meantime, Slobodan Milošević rose to power as the leader of Socialist Party and Yugoslavia. Through nationalistic ideology, Milošević deliberately created ethnic conflicts between ethnicities in Yugoslavia, particularly among Croats, Serbs and Bosnians. The first republic to leave the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was Slovenia, which declared independence in September 1989. The next few months after the separation, there was a tension between Slovenia and the government of Yugoslavia “which was becoming increasingly dominated by Serbia and its leader Slobodan Milošević” (King, 2003:236). Following Slovenia, in 1991 Croatia declared its independence from the Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia. However, the declaration of independence of Croatia was far less simple than the independence of Slovenia. The creation of the new Croatian Republic alarmed the Serbian leadership, who in return, sent military forces in the region of Croatia that was populated by Serbians. Open war broke out in summer 1991, and the brutality of the struggle came to be symbolized by the fight of Vukovar from September to November 1991 (King, 2003:237). The ethnical tensions that were raised within Yugoslavia produced a negative effect on the social life of the ethnicities who were sharing a country in the past. Given the demographics of the country, the conflicts based on ethnicities severely affected Bosnia and Herzegovina, whose population was composed of Bosnians, Serbians and Croats. The construction of Bosnia and Herzegovina identity was permeated by two competing narratives, namely Bosnia and Herzegovina ‘as a symbol of a united Yugoslavia’, on the one hand, and the claim of ‘a unique cultural heritage distinct from the neighboring states of Serbia and Croatia’, on the other hand (Alić, Gusheh, 1999: 12). The raise of tensions between Croats, Serbs and Bosnians on the federation level, is believed to be on the main causes of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, the war in Croatia is also believed to have had an impact on the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. First, at the highest political levels, both Milosevic and Trudjman (president of Croatia) were flexible in tactics and goals (King, 2003:237). Secondly, the fighting in Croatia transformed the Yugoslav People’s Army from a multiethnic force fighting for a federal Yugoslavia to a pro-Serb force that supported Miliesvic’s agenda for a greater Serbia (Silber, Little, 1996:171-175).

In 1992, following the rise of the Greater Serbia expansion within Yugoslavia, Bosnia and Herzegovina held a referendum for independence from Yugoslavia. According to Marie-

Joëlle Zahar, “the 1992 referendum was boycotted by a majority of Serbs but with a turnout of 63.4% of voters of whom 99.7% voted yes, Bosnia and Herzegovina declared independence on 3 March 1992” (Zahar, 2019:4). The declaration of independence marks the official separation of Bosnia and Herzegovina from the Federation of Yugoslavia, which had started to dissolve already with the separation of Slovenia and Croatia. The independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina alarmed the Serbian leadership in Belgrade, who in return organized the “siege of Sarajevo in April 1992” through the Serbian community in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which marked the beginning of the war (Zahar, 2019:5).

“The Siege of Sarajevo resulted in over 11,000 people killed, of which 1,600 were just children” (Report by Remembering Srebrenica), and it lasted for over four years.

