Reconsidering Dayton

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Much has been written about the political, theoretical and ideological consequences of the end of the Cold War. The downfall of the Soviet Union and dissolution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) signaled to many the so-called 'End of History' (Fukuyama 2006) and thus a new era for Western foreign policy and state interests. With the defeat of communism and an increasingly strong cosmopolitan human rights regime the liberal democratic state had emerged triumphant and declared fit to be exported into the world. But this was of course easier said than done.

The dissolution of the SFRY would essentially lead to wars in the majority of its former federal territories. But, while Croatian and Slovak demands for secession were soon met and deemed legitimate by the international community, the situation in Bosnia-i-Herzegovina (BiH) proved to be more complex. Most commonly this complexity has been brought down to the diverse ethnic make-up of the Bosnian territory. Its three main ethno-national groups (Bosnian Muslims 45%, Bosnian Serbs 35% and Bosnian Croats 18%) held distinct visions for the future state of BiH resting on mutually exclusive claims to national self-determination (NSD). These claims, which had long existed but remained latent while the SFRY framework was stable, saw the area convulsed by war in 1991 (Bose 2007). Overall the war produced a catastrophic toll: approximately 100,000 killed as well as 4.4 million refugees. The brutality and controversial character of the conflict were ultimately reflected in the agreement that was to mark the beginning of the Bosnian peace process.

In 1995, the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina was initialed at Dayton, Ohio, by the Serbian, Croatian and Bosnian heads of state under strong international encouragement. Also known as the Dayton Agreement (Dayton), it would come to be referred to as one of the "most famous and controversial settlements of recent decades" (Bose 2005: 326). This essay will attempt to address the criticism directed at Dayton, which claims that it has created a dysfunctional and unviable framework for post-war BiH, by examining both the historical and theoretical context within which it was conceived. I wish to argue that while the framework may certainly be criticized for being dysfunctional, its unviability does not derive from the Dayton agreement per se, but more generally from the dilemmas inherent in the liberal peace-building project of which it is a product. Thus, criticism directed solely at the constitutional engineers of Dayton, who in fact did a notable job in crafting an institutional framework required for building a stable democracy despite complex circumstances, misses the impact that international involvement has on the dynamics that drive the implementation of Dayton.

To understand the predicaments faced by Dayton's engineers we must at first take a look at the historical and ideological emergence of conflicts driven by demands for NSD and ethno-nationalism itself. We subsequently address in detail the competing claims made by Bosnian nationals and establish that the deeply divided nature of Bosnian society severely limits the possibility for institutionalized compromise in the aftermath of the war. The second part of the essay explores how and why, despite secessionist claims by two of the main groups, the international community opts to install a consociational and confederal framework, which it hopes will preserve a formally united Bosnian state while accommodating undeniable ethnic divisions and grievances. We shall then, in part three, survey the extent to which the given institutional framework has been criticized and deemed dysfunctional in the post-war Bosnian context. In part four, I hope to contest conventional criticism of Dayton, by asserting that its dysfunctionality does not originate in the consociational and confederal framework it proposes, but from the wider failings of external state-building projects and the unsustainable and unviable post-Cold War liberal interventionist agenda, which has

relegated Bosnia to its permanent liminal state.

Part 1 – Changing States, Claims and Conflict

In order to assess the adequacy of the institutional framework proposed by the Dayton Agreement we must attempt to understand the historical background and dynamics of the conflict, which it sought to settle. It is almost safe to say that since at least the middle of the 20th century disputes over competing claims for NSD have dominated the landscape of political conflicts. This may be largely attributed to the gradual transformation of the role of the nation-state under globalization (Rothschild 1981: 16). While, since the enlightenment period, political legitimacy and in turn authority was traditionally derived from the self-determination of people inside a nation state, today this type of boundary maintenance is no longer sustainable. States constituted of singular nations have become an anomaly, which means that there is increased pressure for respective ethnic groups to access power in order to secure resources. Of course such an increase in ethno-political consciousness must not by default result in the outbreak of conflict over competing claims for NSD. According to Rothschild, in order for mobilization, let alone political militancy to occur, ethnic groups must be experiencing particular strain, competition or danger (1981: 27). Such strain may be the result of a state's own inability to treat all its communities fairly. Simply because liberal political philosophers view 'the nation' as everyone within a state and the just state as a state which treats all individuals with equal respect, does not mean that this is the case in practice (McGarry 1998: 1). It thus becomes in the interest of most ethnic minorities to secure the recognition of their individual and collective rights through pursuing demands for NSD.

