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The Beauty and the Beast: Civil Society and Nationalisms in Bosnia and Herzegovina

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Abstract

Both ethnic nationalism and liberal civic nationalism exist with historical precedents in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Many elected elites privilege extremist ethnic nationalism. The power-sharing structure of the Dayton Peace Accords institutionalizes their influence and permits the current political stalemate. Further, a legacy of authoritarianism vitiates a political culture supportive of elite accountability and mass responsibility. Yet a nascent civil society witnesses to the past and potential future of liberal cosmopolitanism. This research includes interviews with leaders and members of civil society organizations to assess the impediments to and strength of civil society as a vehicle to promote civic nationalism. While interviewees acknowledge multiple impediments to the development of civil society and civic nationalism, they also perceive reasons for optimism. They contend the primary challenge to the development of liberal civic nationalism is not ethno-religious tensions but rather the legacy of authoritarianism. Moreover, people from diverse backgrounds already organize in response to various shared, practical problems. Cooperation in civil society presents a context for the development of civic nationalism. The challenge remains whether civil society and liberal civic nationalism can gain sufficient strength to counter political intransigence and virulent ethnic extremism.

Introduction: Ethnic and Civic Nationalism in Bosnia-Herzegovina

Tension characterizes the current political stalemate in Bosnia and Herzegovina (B-H). The failure of the international community to mediate this intransigence heightens pessimism regarding the ability of domestic or European elites to resolve the situation. Ethnic nationalisms thus fragment B-H, fueling a debate regarding their origin, character and durability. Yet, the fact 43% of the population primarily identifies as B-H citizens suggests the potential of a bottom-up civic nationalism to counter ethnic extremisms (Kaldor 2006; Oxford Research International 2007). An overlooked, albeit nascent, civil society exists in B-H. The strength of this civil society arguably correlates with civic nationalism and offers an indicator of the potential character and direction of a democratic inclusive civic nationalism. The history of B-H's

cosmopolitanism and current developments in civil society provide some basis to believe civic nationalism perhaps can moderate ethnic nationalism.

The nailing of obituaries to a central town tree continues as an interesting tradition throughout the Balkans including B-H. In neighborhoods and villages a particular tree or alternative obituary stand serves as the vehicle for death announcements. In an ethnically pure Balkan village the tradition illustrates respect for people's lives and civility in death. The practice also demonstrates recognition of the right and need to engage in activity in a shared public space. Within B-H too, the tradition demonstrates civility about people's lives and deaths and the right to engage in activity in a shared public space. This is B-H, however, where rights and territory since 1992 often are contested. Thus, the practice in B-H highlights civility and shared public space *irrespective of ethnicity and ethnic tension*. Indeed, the tradition within B-H suggests an acceptance of equal dignity in death, a shared interest among the living, and tolerance in the public square. While perhaps insufficient to claim civic nationalism exists or to counter the ethnic nationalisms which dominate politics, the practice hints of shared values and tangible common ground. Indeed the practice requires the type of decency and respect for rights which Nairn views as the basis of a "civic form of national identity" ultimately necessary for civil society (1997, 87).

Likewise the story of Hajra, a widow living in the isolated hilltop community on Mountain Bjelašnica in Jabukovača illustrates an effort to develop social trust, civil society and civic nationalism. The post office in nearby Tarcin is the government's only presence in Hajra's neighborhood. The international community also is absent. Yet, Hajra works to unite and organize the Mountain Bjelašnica residents to address problems as diverse as breast cancer screening and loose dogs. Following a dog attack on a cat Hajra gathers neighbors of all ethnic and religious backgrounds and uses the symbolism of wild lawless animals to emphasize the need for respect of rights, recognition of responsibilities, and renewed cooperation. She brings together neighbors who are 55% Bosniak, 20% Croat 15% Serb, and 10% other.

Beyond the obituary tradition and Hajra's story exists a history of civic nationalism. B-H residents lived and worked together for many decades. Estimates suggest at least a third of families constituted inter-marriages before the war (Mazower 1997). In the pre-war B-H census at least one third of the population identified with the national Yugoslav category compared to only 6% throughout Yugoslavia (Vuckovic 1997). Indeed, the Yugoslav Agency of Statistics

shows 43% of B-H citizens identifying as Yugoslav in 1980 and 1990.¹ The people also shared pride in the Sarajevo Olympics and united during the protests of 1992. Currently a variety of programs and organizations seek to unite the people of B-H to advance their interests. Thus, while many analysts highlight the failure of the Dayton Peace Accords (DPA) and the prominence of ethnic conflicts and elite intransigence, people do cooperate across ethno-religious lines.

The primary question of this research focuses upon whether B-H can resurrect the strands of its historic cosmopolitanism as a political movement of civic national identity and thereby overcome ethnic nationalist extremists which embrace objectives consistent with superiority or exclusiveness. From this perspective, civic nationalism need not challenge all ethnic nationalisms. Some ethnic groups accept the possibility of multiple identities and focus upon celebrating their identity without rejecting other groups or the potential of a common viable democratic state.² Yet, extremist nationalisms, typically rooted in a romanticism which celebrates sacred lands, epic struggles, and ethnic purity, pose a barrier to the development of liberal civil society. This research finds a concern within B-H of the potential for a Hobbesian environment in the absence of cooperation. Hajra as well as indigenous civic leaders and international workers acknowledge the fear of stalemate or even disintegration. The research identifies the seeds of civic nationalism as expressed within civil society which offers a counter to the polarizing ethnic nationalisms and current political stalemates.

Civil Society and the Question of Civic Nationalism

The broad objective of this research focuses upon investigating the possibility for the reemergence and development of a civic nationalism in B-H which can serve as the foundation for an inclusive and democratic system (Bernhard 1993; Bernhard and Karakoc 2007; Howard 2003). Accordingly this work considers the extent to which extremist ethnic nationalism, elite interests, and/or other factors limit civil society and civic nationalism. The work also assesses the viability of civil society as an expression of civic nationalism.

Nationalism is variously understood as an ethnic identity, a political opposition movement for state power, a polity based upon equal rights, or a self-determination/state-

¹ The second highest level of Yugoslav identification existed in Serbia with 11.5%.