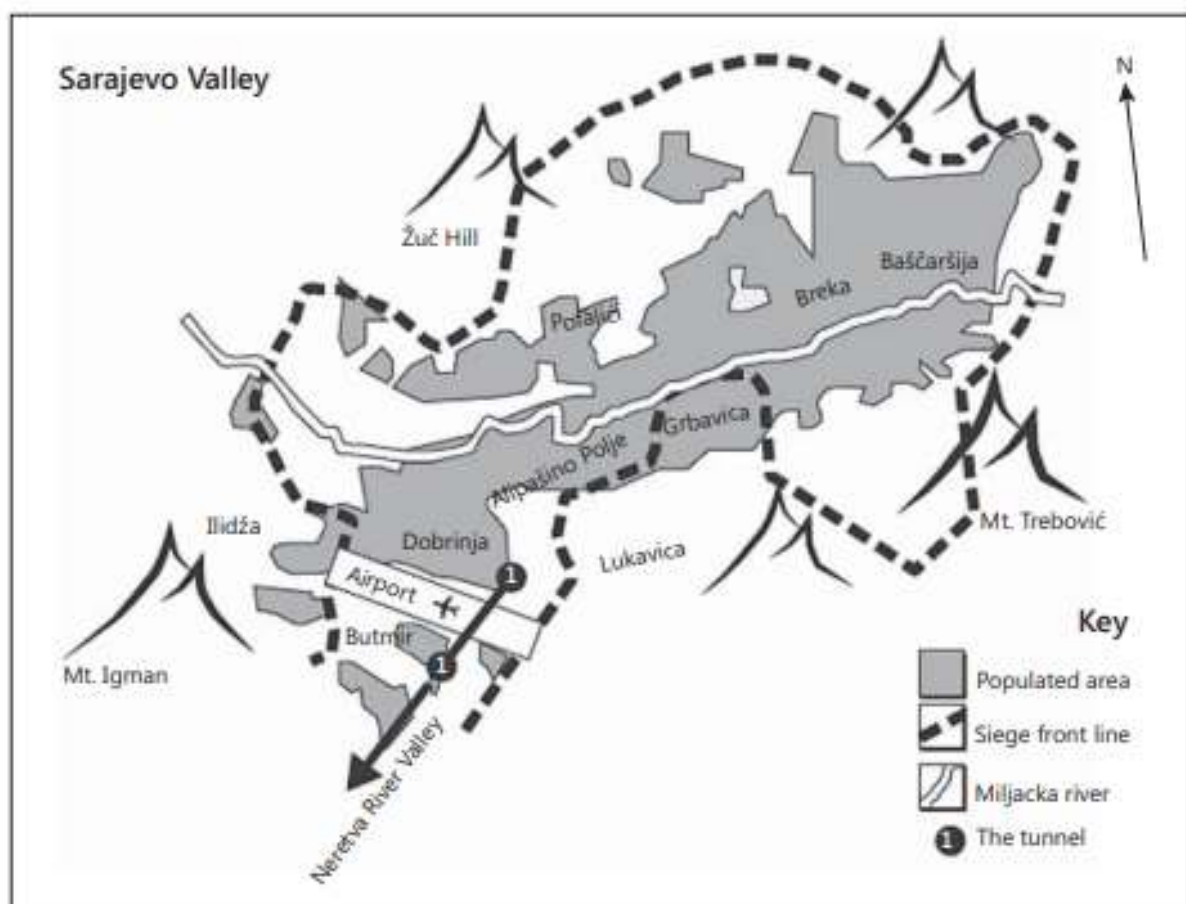


Fig. 1. *Sarajevo under siege 1992–1995. For almost four years, citizens of Sarajevo lived under daily siege imposed by the Army of Republika Srpska. The above map depicts Sarajevo valley, the populated area of the city, and the surrounding enemy positions (Lucić, 2016: 90).*

The siege was followed by the Serbian Army's systematic invasion of Bosnia and Herzegovina in close cooperation with the Bosnian-Serb community in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Yugoslav People's Army (JNA), which had officially left Bosnia and Herzegovina after the referendum, occupied the eastern parts of the country and claimed the control of strategic points (Filipov, 2006: 25). They persecuted, killed, and displaced thousands of Bosnians over the course of four years. The war in Bosnia and Herzegovina is considered to be the most brutal tragedies of modern Europe since the end of World War II. The Bosnia Muslims were subject to many crimes against humanity purely based on ethnicity and religious differences.

The Bosnian war and genocide resulted in close to 100,000 civilians killed, over 2 million people forcibly displaced, and between 20,000-50,000 women systematically raped, all due to their ethnic and religious identity. (Report by Remembering Serbrenca).

The war in Bosnia lasted until August 1995 (Zahar, 2019:5). The end of the war is marked after Bosnia's President Alija Izetbegović, Croatian President Franjo Tudjman, and the President of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia Slobodan Milošević agreed on the terms of the General Framework Agreement for Peace, known as the Dayton Peace Agreement. However, the road to peace which was concluded by the Dayton Peace Agreement was a long process, which included an incredible amount of challenges, resources and international institutions involved. The process as such was complex, as the war had produced many casualties, both on the human level as well as material, impacting the society of Bosnia and Herzegovina in economic, social, cultural and psychological levels. Today, Bosnia and Herzegovina continues to face the challenges inherited from the past, including

ethnic unrest and economic prosperity. On the other hand, however, the country is continuously thriving to ensure democratic values, rule of law and is committed to integration of the country into European Union, with the hope to become a contributor to peace, stability and development of the region.