When viewing the context of the outbreak of war in Bosnia following the dissolution of the SFRY, the salience of the above claims becomes particularly clear. Bose has argued that due to its history as a frontier society on the fault lines of contending Russian, Habsburg and Ottoman empires, 'modern collective identities in Bosnia (have) emerged and developed on the basis of ethno-national communities' (2007: 115). This is also reflected in Bosnia's history of politicized ethnicity. Its first political parties, which formed at the beginning of the 20th century, were entirely segmented into Serb, Croat and Muslim organizations (2010: 4), underlining the fact that neither socially nor politically was there ever a sense of an overarching 'Bosnian identity'. While differences remained fairly latent under Tito's communist regime, which sought to make a showpiece of the ideal of 'brotherhood and unity' in Yugoslavia, the failure of this ambition became visible in the early 1990s (Bose 2010: 7). Due to the gradual dissolution of the SFRY the region was led into a 'quasi revolutionary situation' resulting in an explosion of state-led nationalisms (Tilly 1993 and 1994: 143).

In line with Tilly's assertion that 'nationalist claims wax and wane' depending on the value and feasibility of ruling your own state, it suddenly seemed possible for ethno-national groups, which feared relegation to minority status, to realize the Western principle of 'one state: one people'. Given the 'attractive prospect of recognition and favoured treatment by Western powers', every group that commanded any military power was consequently bidding for an independent state (Tilly 1994: 143). Essentially, for Bosnia this meant that all three of its main ethnic communities were ardent to assert their own distinct nationalist claims over the country's territory. While Bosnian Serbs intended for Bosnia to remain part of a reduced Yugoslav federation with Serbia and Montenegro, Bosnian Croats were highly opposed to this idea, instead wanting to unite with Croatia. Meanwhile, Bosnian Muslims, who outnumbered both Serbs and Croats, but were treated relatively subordinate to Slavs, sought sovereignty for a united Bosnian state. Despite being mutually exclusive, each group believed in the inherent legitimacy of its claims. Ethnic cleavages, which had existed throughout Bosnia's history, were widening as a result of nationalist competition, so that by early 1992 it was evident that the dispute over NSD in Bosnia would not be solved without force (Woodward 1995: 220).

The Bosnian war raged until 1995, when a successful peace treaty was brokered by the US administration in negotiations at Dayton, Ohio. Nevertheless, it was evident that deep ethnic divisions, which had existed in Bosnia prior to the war, had hardened in its aftermath. In addition, ethnic cleansing had resulted in the relocation of a huge proportion of the population essentially affecting the entire demographic make-up of the country, which was now divided into decidedly more homogenous ethnic regions. It came as no surprise then that, while a united Bosnian state was regarded as undesirable by over half of its population in 1991, the decision outlined in Dayton to pursue the objective of a united, sovereign and democratic Bosnia after the war was met with widespread outrage. Both Bosnian Serbs and Croats felt like their right to secede from Bosnia had been denied, while Bosnian Muslims declared that

Dayton had created no more than a caricature of a state (Bose 2010: 7). Naturally, such local contestation would have a significant impact on the stability and legitimacy of unified Bosnia and its central government. But, if it came at such a high cost, why did peace brokers at Dayton decide to hold on to the idea of a multiethnic Bosnian state?

Part 2 – Imagining the Bosnian State

I have already mentioned that the divergence of national groups' assertions to self-determination essentially disqualified any territorial solutions to the Bosnian question. While, according to Woodward 'all three claimants to the territory (…) could legitimately defend those claims with the historicist principle,' meaning that common identity could be linked to a prior historical state, 'two – the Bosniaks and Serbs – could claim the democratic principle', based on their regional majority status (1995: 216). Thus, any agreement between the Croat and Serb leaders with their secessionist counterparts in BiH would leave the third constituent nation, the Muslims, without a state despite equal rights to Bosnian sovereignty. The intractability of the territorial problem thus largely boiled down to its zero-sum nature.

Besides simple mathematics the international community's decision against partition was also informed by strong normative concerns. McGarry has pointed out, that liberals in general tend to view secession as illegitimate, a view, which is driven by the US experience as a heterogeneous immigrant society (1988: 2). Bose adds that secessionist rebellion is widely regarded as an 'intolerable threat to territorial integrity' and must be crushed because it damages the liberal democratic credentials of a state (2003: 19). Within this liberal line of argument Etzioni contends that for a state to be truly democratic it must preserve individual identities

'*without* [emphasis added] breaking up (…) societies', otherwise the breakdown of existing states will never be exhausted. Thus, instead of secession or self-determination there exists a need for 'fuller representation, responsiveness, and democratization' (Etzioni 2000: 25-26).