² Oxford Research International finds that 43% of the people who primarily identify with an ethnic group also secondarily identify as B-H citizens. Only 14% of the population exclusively identifies with an ethnic group (49-51).

building movement. Individual researchers often focus upon one conception while ignoring other definitions (see for examples Anderson 1983; Brass 1991; Breuilly 1994; Gellner 2006; Hobsbawm 1990; Renan 1882; Smith 1994, 1996, 2009; Taras 2002; Tilly 1994). To the contrary, B-H's past demonstrates the possibility for the coexistence of ethnic nationalism and civic nationalism. Indeed, this analysis recognizes the existence of various nationalisms in B-H without debate concerning the ideas, origins, causes, and character of these nationalisms. The situation since the early 1990s, however, illustrates a specific struggle between nationalisms: liberal v. illiberal, bottom-up v. elitist, and civic v. ethnic.

Civic nationalism unites people based upon a shared appreciation of equal political rights and a loyalty to democratic beliefs, practices, and processes (Renan 1882). While bloodlines typically determine ethnic national membership, civic nationalist identity requires a commitment to the values of the social and political system. Ignatieff notes excessive patriotism can create intolerant civic nationalists, but "a society anchored in a culture of individual rights and liberties is more easily returned to the practice of toleration than one where social allegiance is invested in ethnicity" (1996, 219). Conversely, extremist ethnic nationalism founded in romanticism often creates claims about land and identity which impede tolerance.

Indeed the competition between these two nationalisms is reminiscent of the story *The Beauty and the Beast*. The Beauty represents the hope of a flourishing civic nationalism, open-minded and optimistic. The Beast resembles exclusive ethnic nationalism, currently angry and conflictual, but with the capacity for moderation. Just as a kiss from the Beauty transforms the Beast to an attractive and strong prince, so too ethnic identity tempered by civil society can nurture an Actonian same state in which ethnic differences are accommodated and common goals achieved (1995). The story begins with fear motivating the Beast; in relationship to the Beauty, however, the desirable qualities of the Beast- turned- prince emerge and dominate. Ethnic nationalism free of fear can contribute to a state's strength. A dichotomy between civic nationalism and ethnic nationalism is not inevitable; multiple identities and the coexistence between ethnic and civic nationalism are possible.

Thus, this research identifies and accepts various nationalisms as political movements in B-H, and suggests the tension and competition between these nationalisms characterize contemporary politics in B-H. The analysis focuses, however, upon the foundations for a modern state and democracy within the historic liberal national consciousness of B-H and emergent civil

society. A key premise assumes civil society relates to civic nationalism (Kuzio 2001; Nairn 1997; Walzer 1998). The research finds contemporary expression of this civic nationalism in the developing programs and efforts of civil society.

Various debates persist regarding the concept of civil society. Diamond suggests civil society consists of associational groups which stimulate participation, facilitate compromise, summarize interests, and check the state (1996). Putnam sees civil society as a vehicle to promote tolerance and trust and counter the state (1995). Howard suggests civil society and the state necessarily overlap and interact. Indeed, Mudde contends civil society is not necessarily in tension with the state; rather a strong (but limited) state can protect and promote civil society, just as a strong civil society can support the work of the state (2007).

Additionally, debate exists concerning whether political parties constitute civil society. Cohen and Arato exclude parties because they view “The political role of civil society...not directly related to the control or conquest of power but to the generation of influence through the life of democratic associations and unconstrained discussion...” (1992, x). Howard notes elites seeking state power primarily compose parties while “civil society is the realm of ordinary citizens who join and participate in groups and associations because of their everyday interests, needs and desires” (2003, 35). Given the focus of this research upon whether civil society can move B-H in a direction which elites and extreme nationalists resist, the research excludes parties and focuses upon organizations and associations outside the exclusive ethnic nationalist and elite context.

Accordingly, this research understands civil society as consisting of public institutions and organizations existing independently of the state, which create and offer an environment in which individuals and groups both can interact with one another and cooperate to influence the state. Liberal civil society assumes a tolerance of differences, an embrace of civil liberties, and openness to all individuals. The Center for Civil Society at UCLA states: "A healthy civil society offers the hope of an expansion of local democracy, just and efficient service delivery, and the creation of a shared and inclusive civic identity." While some scholars separate civil society from the political and economic sphere, this research not only accepts the interaction of society with the state but also appreciates the importance of economic groups in the formation and expression of societal interests. Thus, in a liberal civil society, a free market operates and brings together buyers and sellers irrespective of race, religion, ethnicity, and gender. Indeed, in B-H, and other

systems transitioning from a planned to a market economy, the significance of economic groups becomes notable.

By contrast illiberal civil society (or uncivil society) and illiberal organizations preference and exclude individuals based upon ascriptive characteristics. Howard excludes from civil society such illiberal groups because "only those groups or organizations that accept legitimacy of other groups" (2003, 40) are part of civil society, and those which seek "denigration and destruction of other groups" (2003, 41) are excluded. From this perspective, civil society also excludes organized crime. Yet, Mudde importantly notes uncivil society can play a significant role in the development of democratization and liberalism (2003). Bieber likewise explains uncivil groups can create a context which inspires moderation toward democracy (2003).

A context for this research developed from 2006-2008 during interviews of government and political party officials. These interviews coupled with the B-H leadership's ongoing internal 'cold war' and failure to advance constitutional reforms produced doubt regarding the possibility of elite led change. Yet, at the same time instances of civil society organizing across ethnic national lines became notable. Discussions with young GROZD (Civic Organization for Democracy) campaign workers in 2006 and the farmers protesting outside the parliament during 2006-2007 highlighted the reality that some people understood their interests were better served outside of the politics of extreme ethnic nationalism. GROZD united people on salient economic platforms and demanded politicians articulate their positions on these issues which cross-cut ethnicity. The farmers camped at the parliament represented all ethnic groups, but their motivation and community developed from their shared opposition to free trade in agriculture.