5.2 Strategic Peacebuilding, International intervention and the Dayton Peace Agreement

Strategic peacebuilding in Bosnia and Herzegovina refers to the intentional and coordinated efforts to establish and sustain peace, promote reconciliation, and support long-term development in the country. It involves a comprehensive approach to conflict resolution that integrates many aspects of social, political, and economic life, including reconciliation, institutional reforms, economic development, and international cooperation and diplomacy.

When exploring the conflict resolution process in Bosnia and Herzegovina, one can say that the liberal approach to peacebuilding has indeed been successful, as its efforts to stop the war and the aggression between the ethnicities in Bosnia and Herzegovina have seen the light. Between 1992 and 1995, there have been a series of talks, approaches and tries to bring the conflicted parties into the table of dialogue that would eventually stop the fighting and bring about peace in the country. These efforts culminated with the Dayton Peace Agreement, which provided a framework for peace, collaboration between ethnicities, and the political intuition and functionality of the country. The main question of Dayton negotiations was conflict resolution and preservation of an independent and functional state of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Korkut, Mulalic, 2009:110).

The road to reaching the Dayton Peace Agreement, which officially ended the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina was a bumpy one. Several months after the outbreak of war, the international community began its peace initiatives, starting with sanctions. Many peace initiatives were introduced prior to the Dayton Peace Agreement (Korkut, Mulalic, 2009:119). It started with the “growing concern of violence, so the international community provoked peace talks in London in August 1992, initiated by UK foreign secretary, David Owen, and US secretary of state Cyrus Vance” (Filipov, 2006:25). The Vance-Owen peace plan proposed that Bosnia-Herzegovina should be organized as a decentralized state of three constituent peoples with ten provinces, the special status of Sarajevo and a loose central

government (Korkut, Mulalic, 2009:110). In practical terms, Bosnia and Herzegovina was divided into cantons, based on ethnicity of people living in each region. In terms of political governance, the Bosniaks and Croats were represented as the majority in the country with 51%, whereas Serbs were considered the second constitutional group, with 49% (Filipov, 2006:26). The division based on ethnicity was proposed and agreed on the Dayton Agreement, as the United States and European countries had to intervene and facilitate this agreement due to the human catastrophes and infrastructural damages the conflicted parties were causing.

5.2.1 An overview of The Dayton Peace Agreement

The Dayton Peace Agreement introduced a complex political and institutional structure, where the power is shared along ethnic lines. An example of this complexity is the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is shared among the three nationalities (Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs), giving life to a new model of presidency governing in the country. The Dayton Peace Agreement outlines a few important general obligations, such as military aspects, regional stabilization, inter-entity boundary line, elections, constitution, human rights, refugees and displaced persons, preserving of monuments, public corporations, civilian implementation and international Police Task Force.

On military aspect, the agreement regulates the international peacekeeping presence in the country through a NATO mission. The establishment of the multinational military implementation force (IFOR), led by NATO, will provide support in cessation of hostilities and ensure that neither entity, under no circumstances will use armed force against each other. As a first step into the peace process, the establishment of the internationally led peacekeeping mission is provided to ensure stability, protection and monitor the peace and the implementation of the peace accords. In addition, the annex on military aspects highlights the urgent need of withdrawal of Foreign Forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina, whether or not they are legally subordinated to the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina or Republika

Srbska. The annex on regional stabilization highlights the importance of the conflicted parties agreeing on enhancing mutual confidence and reduce the risk of conflict under the 1994 Vienna Document of the Negotiations and Confidence – and Security-Building Measures of the OSCE. This annex restricts the conflicted parties of military deployments in different geographical areas, restraints them from the reintroduction of foreign forces, restricts locations of heavy weapons and obliges the parties to notify certain planned military activities and special operations, in addition to the identification of weapons manufacturing capabilities.

The inter-boundary line annex regulates the boundary between the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska, Rivers, delineation and marking, arbitration for the Brcko Area and transition were regulated in this annex, were parties agreed to create local commissions, composed by each ethnicity in ensuring the implementation of the agreement. On the annex of elections, the agreement outlines a number of regulations, mandates of commission, international observations of elections, timelines, and more. This annex highlight the importance of creating a neutral environment for the organization of free and fair elections, and how the parties should establish an environment that is free from intimidation and enforces the right to vote. The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) was mandated to supervise, prepare and monitor the elections in the country. It was within the right of OSCE to assess whether the conditions to organize fair and democratic elections are met. In addition, this annex regulated a variety of election commissions, their compositions and mandates, in addition to highlighting the eligibility and criteria of voters.

The constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, driving from the Dayton Peace Agreement constitutes the country as a democratic state, with three constituent peoples (Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs) and with a clear outline of institutions and power sharing between each ethnicity. The annex on constitution established the official name of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and it highlighted the importance of the country becoming e member state of the United Nations. In addition, it regulated the democratic principles, movements of good and capital the citizenship. As for the citizenship, this annex allows the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina to hold the citizenship of another state, hence respecting the ethnic diversity that the country

has. Besides highlighting the responsibilities of the entities towards the constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, this annex regulated the power sharing among ethnicities, presidency (where the federation consists of three members of presidency, one Bosnian, one Serb and one Croat), and procedures for establishing house of peoples, house of representatives, council of ministers, committees, constitutional court, and central bank.

The annex on arbitration obliged the conflicted parties to respect and honor the obligations set forth in the Agreed Basic Principles adopted at Geneva Convention, such as engaging in binding arbitration to resolve disputes and to design and implement a system of arbitration for the solution of disputes. The human rights annex outlines basic human rights to be respected in the country, driven by democratic values. This annex regulates the fundamental rights and freedoms and establishes procedures and institutions that will be created to reinforce the commitment to protect human rights of people of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It regulates the creation of the human rights Ombudsman and their jurisdiction, the human rights chamber and their jurisdiction, and the adaptation of international Human Rights Agreements.

The annex on refugees and displaced persons established a process of displaced persons to freely return to their homes of origin and restore their properties. All refugees and displaced persons were given the right and provided the security to return to their homes and restore their belongings that they owned prior to the conflict, without risk of harassment, intimidation or discrimination based on their ethnic origin, religious belief or political stance. The conflicted parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina, through this annex agreed to undertake the creation of suitable conditions for return and provide all possible assistance, including financial, for the people who voluntarily decide to return to their home. This article emphasis the cooperation with International Organizations, mainly UNHCR, led by the Secretary General of the United Nations which would coordinate all the agencies involved in assisting the repatriation and relief of the refugees and displaced persons. An important element on this annex is related to the amnesty, where any returning refugee or displaced person charged with a crime (other than violation of humanitarian law as defined in the Statute of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia) enjoys amnesty upon return. The annex

regulates and mandates different commissions who will be in charge of coordinating and monitoring the returning of the refugees and displaced persons – a commission which would be shared among all ethnicities in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The annex on preserving national monuments regulated procedures, commissions and mandates on preservation of historical facts of the country. It established a commission which was composed by five members (two coming from the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, one from Republika Srpska and two members would be appointed by the director general of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization). The annex regulated the staffing, expenses, mandates and procedures that the commission should follow in carrying out the duties of preserving national monuments in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Similarly, the annex on corporations established procedures and hierarchy for reconstruction and preserving of national wealth. Bearing in mind the reconstruction of the country, this annex established the commission for Public Corporations to jointly facilitate the operation of public corporations such as energy, postal, utility and communications. This commission was also composed by five members, two coming from the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, one from Republika Srpska and the remaining two members would be appointed by the President of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. The mission of the commission was to examine the appropriate structures of public corporations and ensure that they have the necessary conditions for a successful and permanent operation.

On the civilian implementation annex, the agreement outlines an international hierarchy of supervision from the UN agencies representatives, their mandates, duties and capacities, in addition to humanitarian aid management. Given the complexity of rehabilitation, economic reconstruction and reconciliation, this annex established the designation of a High Representative, which is appointed by the United Nations Security Council resolution, in order to facilitate, coordinate and mobilize activities of the international agencies involved in carrying out the peace settlements in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This annex outlined the mandate of the High Representative, which was mainly connected in ensuring that the agreement is being implemented by all parties, coordinate activities of international agencies, coordinate international donors, work in close cooperation with IFOR, and establish Joint

Civilian Comissions at the local levels, if necessary. The High Representative, according to this annex is considered the highest authority in regards to interpretation of the Dayton Peace Agreement, particularly on the civilian implementation of the peace settlement.