Talbott elaborates from a similar perspective that in an interdependent world 'a pure nation-state does not exist in nature'. Instead liberal governments should aim to create a feeling of belonging to a multiethnic-state by putting in place common institutions (Talbott 2000: 155). These common institutions are essential to ensuring that 'all who live within the boundaries of a state consider themselves fully respected and enfranchised citizens of the state' (Talbott 2000: 157). Because both Etzioni and Talbott's emphases on the need for good governance reflect their alignment with essential dimensions of the neoliberal institutionalist turn, we must treat them with caution. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that these ideas were also dominant when Dayton was conceived in 1995 and of course during its implementation period. In addition, Horowitz rightly concedes that secessionists often promote the illusion of a clean break, when in reality neither secession states nor rump states are homogenous and can be made so only by 'the clumsiest and most unfair methods of population exchange or by policies of expulsion, always carried out by a massive dose of killing' (1998: 12). He adds that post-secession warfare is likely, because kindred minorities, formerly within the same state, are placed beyond the reach of their cousins across the border' (15), a dynamic which had already unfolded in Bosnia following the dissolution of the SFRY. Finally, a further break-up of Bosnia would simply lead to the creation of lower levels of ethnic tyranny against newly formed minorities, due to the country's extremely ethnically heterogeneous character (McGarry 1998: 6).

While the international engineers of Dayton's institutional framework saw no merit in Bosnia's formal partition, it was evident that fully-fledged unification, as proposed by failed settlements such as the Vance-Own plan, would not only be anti-democratic and 'against the wishes of the vast majority of Bosnians' (Bose 2005: 326) but also fail to address the very real issues concerning Bosnian's national, ethnic and minority rights (Woodward 1995: 220). But how can aspirations to NSD and liberal values of respect and individual autonomy be reconciled? And how do we respond to minority problems? These are only some of the question that academics and policy-makers must concern themselves with when they engage with the issue of state-building in deeply divided post-conflict and post-secession societies, such as Bosnia.

Bose (2003) and McGarry (1998) agree that any solutions for the given dilemmas must address the grievances that caused minority discontent in the first place. Usually this means moving away from a traditional model of the

Westphalian-style 'nation-state', with its emphasis on a common culture, majority rule, and political centralization, towards that of a 'multinational state' in which all national groups are treated equally (McGarry 1998: 14). Ultimately, this requires arrangements, which ensure that national minorities are represented in central government executive, judiciary, legislative and bureaucracy. Additionally, such a framework may include establishing institutional arrangements based on the concept of multinational partnership, decentralization and autonomy, as has proven successful in, for example, Switzerland and Canada (McGarry 1998: 15). Of course, one could argue that neither Switzerland nor Canada qualify as deeply divided societies, in the sense that neither has endured long-lasting civil conflict between ethnic groups. This in turn weakens the argument for the appropriateness of what is essentially a consociational agreement in Bosnia. However, McGarry and O'Leary note the success of the Good Friday Agreement of Northern Ireland which 'confronts one important criticism of Consociationalism: that it is unachievable in deeply divided societies' (in Taylor 2006).

Very much in line with the above recommendations and instead of opting for formal partition or unification, Dayton proposed for Bosnia an institutional framework based on principles of power-sharing between different segments of its divided society (Bose 2002: 205). Precisely, this meant preserving BiH as a single but strongly decentralized state with a tripartite presidency and decision-making based on democratic consensus (McGarry and O'Leary 2004: 4). At the second layer the state was divided into two federal entities, the Republika Srpska (RS) and the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina (FBiH). The RS, dominated by Bosnian-Serbs, was granted radical (military) autonomy to the extent that it has been named a "state within a state" (Bose 2010: 7). Meanwhile the FBiH, dominated by Bosnian Muslims and Croats, was divided into 10 cantons. Overall the central government had limited competencies and, in line with consociational principles, its decisions would be subject to consensus by the three ethno-national groups. The following paragraph will outline in more detail the consociational mechanisms, which were built into 'practically every aspect and every level of the Dayton system' (Bose 2002: 10).