Moreover, fertile ground for the further development of civil society seemed apparent beyond the political realm. Conversations with multicultural Procter & Gamble executives whose investments are sought throughout B-H, condo developers who willingly sell to any buyer, hunting enthusiasts who sought to revitalize an old magazine, and members of the Sarajevo soccer club highlight a broad range of interests willing to set aside ethnicity in pursuit of other goals. These attitudes also reinforce evidence of a nascent civil society revealed in the United Nations Development Program's (UNDP) *The Silent Majority Speaks* which demonstrates people's primary concern is economic, the overwhelming majority aspires to EU membership, and citizens accept the notion of multiple identities (Oxford Research International 2007).

This background contributed to the decision to interview representatives of international organizations which work with civil society and non-governmental organizations constituting part of civil society. These organizations operate in both entities and throughout B-H. (See Appendix 1 for a brief description of the missions, objectives, and programs of these groups as well as an identification of the representatives). The interview questions developed from Howard's work but evolved during extended discussions with the representatives of civil society. Interviews first occurred during summer 2009 with follow-up discussion in fall 2010. The objectives guiding the research were to assess existing impediments to civil society and examine development in interethnic civil society as a meter of civic nationalism. These factors are significant because as Nuhanovic contends, civil society protects the core of a civil public and thus offers a counter to the salience of ethnic nationalism (2002).

Nationalisms in the 1990s

Spontaneous movements in B-H in the 1990s demonstrate existence of a civic consciousness rooted among the people of B-H. Yet, illiberal, xenophobic nationalisms reacted against this civic nationalism, fueled war throughout Yugoslavia and B-H, and impeded B-H's development as a state (Crnobrnja 1996). B-H now struggles with questions of identity and sovereignty despite its cosmopolitan history and current efforts from below to reinvigorate cosmopolitanism (Kaldor 2006).

During the economic development of Yugoslavia in the 1970s and 1980s, B-H, like other republics, awakened to a new consciousness. Economic change and associated political and social developments nurtured a voluntary impulse and civic national consciousness which eventually contributed to the demise of communism. The system of self-management created the space for various interest associations including workers, health care, and tourism (Bartlett, 1985; Djordjevic, 1958; Uvaliy, 1988). In the 1980s environmental, economic, religious, and academic groups developed to voice their interests (Kabala 1988; Ramet 1992). Additionally the media diversified and became critical. The independent television program Top-Lista Nadrealista, a B-H Monty Python, proved notable for its satire of the political system (Denich 1993). So too, the music of the New Partisans brought to pop culture a denunciation of the contending voices of ethnic nationalisms while explicitly lionizing civic nationalism with a call for democracy to support “three people who don't think the same way sharing the same place”

(Misina 2010). B-H certainly appeared the most multicultural republic with the least xenophobic tendencies. In fact, Andjelic argues that in 1990, B-H still lacked ethnic movements (2003).

The secular democratic nature of this popular agenda, however, disturbed many political leaders. Misina cites the “disillusionment with the communist leadership’s inability or unwillingness to relax its ideological rigidity and broaden the country’s political field” (2010, 273). According to former President of Yugoslavia Dizdarevic some communist leaders subsequently adopted ethno-religious identities to counter liberal civil society (Tesan 2007). He admits members of the Communist Party opened the door for politicians to offer the vision of ethnic nationalism because they hesitated to respond to the citizens’ preference for the alternative vision expressed in the form of a secular, civic liberal nationalism (Tesan 2007). Thus, politicians embraced competing self-interests and goal maximizing behaviors under the romantic nationalist motto: Your state is not good for my nation (Breuille 1994). This elite response signaled the beginning of the temporary eclipse of B-H civic nationalism and civil society. Consequently, nationalist parties contested the 1990 elections and 75% of the vote supported their candidates.³

Ultimately, civic municipal movements challenged the communist leadership (“The Last Train to Save Bosnia” 1992). Di Palma generally characterizes the end of legitimation from the top and the beginning of civil society with a “revolution of citizenship” and “extraordinary mobilization of civic identities” (1992, 52). Movements confronted the authoritarian policies and introduced a liberal nationalist consciousness consistent with democratic transition based upon a consensus against dictatorship. The movements attracted a wide range of B-H individuals: Catholic, Orthodox, Muslim, Jewish and others. Their outreach built on the existing, centuries-long, cosmopolitan civic traditions. The Committee for the Protection of Right and Liberties of Individuals and Groups and the Green Movement included citizens irrespective of ethnic identity (Andjelic 2003) These developments demonstrate a bottom up effort to support civic nationalism through civil society. Consistent with Renan’s understanding, such nationalism spurs any particular ethnic or linguistic background to broadly embrace people of a shared vision as a common nation.

³ Significant to note is research which demonstrates the nationalists fared less well in urban, integrated areas as well as indications that a vote for a nationalist party did not necessarily equate with nationalist sentiment (Pugh and Cobble; Cohen 105; Donia and Fine 211; Pierce and Stubbs).

Accordingly, when intense agitation toward nationalist elites in political institutions occurred in early April 1992, the discontent crystallized into a broad based civil society movement whose demands included representative liberal democracy. The movement paralleled comparable “peaceful revolutions” elsewhere in Eastern Europe notably Leipzig and Dresden. In fact, often the language and tactics were replicated. Archival evidence highlights the significant liberal political movements which formed and tried to convey to politicians that the status quo was unacceptable in the wake of change throughout the region (“Leaders spent all their Credibility” 1992). Di Palma notes the movements did not assume the form of typical opposition groups contesting for power because the people viewed themselves as largely powerless. They sought not political office but rather to challenge the policies of elected officials (1992).