Lastly, the International Police Force is established to oversee the overall implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement. To assist the local authorities and the High Representative, the International Police Force was established by United Nations Security Council with an extensive role in regards to monitoring, observing and inspecting law enforcement, advising law enforcements personnel, training law enforcement personnel, assess threats to public order, assist the local enforcement personnel in carrying out law enforcement missions, and more. A particular responsibility assigned to this force was to ensure the social conditions for free and fair elections, and ensure the safety and protection of international personnel in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

While in theory, the framework for establishing a functional and democratic state of Bosnia and Herzegovina, involving all ethnicities, may seem like a perfect scenario, what becomes obvious from the Dayton Peace Agreement is the lack of depth regarding the actual socio-economic recovery of the country. Disarmament, infrastructure, social and cultural life and much more are at stake for rebuilding as part of the external-led conflict resolution process. While the Dayton Agreement aimed at the stimulation of rapid and complete recovery by suggesting policies of social mobility (all members of the territory were allowed to move freely within the two political entities), economic revival, and political consolidation, on the other hand, it lacks to provide a framework for rebuilding the educational system of the country, for example (Filipov, 2006:26). Nor these efforts, nor the commitments are outlined on the Dayton Agreement. Given the division of the country along the ethnic lines, Bosnia and Herzegovina suffers from an unintegrated education system where Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs undergo through parallel educational systems, hence, creating a gap within the education sector of post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina. Furthermore, Bosnia and Herzegovina with its fewer than four million people has 14 different governmental levels such as the state

level, two entities – Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Republic of Srpska, 10 cantons, one district, and a municipality level.



Fig. 2. *Geopolitical Composition of Bosnia and Herzegovina (S-RM Intelligence and Risk Consulting, 2021:14).*

In addition, there is a growing sense of division being born by the Dayton Agreement itself, just as Paddy Ashdown noted the continuing friction between politicians from the three main ethnic groups who have “used the Dayton Agreement not to build peace, but to continue the pursuit of their war aims” (Morrison, 2009:8). The significance of an external-led conflict resolution process does not end with peace or the achievement of peace. Even when peace is secured through concessions on both sides regarding the future political and economic status of the parties, rarely any effort is made towards a long-term halt of hostilities that would lead

to a thorough recovery of the post-conflict area (Filipov, 2006:12). In fact, concrete efforts, inflow of international aid and foreign expertise prove crucial for war-torn societies in their attempt to finalize conflict and create politically and economically stable societies by overcoming the struggles for power executed by the sides involved in the internal conflicts (Filipov, 2006:12).

The strategic peace-building in Bosnia and Herzegovina is an ongoing and complex process. This process requires sustained commitment and coordination among various stakeholders, internal and external, and the international community. From the historical context of the conflict resolution in Bosnia and Herzegovina, it becomes obvious that the frameworks and the strategies to stop the war and bring peace along the ethnicities have worked, and that the Dayton Agreement as the main instrument to stop the fighting has indeed worked. What also become obvious in the context of conflict resolution in Bosnia and Herzegovina is the insufficiency of post-war effective strategies that will play a significant role in country's socio-economic development. While dividing the country and the power along ethnic lines may have ended the fighting and satisfied the appetites of all ethnic groups, it has also created an almost dysfunctional state and governing system that rather depends on groups interests and coalitions than the future development of the entire Federation. Although Dayton Agreement partially facilitated the creation of a sustainable state, major ethnic groups that were involved in the conflict remained unwilling to form a functional state of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Schake, 1999:281).

5.3 Conflict resolution beyond immediate peace and the connection to today's reemergence of tensions in Bosnia and Herzegovina

At the end of the war, the economic situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina was dire. The World Bank estimated that total war damages came to US\$50–70 billion (Guevara, 2009:9). These numbers are unfavorable for Bosnia and Herzegovina, and it should take the country years

and decades to fully recover economically. The war destroyed the economy and infrastructure in the country, causing production to fall by 80 per cent from 1992-1995 and unemployment to soar (Labour and Employment Agenca, 2011). Besides the physical damages, Bosnia and Herzegovina was brutally damaged by the loss of human life and human capital. Over 100,000 people have lost their lives over the course of four years, and more than two million people have fled the country and never returned, either because they couldn't or because they simply refused to go back to the ruins of the war. Even more than twenty years after the fall of Yugoslavia, Bosnia and Herzegovina is still dealing with a dual economic challenge: first, it has to cope with the consequences of the Bosnian War, and secondly it has to finish its transition from socialism and its centrally-planned economy to a market economy (Kivimäki, Kramer, Pasch, 2012:50).