McGarry and O'Leary have argued that what unites the 'consociational breed is skepticism about the universal merit of adversarial majoritarian and integrationist institutions' (in Taylor 2006). Lijphart, the leading scholar for consociational theory, starts from the premise that majoritarian, or 'Westminster Model' of representative democracy works best in homogenous societies such as Great Britain or New Zealand (1984). This is largely due to the fact that in this model of representative democracy, political power goes to the majority while a large minority of the population is excluded from power and momentarily condemned to the role of opposition. Because dominant party programmes in homogenous societies deviate only to a certain extent, voter interests will be served reasonably well, no matter which party is in power (Lijphart 1984: 6). Meanwhile, in less homogenous societies, such as Bosnia, this does not apply because the policies advocated by the principal parties tend to diverge to a greater extent and usually main parties wont alternate as much. Essentially, this is due to the fact that, while in most Western countries class identity informs party formation, political parties in Bosnia are almost exclusively constructed on the basis of ethno-national identity, underlining the deep divisions that characterize its population (Bose 2002: 206-7). Ultimately then, in plural societies the flexibility for majoritarian democracy is absent. Majority rule becomes undemocratic, even dangerous, because minorities are continually denied access to power and decision-making. Instead, Lijphart implies that the Consensus Model of democratic decision-making better serves plural societies. He suggests that it should be characterized by the following majority-restraining elements: (1) executive power-sharing, (2) separation of powers, formal and informal, (3) balanced bicameralism, (4) multi-party system, (5) multidimensional party system, (6) proportional representation and (7) written constitution and minority veto (Lijphart 1984: 23). Ultimately, by constructing the Bosnian institutional framework as a power-sharing Consensus Model democracy, as suggested by Lijphart, Dayton attempted to include all significant sub-societies in decision-making as much as possible.

In a similar manner the delegation of political control to federal governments of RS and FBiH presented an additional means of granting autonomy to minority groups in Bosnia's plural society. As discussed earlier, claims to NSD by Bosnia's ethnic groups were intrinsically tied to claims to territorial representation. Similarly, King has suggested that the chief distinguishing feature of a federation is that distinct interest groups are represented, not by their language, culture or nationality but by the territorial space, which they inhabit (1993: 95). In a confederal state regional representation takes precedence over individual representation. Thus, by devolving power to the federal or sub-state level, the creator's of Dayton attempted to secure regional equality, which was as close to ethno-national equality as any institutional framework for Bosnia was likely to come. Consequently, Bose has implied that multinational

federalism should be regarded unequivocally the appropriate choice for Bosnia after Dayton (2002: 241).

Part 3 – Dayton Disputed

From a purely technocratic perspective Dayton proposed an institutional framework for Bosnia, which would allow for the effective governance of a loosely united Bosnian state, while accommodating ethic divisions and complex grievances. Yet it has encountered substantive amounts of more or less well-founded criticism. I will thus set out to explain this widespread contestation of the Dayton framework, both at the local and the international level.

In 1997 a study suggested that, while 98% of Bosnian Muslims were officially in favour of a united BiH, a huge 91% Serbs and 84% Croats expressed their discontent over this arrangement (Bose 2010). But why exactly where Bosnia's so polarized on the question of the post-Dayton state's legitimacy? Firstly, while Bosnian-Muslims generally proposed the idea of united BiH sovereignty, they were appalled by the recognition of the RS as a federal entity. It is believed, although of course contested by some, that the atrocities committed against non-Serbs by Bosnian-Serbs (…) were on a larger scale and more systematic in nature than those perpetrated by the Muslims (Bose 2007: 127). Meanwhile Bosnian Croats, who were outnumbered within the FBiH by Bosnian Muslims and saw this as entirely unjust, wished instead to be united with their Croatian neighbours (Bose 2010: 7). Finally, Serbs, who were pursuing an agenda of total separation, were not satisfied with their autonomous entity status. Despite its aim to accommodate competing ethno-national claims, it was clear that Dayton ran the "risk of dissatisfying all of the three Bosnian peoples by denying them the right to govern themselves" (Bose 2007: 138). Competing claims to NSD had after all been the main reason for war in the first place and did not suddenly vanish, due to the external orchestration of a peace settlement.