The embodiment of civic nationalism in B-H peaked in the demonstrations of 5 April throughout the country and most notably in the capital. Citizens gathered at the parliament to support dialogue, civic nation-state traditions, and peace. This liberal social movement swiftly reacted to both ethnic nationalism and an unresponsive government and formed a broad based organization. Pejanovic discusses this citizens’ opposition to war in Yugoslavia and demands for cooperation between elected nationalists in the B-H Parliament. He states “...The idea of a ‘citizens parliament’ grew from the gathering of crowds around the Parliament building” (2002, 53). They sought the creation of a new parliament based on civic nationalism to counter or replace the existing, outdated and failed political institutions. The movement also demanded political institutions consistent with its interpretation of the basic creed of B-H: peaceful existence of all nations under one state.⁴

While this liberal nationalism of the 1990s might seem imagined and constructed, so too an illiberal, exclusive, ethnic nationalism builds in reaction to the integrative approach. From the beginning of the conflict in B-H, authoritarian elites manipulated ethnic nationalism to protect

⁴The significance of the evolution of this cosmopolitan liberal movement often is lost in the subsequent extremist nationalist response. The comparative perspective is informative because the character of the movement is sometimes misinterpreted due to failure to consistently translate the demands. English, German, and Serbo-Croatian media variously translated the call for a new political institution as Nation's Parliament (Narodni parlament), All-nations Parliament (Svenarodni parlament), Assembly of Nationals of B-H (Vijece nacionalnog spasa), Government of National Survival of B-H (Vlada nacionalnog spasa), National Parliament (narodni parlament), or Citizens Parliament for the Peace (Gradjanski parlament za mir). The slogan, Mi Smo Narod, parallels the German slogans of the period, Wir sind das Volk (HU OSA 304-0-7 and 304-0-12). Therefore, these demands, using the terminology of nation, should not be misunderstood. These slogans are a call for rights and democracy rather than an assertion of ethnic nationalist sentiment. One co-author was present at these events and contends the evidence is clear that broad based civil society explicitly demanded a representative liberal democracy.

their status (Belloni and Deane 2005; Crocker 2007; Fischer 2006). Mansfield and Snyder suggest political and military elites employed extremist nationalism to maintain legitimacy in the face of increasing pressure for democracy. Nationalism offered the advantage of uniting elites and masses (2007). In this case, elites targeted differences and created a party system based on these cleavages (Enyedi 2005). Gagnon argues nationalist propaganda also offered a vehicle to discredit liberal democratic reformers (2004). Accordingly, during the early 1990s, elites desiring to maintain power, transformed communist ideology into a mythical, ethnic nationalism, presented a counter identity, and manipulated a counter-mobilization (DeFigueiredo and Weingast 1999; Fischer 2006; Gagnon 1994; Glenny 1996; Cohen 1992). In late 1991 the Serbian Democratic Party (SDS) declared the Serbian Republic of B-H to be followed by the Croatian Democratic Union's (HDZ) declaration of a separate Croatian Community. Finally, the war then created the basis for the ongoing struggle between the elites' illiberal and coercive nationalism and cosmopolitan society's fading liberal civic nationalism.

Debate continues about the specific origin and character of the war in B-H. Puhovski identifies this phenomenon of the "war after the war...the battle for the interpretation of the past-as a verbal extension of the war-the key moment for postwar self-understanding of communities..." (2004). Stokes, Lampe, Rusinow and Mostow extensively review this debate (1996). Woodward highlights the complex nature of the dissolution including the influence of economic and international forces (1995). Torsten examines the changing nature of the conflict as it proceeded (2008). Other authors focus upon whether the conflict fits the category of war of secession or independence (Carevic 2003; Krech 1997; Malcolm 1996; Sudetic 1998). Hoare identifies secession as a consequence of dissolution but also describes "...Serbia's assault on Bosnia-Herzegovina [as] the next stage in Belgrad's plan of expansionism" (2010, 123). Indeed, other analyses focus on an interstate war, emphasizing the aggression of one party (Dizdarevic 2006; Lampe 2000; Crnobrnja1996). Bennett specifically highlights the behaviour of Milosevic (1995). By contrast, other accounts maintain a civil war between ethnic groups occurred (Bose 2002, 2007; Burg and Shoup 1999).

Facts associated with the B-H conflict establish that the war followed independence wars in Slovenia and Croatia. Yugoslavia transferred quantities of arms and equipment to B-H from Slovenia and Croatia prior to the outbreak of fighting. The weapons primarily benefitted Bosnian Serbs. War began in April 1992, lasted to autumn of 1995, and became characterized as the most

catastrophic and painful conflict in Europe since the Second World War (Bieber 2010; Crnobrnja 1996). As Puhovski highlights, the conflict possibly included elements and periods of aggression and civil war (2004). Further the conflict continues after the DPA as elites try to benefit from their political offices and all sides maneuver to defend their truths.

Yet in the post-war environment space exists for a slow awakening of the cosmopolitan identity of the people, primarily expressed through economic freedom. This revived cosmopolitan political identity no longer originates from elites as Gellner assumes (1994) but rather disseminates through society, percolating from the bottom-up as Kaldor suggests (1996). The current civic nationalism seems to be rooted and an organic product of society (Appiah 1998; Robbins 1998). Civil society maneuvers for space within this context and serves as a visible meter of civic nationalism's development.

Impediments to Civil Society

Various impediments to the development of civil society exist and interact. While ethno-religious tensions contribute to these impediments, the often-overlooked reality is other factors also create critical barriers to civil society. Interviewees identify as important among these factors the consequences of the war and the structural conditions of the DPA, albeit both are difficult to separate from the ethno-religious context. Still, the most notable obstacle to civil society remains the legacy of authoritarianism. In this sense, B-H shares the challenges of other post-communist and newly independent states (Howard 2003). Contemporary B-H also struggles with the ongoing role of the international community.

The question of the influence of nationalist and religious tensions is unavoidable. Some representatives of B-H civil society perceive these tensions as elite manipulated while other representatives acknowledge even if manipulated these differences precede current difficulties. Yet, all representatives concur nationalist tensions currently are political vehicles to maintain power. They also agree politicians manipulate and exacerbate the nationalities' issues in the post-war, post-DPA period. Adis Arapović of the Centres for Civic Initiatives (CCI) contends politicians create an illiberal ethnic nationalism to maintain power and voters' unquestioning allegiance. Nebojša Šavija-Valha of the Nansen Dialogue Center (NDC) and Omir Tufo, program manager for the Civil Society Promotion Center (CPCD) concur with this perspective and identify one of the motivations as the need to maintain patronage jobs. Tufo qualifies a sense of nationalist origin always existed in B-H, but nationalism is new. "In previous periods people

of different backgrounds liked each other and worked together...In the past, B-H was national oriented but not nationalistic.”