The international intervention in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been dominated by two types of strategies: operative and conditional-structural ones (Richter 2009: 94-96). Operative strategies are direct forms of interference or project implementation by international actors (Guevara, 2009:13). The advantages of direct forms of interferences is that they facilitate critical reforms and institution-building, which in many cases either are delayed or don't happen at all due to the unwillingness of local actors to act. On the other hand, a disadvantage of the operative strategy is that they are very pragmatic in figuring out solutions to the problems of institution building, and they may not always take into the consideration the cultural sensitivity context. By contrast, the conditional-structural strategy, are based on the premise of the existence of rational actors which can be influenced by conditionalities—that is, tying specific reform demands to aid, loans or aspired memberships, incentives and monitoring, as long as they are also provided with capacity through transfers of knowledge and technologies (Guevara, 2009:14). The “stick and carrot” approach has been widely used in Bosnia and Herzegovina, especially by the European Union, to push forward reforms and implement strategies as part of the European Union accession, although mainly focused on institutional building, rule of law and fighting corruption. It is of the utmost significance to highlight how the dominated strategies to reconciliation in Bosnia and Herzegovina have a common denominator, which is the focus on institutional building and economic recovery to sustain a long-term peace. However, what seems to be missing on both dominant strategies is

the actual reconciliation of the Bosnian society after a devastating war. The liberal peace seeks to put in place instrumental arrangements that will lead not to a more equitable distribution of resources or power within a society or the settling of fostering difference, but instead to the institutionalization of the appearance of political equity and the promise of economic opportunity (Lipschutz, 1998:14).

The complexity of the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina goes beyond institutionalisation and state-building as conflict resolution mechanisms of peace. The ethnic divisions left behind from the war, the hate between the ethnicities and the dysfunctional society are a consequence of years of fighting, which needed greater attention during the conflict resolution process. The challenges raising from the conflict resolution process are surfacing in different levels, such as the integration of education, socio-economic development, increase of migration and political instability. The later has lately dominated the discourse, with the “increased secessionist positioning and rhetoric in Republika Srpska” (UNSC meeting on May 10). This rhetoric, mainly claimed by the President of Republika Srpska, Milorad Dodik, who is openly advocating and claiming that the entity separates itself from Bosnia and Herzegovina and joins Serbia. In fact, this rhetoric of Republika Srpska is not new, since the leadership of this entity since 2006 has been boycotting and blocking Bosnia and Herzegovina efforts to strengthen central institutions and democracy, such as the example of rejection of the High Representative. Things started to take a serious turn in June 2011, when Republika Srpska begun flirtation with a referendum as a reminder that Bosnia’s smaller entity still threatens the stability of the country and the Western Balkans (International Crisis Group Report, 2011:1). The referendum would have provided the Serb community in Bosnia and Herzegovina with an opportunity to walk out of the Bosnian institutions and potentially bring the country to the peak of tensions since the Dayton Peace Agreement was signed. To rejuvenate the tensions, on April 24, 2023 “a joint statement was signed by the ruling parties in Republika Srpska, which appears to be an action plan for secession (UNSC meeting on May 10). These steps taken by the leadership of the Republika Srpska have contributed to political tensions in the country, and the political instability, in addition to regaining international communities’ attention in the reemergence of tensions.