Critics have been quick to blame the consociational nature of Dayton's framework for its local contestation. Thus, McGarry has conceded that consociation may 'wrench several groups away from co-nationals and territory they identify with' and could lend too much prominence to the primacy and permanence of ethnicity (1998: 15). Essentially, consociation is criticized by liberal technocrats for leading to the entrenchment of national divisions, because it limits the capacity for electoral integration (Bose 2002: 239). The electoral system prescribed by Dayton, Horowitz argues,

'reifies ethnic cleavages and depends too much on cooperation at the elite level' (in Bose 2002: 217). Therefore, 'nationalist leaders have a strategic interest in maintaining the conditions on which their power depends: pervasive separation, fear and insecurity among the general populace' (European Stability Initiative 2012).

Eventually, perseverance of ethno-national conflict has also hindered the proper functioning of the centralized state apparatus. Due to the consociational nature of the institutional framework of BiH, decision-making has proved difficult. Layered sovereignty and power sharing mean that often state mandates overlap with entity and sub-entity mandates. Due to the absence of any significant political party with a cross-ethnic base of popular support" (Bose 2010: 10), it is no surprise that the BiH Parliament is often immobilized by disputes. The Foreign Policy Initiative BH (2011) sums up the dilemmas of the post-war institutional framework in Bosnia as follows:

The BiH state lacks the independence enjoyed by central government in other decentralised states and thus cannot perform basic state functions. (a) Ethno-territorial veto points at state-level accompanied by (b) a complicated division of shared competencies between the state and entities which require high levels of cooperation to function, seriously constrain the ability of the state institutions to perform their functions.

The lack of legitimacy and cross-national accountability of the central government has meant that the multi-tiered BiH federation is far from stable. More recently, there has been a rising threat from Serb nationalists countered by Bosnian Muslims demanding liquidation of the RS and more centralization (Bose 2002: 242). Meanwhile, Croats call for abolition of the entire entity system. Instead they demand that the whole country be administered by cantons, although this would probably expand the terrain for 'predatory elite networks', which thrive on crony capitalism, smuggling and corruption (Bose 2002: 25).

Part 4 – Great Liberal Expectations

That Bosnia in its current state can be most appropriately described as dysfunctional is no secret and criticism of the outcomes of the Dayton Peace Agreement is certainly justified. Whether the institutional framework outlined by Dayton alone can be blamed for the failings and weaknesses of the post-war Bosnian state is an entirely different matter. By discussing in this essay the driving factors behind the Bosnian war and the divisions and grievances, which characterize Bosnian society to this day, I have intended to show that the institutional framework chosen for Bosnia at Dayton was well conceived in that it took account of complex empirical circumstances and built upon existing knowledge of liberal state-building practice. Carl Bildt, High Representative for Bosnia-i-Herzegovina from 1995-1997, agrees that 'the peace agreement balances the reality of division with structures of cooperation and integration' (in Bose 2002). And yet somehow, remedies for the dysfunctionality and unviability of the Bosnian state as well as explanations for the sustained fragmentation of the Bosnian populace continue to circle around questions of institutional design and implementation strategies. Essentially, what these voices tend to miss, is that the Bosnian dispute is too complex to be solved by an institutional formula (Bose 2002: 249). I would thus like to argue that the main dilemma underlying the dysfunctionality and unviability of the Dayton framework is in fact the uncertainty over what kind of Bosnian state the liberal international community is actually trying to construct and how. In the following paragraphs I will attempt to outline in which ways the basic liberal premise of transforming war-shattered states into 'stable societies that resemble the industrialized market democracies of the West' (Bose 2002: 90), has not proven a feasible agenda in the Bosnian context, but instead has made it entirely dependent on international intervention.

As mentioned in this paper's introduction, the end of the Cold War signaled the beginning of a new era for Western foreign policy-making. Instead of defending liberal values against the Soviet enemy, the democratization and stabilization of transition countries in Central and Eastern Europe took precedence on the international agenda, as exemplified by the Dayton Peace Agreement. It installed a transitional administration leading up to the first democratic elections in 1996 and granted extensive powers to international organisations and foreign diplomats (Chandler 1999: 1). These new powers of international involvement 'were written directly into the Bosnian Constitution', while the process of Bosnia's democratization and marketization was to be overseen by outside administrators appointed by international bodies such as the United Nations. Initially intended for a one-year period, the international community's mandate has now been indefinitely extended (Chandler 1999). Today Bosnia remains dependent on the international community's lifeline, which has undermined the functioning of its state institutions and of course their legitimacy. Chandler has argued that the creation of a culture of dependency on external intervention has made the Bosnian people and their elected representatives superfluous to policy development and implementation in their own country (1999: 194). Thus, by assuming that democratization should no longer lie in the hands of the demos, but the international regulatory bodies, the liberal-peace building project is itself encouraging anti-democratic action. It also implies that 'some cultures are not rational or civil enough to govern themselves' thereby recasting liberal foreign intervention as the new 'White Man's Burden' (Chandler 1999: 3). Yet, instead of acknowledging the destructive impact of external regulation, the lack of success of the Dayton Peace Agreement has been understood by some to mean that intervention must go deeper (e.g. Chesterman, Fukuyama in Paris 2010) or that the consociational framework is not integrating and democratizing Bosnian society fast enough. Thus, the ultimate paradox of liberal state-building practice is that it attributes failure to mismanagement rather than acknowledging it as a product of its own making. It may then not seem entirely far fetched to suggests that the liberal drive to control and regulate the post-colonial world (Jahn 2007), is what is condemning Bosnia to its liminal existence by preventing the pursuit of long-term solutions generated by Bosnian people themselves (Chandler 1999).