Religious differences also became a post-war *issue*. In post-war B-H, religious leaders entered politics to gain resources while politicians emphasized religious identity to win votes. Tufo explains some of the refugee resettlement funds were used to construct mosques. He suggests, “religious leaders’ interests are to frame territory” with their churches and mosques. This contrasts with the pre-war and communist period when people worked together without attention to religious identity. Tufo notes, “In the past, religion, like soccer, happened after work and school.” Various reports substantiate the ongoing and perhaps strengthening influence of exclusive civil society based on religion (Jelusic 2009; USAID 2009).

In fact, many people believe religion dominates and directs nationalism. To this extent nationalism is both a top-down and bottom-up creation. The people possess a real sense of ethno-religious identity which the leadership reinforces and manipulates. Yet to the extent religious and political leaders encourage a primary loyalty to their group the OSCE’s Slađana Milunović and Saltana Sakembaeva maintain many people increasingly are sick of *their* issues and increasingly disinterested in religious and ethnic differences. Indeed the UNDP’s *Silent Majority Speaks* cites that 55% of the population favors politicians not make decisions based upon ethnicity (Oxford Research International 2007).

Nonetheless one cannot deny the heightened importance of religious and ethnic identities in the post-Dayton period. Nor can one ignore the real traumas which people associate with ethno-religious differences. Still, most interviewees view such traumas as a consequence of the war rather than a result of religion and/or nationalism. Indeed, the development of civil society must contend with apathy, distrust, and exhaustion. The reality of territorialized and displaced people further complicates these sentiments as does the specifics of the DPA.

Darko Brkan of Dosta highlights the DPA as the primary impediment to civil society because of its tangible structure and observable behavior. He emphasizes the DPA constrains citizen input in political decisions. As a consociational system the structure tends to privilege elected elites, emphasize the absence of shared loyalties, and segment the population into its relevant identities (Steiner 1998; Horowitz 1993; Snyder 2000). Norris specifically identifies B-H as a case in which power-sharing arrangements intensify ethnic extremism and threaten democratization (2008). Tsebelis’ work with nested games and veto players explains

consociational systems as impediments to institutional reform which reward elites who engage in conflictual behavior (1990). Thus the Party of Democratic Action (SDA) and Party for Bosnia and Herzegovina (SbiH) favor eliminating entities, while HDZ endorses decentralization of the federal arrangement, and the Alliance of Social Democrats (SNSD) supports the existing DPA formula which provides a high degree of Serb autonomy – no consensus emerges. Elites also avoid compromise in some instances because they believe their counterparts under pressure will concede, thus giving the intransigent elite the best outcome (Tsebelis 1990). This explanation seems consistent with Fischer's notion of B-H politicians as conflict entrepreneurs who perpetuate the system because of the benefits associated with patronage (2006). Furthermore, from Dosta's perspective, DPA removes B-H from the category of a typical-post communist state in which nascent civil society struggles. The perception exists that civil society must operate within corporate segmented structures.

Interviewees express concern with the DPA's structure which tends to emphasize tripartite representation to the exclusion of civil society. Civil society must counter the complexity of the multiple ministries and levels of government. Yet, civil society leaders view central government politicians as more problematic than local officials. Local leaders increasingly accept the need to work with civil society on basic issues of sanitation, health, education, and economic development. To this extent, OSCE's UGOVOR program to build civic responsibility and government accountability achieved its objectives in 79 of 100 localities.

Politicians' preferences for the status quo rather than the uncertainty of constitutional change also relate to the legacy of authoritarianism. A culture of powerlessness, dependency, and/or irresponsibility probably creates the greatest impediment to the development of civil society. All representatives agree the legacy of socialism, authoritarianism and external control stands as a potent barrier to civil society. The periods of Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian rule left the mark of powerlessness among the public. Tito's dictatorship reinforced this character. The legacy continues to affect the development of civil society in diverse, divergent ways. McAlister (with the UNDP) Arapović, Milunović and Sakembaeva believe it reinforces apathy. They contend some citizens would like to go back to socialism even if they must also forego political rights because they prefer the guarantee of having economic needs met. This sentiment remains particularly prominent among the older population (Oxford Research International 2007). Šavija-Valha asserts the authoritarian and imperialistic legacy allows for blame and permits a "culture

of dependency and irresponsibility.” Indeed, 92% of the people believe the state should solve problems; only 4% believe people should solve problems (Oxford Research International 2007). Thus, *The Silent Majority Speaks* concludes, “Politics and politicians and not citizens’ actions are seen as the vehicle for the implementation of change...most respondents understand intellectually that change is needed but are reluctant to abandon the ‘delivery van’ of the administrative-centralist socialist legacy” (Oxford Research International 2007, 4). Others identify a popular suspicion and disinterest in associational activity attributable to state control during the socialist era (Sejfića 2008). Yet, civil society leaders note the legacy of socialism also positively affects civil society because people remember the level of inter-ethnic cooperation under socialism. People do not wish to “rebuild the socialist brotherhood” but they recognize the need to cooperate on common interests and problems (Milunović).

A second problem for civil society related to the authoritarian legacy is it creates a new phenomenon for both politicians and people. Politicians and the public long functioned without civil society, and B-H lacks a fiscal and legal environment supportive of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Arapović explains politicians are unaccustomed to accountability, and citizens never assumed a need to demand transparency and accountability. Laws pass without consultation with relevant interest groups. Furthermore, politicians view civil society as a constraint contrary to their political interests. Therefore they are disinclined to change the legal framework. McAlister concurs people in B-H assume it is appropriate for politicians to act in their own interests. The personalization of power in B-H creates an upside-down system where the public finds it difficult to hold institutions accountable. “Politicians are not connected to voters and have no sense of obligation to voters. Politicians campaign each electoral cycle as if not an incumbent; they present their promises and programs, and the voters do not question their past records” (Tufo).