United States of America, for example, has already imposed sanctions on the Bosnian Serb leader, Milorad Dodik, for “significant corruption and destabilizing activities” (The Guardian, November 2021). These tensions are a direct attack to Bosnia and Herzegovina’s political stability and decades of investments from international community in ensuring long-term peace and state-building of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The current tensions in the country raise critical questions related to the success of liberal approach in ensuring long-term peace and stability of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

While building democratic institutions and ensuring power-sharing are of critical importance, not enough attention was paid to ensuring the reconciliation among ethnicities and coexistence. Today, Bosnia-Herzegovina remains deeply ethnically divided, as citizens prioritize their nationality and ethnicity over their citizenship to the state in the formation of their identity (Hunt, Durokovic, Radeljkovic, 2013:26). In fact, there is not a single annex on the Dayton Peace Agreement that speaks about approaches or ways to ensure reconciliation between deeply ethnically divided society of Bosnia and Herzegovina after the war. Identity-based conflict needs solid efforts at all levels of society that seek improvement of each sector, starting from political and economic stabilization to capacity building and establishment of civil society to refugee return and demographic recovery (Filipov, 2006:27). Since the short-term goals of political and economic stability and creation of power-sharing institutions have been achieved, the peacebuilding efforts are now directed to social development in order to meet the goals of long-term recovery (Filipov, 2006:27).

Socio-economic development after peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina is key for establishing stability, fostering reconciliation, reducing poverty, rebuilding trust, and preventing future conflicts. It is a vital component of the peacebuilding process, contributing to a resilient society, improved living standards, and a sustainable and prosperous future for the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Clearly, the effects of the conflict in the economy and the social development of Bosnia and Herzegovina are very unfavorable, and put the country into risks of other social and political problems such as violence, corruption and unrest. Billions of US dollars have been brought into the country after the war, in forms of aids to help rebuild the infrastructure or infuse the economy, however, even today Bosnia and Herzegovina remains

as one of the poorest countries in Europe. Bosnia and Herzegovina remains divided along ethnonationalist lines and fraught with economic issues (World Bank), and the peacebuilding agenda is now almost entirely devoid of legitimacy within Bosnian society.

Chapter 6: Concluding Remarks

To conclude, conflict resolution is a complex process of facilitating, mediating, negotiating, planning, and implementing – all in the name to stop the violence between the conflicted parties and facilitate a process of working and coexisting together. In many cases, conflict resolution process saves millions of lives and billions worth of dollars in damages, while in some other cases it may fail to do so. However, as pointed above, during the different phases of conflict resolution, the role of the mediators is adaptable, but what it really takes is effort and commitment from the conflicted parties to seriously engage in talks that would eventually help solve the problem between the parties. In our case, the case of conflict resolution in Bosnia and Herzegovina, we witness an extensive engagement of international actors to stop the war and the fighting, regardless of the costs. For some scholars this extensive engagement may have arrived a little late (after the Srebrenica genocide), for others this was part of the process of conflict resolution. The conflict resolution process in Bosnia and Herzegovina has faced various of challenges, most of them due to the political and cultural context of the conflict. While Bosnia and Herzegovina was desperately trying to get out of the Socialist Federation of Yugoslavia, it found itself in accepting an internal system that is not that different from the Federation they desperately wanted to leave. In addition, the religious and cultural diversity that is present in the country has both helped keep Bosnia and Herzegovina together during Yugoslavia, but it had a negative affect on the raising of the conflict. The process of conflict resolution in Bosnia and Herzegovina seems to have been mainly focused on putting an end to the conflict and bring peace in the country. From the first UN resolutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, to talks between western powers, to the draft of the Dayton Peace Agreement, it becomes obvious that the main strategy was to stop the conflict, by restructuring the governing bodies and the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The focus was to ensure inclusivity in every political body. By contrary, it has only changed timelines of crisis, because we see even today Bosnia and Herzegovina is living through threats of having autonomous parts declare independence from Sarajevo, such as Republika Srpska. The current reemergence of tensions attests to the fragility of these divisions, and the danger that they possess for the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

To answer the sub questions of this research, the following are important to highlight:

Firstly, from the historical context, Bosnia and Herzegovina became a victim of ethnic nationalism led by the Serbian leadership in the aftermath of Tito's death. This type of nationalism aimed to utilize the military resources and the political power of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to extend the influence of Serbians in the region, with the aim of creating a greater Serbia. In addition, the ethnic disagreements and fighting between the Serbian leaders and the leaders of Croatia, over the eastern part of Croatia, had a domino effect on the social cohesion of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is composed by Bosnian, Serbian and Croatian ethnic groups. The disturbance of the social cohesion, supported by nationalistic appetites for further extension of influence, brought Bosnia and Herzegovina to facing the most devastating war in modern Europe. While the protection of ethnicities in Bosnia and Herzegovina was the pretext, the underlying factor for the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina is the assertion of power, by both Serbia and Croatia. The first wanted to create a greater Serbia in the region, while the later possessed both political and economic aspiration towards Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the middle of this political turbulence and nationalistic appetites were the Bosniaks, who were forced to react in protection of their own cultural identity, national pride and protection of their own resources. The Bosniaks were looking to assert their right of choice for the future of their country, similar to the other republics of Yugoslavia, however, in return, they were faced with brutal opposition and violence. The brutality of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina resulted to 100.000 civilians killed, two million people displaced, between 20.000 – 50.000 women systematically raped, and a genocide. All this on the name of protection of ethnic groups, while the main bearer of the damages were the Bosniaks.