Part 5 – Dayton Reconciled

It is easy and sometimes necessary to get carried away on the waves of critical theory. However, while scholars like Chandler tend to steer clear of making policy recommendations, decisions based on such recommendations are continuously being made in international politics and have an effect on people's lives. This is why I would argue that while Dayton may not have proved the be all and end all for the Bosnian peace process, it has at least provided a base for further developments by ensuring peace and relative stability for people in Bosnia. At the same time the immediacy and comprehensiveness of the consociational settlement have ensured that the peace process could not drag on endlessly, thereby decreasing the chance for spoilers. The consociational nature of the post-war institutional

structure made an immediate response possible and practical. Bose suggests that any other model of government, which had granted primacy to individual rights over group rights, would have been against the will of the vast majority of members of two of the three Bosnian groups (Bose 2007: 140). As such, the consociational framework implemented by Dayton provided a compromise between liberal tendencies to ignore local grievances over efficiency concerns, and ending the conflict thereby restoring some form of normalcy to Bosnian's lives.

Conclusion

In the preceding paragraphs I have engaged with the question whether the Dayton Agreement was inherently flawed and dysfunctional because it created an unviable post-war institutional framework in Bosnia. It has become evident that the end of the Cold War and the dissolution of former Yugoslavia acted as catalysts for the loudening of claims to national self-determination by Bosnia's three main ethnic groups. The civil war, which ensued in the early to mid 1990s, effectively deepened the division between these groups. The Dayton Agreement, which was to initiate the Bosnian peace process, sought to balance out these irrefutable divisions while retaining a united Bosnian state in line with liberal ideals of territorial integrity, by drawing on institutional technologies of consociation and federalism. However, the framework was soon rigorously contested by both local and international actors, on the basis that it lacked legitimacy and accountability, entrenched ethno-national divisions in Bosnian society and resulted in political impotence of the central government. I have argued in this essay that, while the framework proposed by Dayton may certainly be criticized for being dysfunctional, its unviability does not derive from the Dayton agreement per se, but more generally from the dilemmas inherent in the liberal peace-building project of which it is a product. If anything the consociational framework symbolized a move away from strictly Westphalian assumptions about proper statehood. Still, the liberal setting within which Dayton was conceived meant that its implementation would go hand in hand with extensive external intervention. Ultimately, this is what has caused Bosnia to remain dependent on the international community and has hindered effective functioning of local institutions. Meanwhile, over the course of the last decade, liberal state-building practices have intensified in scope and depth in many conflict zones, such as Iraq and Afghanistan. Strategic exit solutions are no longer the main preoccupation of powerful international actors in the post-9/11 world. Therefore, today Bosnia's future role in the international system is unclear while its government remains immobilized by continuous internal disputes and bickering.

However, it is exactly this kind of nationalist bickering between lawmakers, which very recently has resulted in developments that could confirm Bose's prediction (2002) that the cleavages within Bosnian society may become less salient over time. Demonstrations in Sarajevo, sparked by the inability of the government to pass a law concerning national identity numbers for newborns, appear to be transcending ethnic boundaries and uniting rivals with newly a common cause (The Washington Post 2013). In essence, this means that seemingly mundane everyday interaction and concerns may be strengthening ethno-national ties, in a way that governmental institutions and confidence building programmes never could. Thus, while Dayton must be credited with laying the institutional groundwork for such developments in Bosnia, it should not be seen as possessing eternal validity. Ultimately, it is crucial that state-building, in Bosnia and across the non-Western world, is recognized once again for what it should be; the means to and end and not an end in itself.

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