In this atmosphere people do not know how to communicate with government. While only 13% report contact with a local government or board, a mere 1% contact the state or entity governments. Further, such ‘participation’ typically is associated with patronage politics rather than public policy (UNDP 2009c). Concern persists “whether a crucial mass of readiness among government, NGOs, and citizens who are aware of civic activism is present...without such a mentality there can be no sustained change” (Tufo). Accordingly, much of CCI and OSCE’s training focuses upon understanding budget cycles and grant proposals. Likewise, CPCD is

launching a new initiative, Sporazum Plus⁵ to organize local civil society based upon local needs. Thus, the general legacy of authoritarianism and external control impede the development of civil society. Representatives of civil society concur the legacy creates a state-societal relationship in which leaders are not accountable and people lack a sense of efficacy, responsibility, and citizenship. Brkan highlights the current negative effect of the Office of the High Representative (OHR). He contends “its role as a pseudo-society indirectly suppresses indigenous civil society.” Civil society must operate within the framework and paradigms of the dominant international community. Grass root apathy associated externally imposed authoritarianism persists. The legacy of authoritarianism therefore emerges as a major impediment.

Ethnic Nationalism Meets Civil Society

While not the source of ethno-religious tensions, the DPA creates a political system which permits ethnic and religious tensions to persist. The consociational structure with its tripartite presidency, ethnic vetoes, and powerful entity governments institutionalizes ethnicity and often impedes state-building, decision-making, economic rationality and reconciliation (Tsebelis 1995; Bose 2002; Norris 2008). Elected elites lack incentive to change the structure which gives them political power. In fact, some leaders tend to stir and manipulate ethnic feelings in order to maintain their constituencies (Belloni and Deane 2005; Crocker 2007; Norris 2008; Tsebelis 1990).

Elite manipulation of ethnic issues differentiates B-H from the model of the modern state in Western Europe where the administrative development of the nation from the top down supports unity among the people (Crocker 2007; Fischer 2006). By contrast, the support and encouragement of multiple, exclusive national identities conflicts with both spontaneous and constructed developments of a civil society and impedes an inclusive civic nationalism founded on a common embrace of rule of law and democratic principles.

Nonetheless, concrete problems, programs, and projects create a need for citizen cooperation. Various actors identify the economic crisis as a potential watershed issue. Dosta speaks of the need for “Crisis Resolution” not only to solve the economic problems but also to address dealings between the IMF and the government. Dosta denounces the lack of broad participation in the negotiations and specifically criticizes the exclusion of parliamentary

⁵ Sporazum corresponds to Ugovor which means contract.

representatives. Additionally, Brkan contends budget cuts must be progressive rather than linear with a focus upon protecting the socially endangered. In the absence of such processes and solutions, Dosta will continue to mobilize a broad, inter-ethnic coalition. Indeed the population clearly identifies economic concerns as more serious than ethnic issues, and even maintains class and wealth divisions are a greater source of tension than ethnic differences (Oxford Research International 2007; UNDP 2009c).

Tufo and Arapović also express concern regarding the deteriorating economic conditions and agree the economic situation might encourage various groups to respond in unison. Arapović envisions the possibility of the “withering away of national differences” to address the economic crisis. He cites the nascent civil society as important to convey such public opinion and contends the existence of a diverse independent media will make it difficult for the government to silence the public voice. The UNDP and OSCE also recognize the potential effect unsolved economic problems might have upon local politicians.

Wide agreement exists that the economic crisis did not occur in isolation but rather relates to constitutional problems and the current governmental crisis. In fact, representatives of civil society perceive the current system as non-sustainable. Part of the problem relates to the DPA’s institutionalization of nationalities. Beyond the crisis, however, the federal structure creates bureaucratic duplication and inefficiency throughout B-H. While some progress occurs in centralization and capacity building, currently 49% of B-H’s GDP is dedicated to government spending (IMF 2008; Europa 2006). Finally the existence of tripartite representatives within the myriad of bureaucratic agencies and ministries permits buck passing, creating a government too often non-responsive to citizens’ needs (Tsebelis 1995).

While general pessimism exists regarding imminent constitutional change, pressure continues for partial solutions. CCI presses for legislation on non-governmental organizations including laws to provide tax-free non-profit status and to offer tax credits for individual and corporate gifts to NGOs. Dosta argues for the introduction of direct democracy mechanisms at the state level including referendum, initiative, and recall. In October 2009, Dosta cooperated with Zastone to initiate a broad-based campaign for direct democracy which attracted wide participation.

Finally, concrete local issues offer bases for the organization, mobilization, and action of diverse citizens and civic groups. The UNDP’s experience encompasses a number of instances in

which citizens' groups play a critical role. UNDP's Upper Drina Program first focused upon non-contentious projects such as HIV and TB education and testing. Later, ecotourism related to rafting united a variety of ethnic groups with diverse interests in both the FBiH and RS Upper Drina Region of eastern B-H. Groups focused upon economic growth, youth employment, and the environment now cooperate across ethnic differences to build new camp grounds, host rafting championships, and construct climbing walls (UNDP 2009a). McAlister sees the slow maturation of civil society in that people now suggest to the UNDP additional projects. Furthermore, "what is noticeable is that an ethnic agenda is no longer evident; rather there is a focus on the task to achieve" (UNDP 2009b:15).

The finalization of a sewage truck contract facilitated by the UNDP's Upper Drina Programme provides another specific example of shared interests fostering cooperation and mutual benefits despite ethnic tensions. The cities of Foča and Goražde cooperate for service. Goražde owns a truck which it must finance; Foča does not own a truck but needs services. The certain benefit of cooperation in an area of compelling necessity displaces the ethnic tension and led to an agreement for the Goražde utility company to service Foča (UNDP 2009b). UNDP also cites a new willingness for local governments under citizen pressure to cooperate in other ventures including water utility companies (2009b). Similarly the decision to integrate after-school English language and technology opportunities near Srebrenica in order to obtain computers serves as a concrete example of economic realities trumping ethnicity. Pressure from parents' groups who preferred computer education to segregation contributed to the policy change at Petar Kochich School. In this case local officials from the SDA and SNSD responded to demands to cooperate and reached agreement with the NSC to accept computers from Norway. Perhaps more significantly, the experience motivated parents to create a multi-ethnic NGO, "Dialogue Srebrenica-Bratunac" to address other issues.