Secondly, the path to ensuring peace and reconciliation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, focusing on the liberal approach to peace-building, utilized by the west, has produced contradictory results. With different layers of public administration, power-sharing, inclusive electoral lists, and concrete governing systems on a country and federal level, Bosnia and Herzegovina

seems like a perfect organization of a society. However, the reality is quite different; Bosnia and Herzegovina is struggling politically, socially and economically because of the political system that was adapted after the war through the Dayton Peace Agreement. Given that nationalistic movements and appetites driven by political agendas have been the root causes to the conflict, the process of conflict resolution in Bosnia and Herzegovina focused exactly on satisfying those appetites. Disintegrated educational system, creation of Republika Srpska, and the equal division of power across the ethnic groups, has given Serbia and Croatia control over national decisions of Bosnia and Herzegovina and destabilizing power. In ensuring a democratic Bosnia and Herzegovina, with an open economy and respect of human rights, the strategies for conflict resolution in Bosnia and Herzegovina have overlooked the root causes of the conflict, and the historical brutality that the Bosniaks had to face because of nationalism proclaimed by their neighbours. In fact, the Dayton Peace Agreement appears to be an endowment to Serbia and Croatia for the atrocities caused to the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina, while the Bosniaks had to accept a deal that keeps their country alive. The liberal approach to conflict resolution, focusing on democratization, rule of law and open market economy seems to have provided insufficient results – because they lacked a crucial component of conflict resolution, which is the reconciliation. As a matter of fact, not a single annex on the Dayton Peace Agreement is dedicated to the reconciliation of the ethnic groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as a mechanism for a long-term peace and stability, but the focus is rather in creating a functional state that is inclusive but also exclusive. Exclusive because it equalized all the ethnic groups in the country in terms of decision making and power, regardless of the historical facts or the percentage of population. As ethnical divisions are still present, they reflect on the decisions and the governance of the institutional and country level, hence creating barriers for development and prosperity. These barriers go against the long-term peace and stability of Bosnia and Herzegovina, sufficing the issues of reconciliation that were not clearly addressed during the conflict resolution process.

Thirdly, there is a clear connection between the root causes of the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the process of conflict resolution to today's reemergence of tensions. As the Dayton Agreement failed to address the issue of reconciliation between ethnicities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, today we witness and a reemergence of a bitter and despicable language

being used on the political level to continue divide the Bosnian society. Mainly coming from the leadership of Republika Srbska, this language aims to exert political power and further divide the country. Furthermore, as mentioned above, the disintegrated education system in Bosnia and Herzegovina disables the opportunity for the Bosnian society to create a shared narrative of the past. In contrast, the ethnic groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina grow up learning historical facts about the past of the country from a bias perspective, hence increasing the probability to continue remaining disintegrated. It is important to highlight that besides the lack of reconciliation plan driving from the conflict resolution process, the decentralization of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the power sharing along the ethnic lines is linked with the current reemergence of tensions. With the creation of Republika Srbska as an entity with self-governing rights, and the veto power that has been given to all ethnic groups within the institutions of the country, it has enabled the government of Serbia to continue exert destabilizing power in the country, through the Serbian political parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This is not only having an affect on the socio-economic development of the country, but is threatening the long-term peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as Republika Srbska is publically declaring succession aspirations. Regardless of billions of dollars invested in the country in the form of foreign aid (\$15 billion according to World Bank), and almost three decades of political investment in stabilizing Bosnia and Herzegovina, the liberal peace approach to peace-building and state-building in Bosnia and Herzegovina has not been able to provide a long-term peace for the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

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