In Mostar, as well, some Bosniak and Croatian students at Stolac High School opted to attend an integrated class within their high school in order to gain access to computers and enhanced journalistic training. Such programs seem critical for young people given research which indicates they desire high quality youth centers and affordable technical education (Oxford Research International 2007). NDC consequently launched recent discussions regarding comparable multi-ethnic educational enrichment programs in Jajce and Zvornik. Accordingly, people of diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds opt to work together on shared, concrete

problems, such as education. In the process they implicitly acknowledge the equality and rights of fellow citizens. In Srebrenica the experience motivated the local creation of an inter-ethnic NGO symbolic of nascent civil society and the potential of civic nationalism.

Civil Society and the Potential for Civic Nationalism

While NGOs initially proliferated rapidly following the DPA to more than 10,000, many of these NGOs were not conducive to the development of a bottom-up civic nationalism. Indeed, the development of civil society in B-H is not best measured in terms of number of organizations. Rather key features to consider are the impact upon the political and social situation within the country and the control and commitment of the indigenous population. The latter is not merely a matter of numbers but rather interest and intensity of involvement.

B-H representatives of civil society explain a variety of problems existed with early NGOs. External NGOs and IOs introduced and funded B-H NGOs without consultation with local groups and people. Some of these projects were not suitable for B-H and the local conditions, but rather simply modeled upon projects in other transition states or post conflict states. Early NGOs focused on refugee return, reconstruction, and the socially marginalized. Important and necessary programs, but democratization and the development of civil society were secondary (UNDP 2009c; Tofu; Arapović). Indigenous NGOs often lacked a well-defined purpose and operated in the absence of outcomes assessment (Tofu; Arapović; Milunović; Sakembaeva). People then harbored suspicions of NGOs, concluding the employees were poorly trained and self-interested. Brkan and Šavija-Valha assert these early NGOs served the objectives of the international community rather than the needs of B-H citizens. The public also suspected NGOs made deals with the EU and IMF as well as political parties. Some organizations operated in a corporatist relationship with parties thereby suppressing independent civil society (UNDP 2009). Civil society representatives concur that these early problems with NGOs led people to react against external dominance and not trust civil society (UNDP 2009).

The status of NGOs began improving in 2005-2006 and the public's perception changed (USAID 2007; 2009). A variety of factors contributed to this change including the impressive election work of GROZD and emphasis on local needs and organizations, especially OSCE's efforts to develop partnerships. In the last few years, CCI, OSCE and UNDP also placed emphasis upon consolidation of NGOs and local empowerment. In RS the improvement partially relates to the increase in funding available from local governments for NGOs following the 2006

passage of the Law on the Budgetary System. Further, the Ministry of Civil Affairs invited NGOs to file grant proposals (USAID 2007). Finally, the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees accepted the UNDP's conditions for operations across entity lines in the Upper Drina region.

Consistent with these trends, CPCD began operations in December 2006. CCI, CPCD, UNDP and OSCE now work with NGOs to define missions and objectives and teach budgeting and accountability. The OSCE and UNDP also encourage NGOs to understand how government works, to apply for grants, and to hold politicians responsible. The increase in local initiative and control highlights a qualitative improvement in the nature of civil society as NGOs emphasize their indigenous character and responsiveness to the community. For example, domestic NGOs now seek assistance from international actors for specific local programs ranging from electrification to sheep farming (UNDP 2009b).

Notable in this time period is OSCE's 2005 establishment of UGOVOR which in 2008 attained success in 79 of 100 target municipalities. Central to the project are a requirement elected officials and civil society representative must follow a code of ethics and a freedom of information act - both of which contrast with the previous typical authoritarian behavior. NGOs receive education to understand budget cycles, grant requests, lobbying and government policy making. OSCE works with both government and civil society to support responsiveness, accountability and social action. In small rural communities where UGOVOR proved too ambitious given limited capacity, OSCE now strives to assist groups with targeted programs for specific needs.

Arapović and Tofu identify as critical to the change in perception regarding civil society the success of GROZD during the October 2006 election. GROZD developed a 12-point program on cross-cutting issues including education, the economy, healthcare, and ecology, and then used these positions to evaluate candidates (USAID 2007). The group continued its work in the 2008 local elections, informing citizens on programs of all registered candidates and political parties. GROZD estimates its work increased participation in elections at the local level by 25% and in 29 of 30 targeted municipalities. Further GROZD claims its work with civil society organizations promoted local budgets and policies consistent with civil demands (CPCD 2009).

The international community's decision to permit extended funding and operations in the RS Upper Drina region also proved critical to the advancement of civil society. UNDP began its

program in rural regions with substantial ethnic tensions. Initial successes in health care delivery, agricultural development, and ecotourism create the potential basis to address civic concerns about rule of law, gender equality, and political rights. McAlister notes the RS government cooperated with some NGO initiatives, while USAID cites governmental response as positive but selective (2009).

Thus, civil society incrementally evolves with activities and programs operating along a broad spectrum. OSCE encourages organizations as well as episodic volunteerism. CPCD and CCI focus upon facilitating the consolidation of groups into a few well-functioning and targeted organizations. Arapović and Brkan claim the continuing evolution of an independent media constrains the ability of government to ignore citizens' demands or violate citizens' rights without negative repercussions.

Yet, the development of civil society certainly still encounters difficulties. Civil society, while progressing, continues to be weak, fragmented and dependent upon international technical and financial assistance. Šavija-Valha and McAlister note young people remain disillusioned and apathetic while the traumatized, such as the widows of Srebrenica, remain particularly distrustful and fatalistic. Milunović explains rural, small and new locales often lack capacity to respond to civil society. UNDP research substantiates this concern (2009c). Meanwhile, Arapović, Tufo, and Brkan claim extremist nationalist leaders in different governments still resist secular civil society and attempt to withhold participation from NGOs. Organizations such as CCI, CPCD, GROZD, NDC, and Dosta all cite frustration with the uncooperativeness of elites striving to protect their status.

Nonetheless optimism exists and progress seems real as civil society struggles but persists and strengthens. In 2008 the B-H Council of Ministers established the Department for Cooperation with the NGO Sector (USAID 2009). The UNDP now holds cross entity meetings in eastern B-H. The OSCE introduced *Local First* to step past the success of UGOVOR and target rural areas, marginalized groups and young people (OSCE). Dosta moved beyond a reactive posture during the 2010 elections. The coalition focused upon solidarity and direct democracy.

Moreover, participation in civil society seems a vehicle for civic nationalism. People involved in civil society are more likely to have friends of different ethnicities than those not involved and to engage in "significantly more inclusive" relationships than others (UNDP

2009c). Brkan notes Dosta attracts people uncomfortable with ethnic nationalism who need a voice. He believes particularly the urban middle class seeks a civil society tolerant and representative of civic nationalism. Arapović also identifies a weak civic nationalism, originating primarily from economic self-interest of urban young people. Tofu concludes, “civic nationalism is asleep, not dead. B-H has not had sufficient time in its post-conflict history for civic identity to blossom. We need first a national awakening of citizenship, and then civic nationalism will follow.” To this extent the nascent civil society fosters attitudes and identities consistent with civic nationalism.

Conclusions

Civic nationalism embodied in citizens’ movements and organizations became political reality in the late 1980s and early 1990s, but also encountered polarizing ethnic nationalism. The traumas of 1992-1995 challenged and still haunt this civic nationalism. Currently, the disillusionment of the population coupled with the apathy associated with the centuries of authoritarianism suppresses participation in civil society. Nevertheless, civil society slowly strengthens and offers a vehicle for the practical solution of problems as well as the development of civic nationalism. Indeed, the current political stalemate creates a void in which civil society can operate and increase its legitimacy. Whether local and grass roots activities can counter national political intransigence remains uncertain. B-H society now possesses the advantage of international support for civic nationalism, but the domestic reaction to the international role limits this advantage.

Relevant, however, are the willingness of more than half the population to move beyond the memories of the war and the overwhelming percentage of the population willing to embrace an identity as a citizen of B-H (UNDP 2009c; Oxford Research International 2007). Such attitudes coupled with the growing professionalization and local initiative of organizations of civil society positively influence the future of civic nationalism. The process is tense, uncertain, and inconsistent. Yet, the civic consciousness, which previously contributed to the communist demise, now slowly develops to challenge the status quo. Civil society seems to offer a vehicle for the evolution of a progress oriented civic nationalism even within isolated and rural areas.

The question of the significance of civil society requires more extensive investigation particularly to examine the interest and intensity of indigenous initiation and involvement. An important question is the extent to which liberal civil society in B-H can emerge without the

assured support of a liberal state. Such a consciousness previously developed from the bottom-up within the context of authoritarianism. Whether contemporary nascent civil society can evolve to possess sufficient strength to temper extremist nationalism remains uncertain. Yet this research suggests the outcome remains open for the Beauty to pacify and transform the Beast.

Appendix 1: Organizations and Interviewees

OSCE in B-H strives to promote the development of civil society and communication between civil society and the government. OSCE seeks to change citizens' perceptions by teaching people to identify local problems, represent themselves to government, lobby about concrete problems, and solve these problems. Slađana Milunović is a participation officer working with voluntary and civic organizations. Saltana Sakembaeva assists Milunović with UGOVOR, Local First and the establishment of volunteer centers.

UNDP assists indigenous civil society with surveys and polls to identify needs, attitudes and clients. UNDP emphasizes the importance of transparency and budget and grant processes. Its Upper Drina Program operates in eastern B-H, in both entities, and in tense regions. Lauren McAlister is Monitoring and Procurement Officer for the Upper Drina Regional Development Programme of the UNDP: Bosnia and Herzegovina.

CCI is one of the largest indigenous non-governmental organizations in B-H. Its mission is to initiate and promote active participation of citizens in the democratic process, strengthen capacities of individuals and organizations to successfully solve problems, and increase citizen participation in decision-making. CCI targets local groups which articulate specific plans and desired outcomes. It works in many cities including Tuzla, Banja Luka, Mostar, Sarajevo, Doboje, and Bihac. An excellent example of CCI efforts is the creation of GROZD. Adis Arapović serves as public advocacy consultant and project manager.

CPCD focuses upon supporting interests in society which seek to organize. Its tactics include lobbying, advocacy, and community organizing. Omir Tufo is the program manager. He also worked closely with the leadership of GROZD.

GROZD first emerged from a coalition of 300 groups during the 2006 elections and became successful in evaluating candidates and issues. GROZD developed policy positions on cross-cutting positions including education, the economy, healthcare, and ecology. GROZD enunciated a 12 point program and gathered over half million signatures during the election. It extended its work in the 2008 local elections when it informed citizens on pre-election political programs of all registered candidates and political parties. GROZD subsequently assisted citizens and civil society organizations to promote local budgets and policies responsive to their demands.

Dosta promotes solidarity, direct democracy, and citizen action. Dosta perceives itself as successful as one of the first indigenous civil society groups, acting apart from the international community. Currently, Dosta focuses upon the Direct Democracy Campaign and its efforts to gain citizens the right to referendum, initiative and recall. In this campaign it closely affiliates with Zastone. Currently Dosta includes 10 regional organizations and 3 interest groups (students,

workers, and the diaspora). Darko Brkan serves as President of Zastone and a coordinator of Dosta.

NDC works in some of the most tense and least developed areas of B-H and maintains central offices in Sarajevo, Banja Luka, and Mostar. NDC identifies its mission “to contribute to the development of democratic practices and the prevention and resolution of conflict throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina by creating dialogue across ethnic and national divides.” It focuses upon process, that is dialogue and communication rules, rather than projects and infrastructure development. In Srebrenica and Bratinosc local dialogue centers are being established under the local initiatives. Nebojsa Šavija-Valha is the Programme and Project Development Manager.

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