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Stagnant Corruption in Bosnia-Herzegovina: Then, Now, and What is to Come

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Stagnant Corruption in Bosnia-Herzegovina: Then, Now, and What is to Come

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Abstract:

Bosnia-Herzegovina, a country recently torn apart by ethnic violence in the 1990s, remains standing yet has struggled for the past two decades to materialize dynamic reform from political corruption and has failed to progress to a more stabilized society. Matters of ethnic divisions, political corruption, and economic underdevelopment all contribute to a deadlocked society vulnerable to further destabilization. The Dayton Peace Agreement produced an environment fit to maintain political corruption with elite entrenchment and governmental deadlock that continues to freeze the county in 1995 and inhibits true ethnic reconciliation. Economic insecurity and high unemployment rates add to grievances in a highly polarized multi-ethnic-religious society. Nationalist rhetoric exacerbates tensions, and there is an overall lacking monitoring involvement from international actors. Lacking involvement from Western democratic influences of the European Union and United States is highly criticized and needed to actualize change in Bosnia. This research paper aims to analyze and answer the sources of stagnant corruption in Bosnia, with analysis of stabilization realities. First, looking to the historical roots of the demographics and grievances of the country from the Ottoman Empire, and most recently the Bosnian War in the 1990s. Then a discussion about the current factors that inhibit stabilization. Finally, to arrive at analysis surrounding European Union integration as well as the realities of the future. In the end, the unfortunate combination of corrupt leadership alongside ethnic divisions and economic underdevelopment in Bosnia synchronized with upheaval in European Union internal politics produces an environment immune to progression and change with little hope for dynamic evolution towards further stabilization in the near future. However, at the end of the day, this resilient country remains standing.

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Introduction

The Problem

Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH), now approaching 25 years after the most recent bloody European conflict, remains in a stagnant corruptive state due to a complex combination of perpetuating ethnic divisions, political corruption, and economic underdevelopment that have suffocated advancement of the diverse historical country. BiH has complex demographics of two semi-autonomous federations that encompass both multi-ethnic and multi-religious populations in a small polarized country of recent warfare overwhelmed with war crimes and genocide. Involvement from the United States (U.S.) and the European Union (EU) in 1995 resulted in a ceasefire to the 1992-1995 Bosnian War and the creation of the Dayton Peace Agreement. However, two decades later, Bosnia fails to be an example of true democratic success from U.S. and EU involvement and threatens to be in a vulnerable position of future ethnic and political upheaval. In addition to the recent grievances from the war, the country remains ethnically polarized and is victim to elite corruption and political deadlock that inhibits economic development and exacerbates ethnic tensions.

My interest in BiH was sparked on an academic study trip with my International Criminal Justice class to Bosnia in May 2018, focusing on the recent war and genocide history of the country, as well as the aftermath of international justice in the International Criminal Tribunal for

the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). I was struck by the contrast of recent warfare and relative normality within the country. Buildings were still visibly damaged from shelling, and new houses had been built on former mass graves. The site of the Srebrenica massacre—an event responsible for the genocide of over 8,000 Bosnian-Muslim men and boys—was unmarked as if nothing happened. The building where thousands of innocent Bosniaks were slaughtered remained riveted with bullet holes—no acknowledgement of history present. Instead a cow was chained to the fence eating grass, which seemed a conflicting image to me. How was it that an area torn apart by genocide and war was still intact? How was it that such lack of progress had been made? How was it that despite such a recent violent history, things also felt so normal? These questions kept circulating.

My research into Bosnia uncovered the various layers of complexity integrated into Bosnia's current state; it is a country that “swallows more history than it can handle” (E. Fouéré, personal communication, 2 October 2018), yet remains resilient and functional. Despite such resilience from society, layers of elite political corruption maintained from a poorly structured Peace Agreement with lacking international involvement have allowed the country to remain chained by the correlative individuals who seek to exacerbate tensions in order to maintain influence and power in their respective parties. This has resulted with economic insecurity and skyrocketing high unemployment as well as threatened relatively dormant ethnic tensions. In addition to such circumstances, newly elected Milorad Dodik now sits as a Serb-nationalist in Bosnia's tri-presidency and is continuing to advocate secession for Republic Srpska—the Bosnian federation comprised of majority Bosnian-Serbs. Needless to say, Bosnia is in a vulnerable instable state and requires international attention in order to further advancement and stabilization.

Research Question, Focus of Study, and Relevance

My research question is to understand the factors that have manifested a stagnant trend of corruption in Bosnia-Herzegovina and a realistic look to the future stabilization of the country.

The research will tackle the integrated complex answer as to why BiH has remained frozen—and more importantly—why BiH will most likely continue to be remain frozen from advancement due to political corruption that further translates into many aspects of life. This will be accomplished through divided discussion concerning historical roots, current affairs, and future possibilities. The first section is dedicated to understanding historical roots that shaped identity and demographics, Yugoslavia leadership influence, the effects of the 1992 Bosnian War, and the structural weakness of the Dayton Peace Agreement. Analysis on the current state of Bosnia will be multidisciplinary, encompassing ethnic, political, and economic factors that together contribute to the vulnerable instability of the country. This analysis will build to evaluate Bosnia’s future given its current realities, giving particular attention to European Union (EU) involvement and integration and acknowledgement to other external actors of influence within the region. The ultimate focus of the paper is to develop a comprehensive understanding for why and how Bosnia has remained in a stagnant corruptive state. The concluding section will highlight a realistic truth of power politics, diminishing the naïve nature of many outlooks of stabilization. My expected outcomes are that Bosnia is moving in a direction towards further destabilization and Western influence will not be a sufficient resource of assistance in the short-term.

This research holds relevance in many respects. Bosnia is a European state with recent war history that received dynamic involvement from the U.S. and the EU. The failure of successful democratic implementation reflects the agendas and capacities of the West and speaks to the theme of power politics. BiH also highlights EU shortcomings through exposing internal politics and the resulting deadlock of tangible assistance. BiH is a geopolitical puzzling combination of a rich historical grievances, symbolic representations of identity that drive intense divisions, diverse external influences, and geographically small yet central to several neighboring cultures. Further,

Bosnia itself is a climate of clashing cultures in its multi-ethnic—religious demographic and speaks to the human experience of diversity and struggle for peace in an increasingly globalized world.

Definitions and Theoretical Framework

The concepts of ethnic identity are fundamental to analysis. To clarify terminology of ethnic identity, the term ‘Bosniak’ refers to the Bosnian-Muslim identity. Serb/Serbian/Bosnian-Serb are synonymous to refer to the ethnic demographic that identifies as Bosnian with Serbian heritage and Orthodox Christianity. Likewise, Croat/Croatian/Bosnian-Croat are synonymous for the Bosnian demographic that hold Croatian heritage and Roman Catholicism as their identity. As will be discussed, religion corresponds with ethnicity in Bosnia. Additionally, Bosnia-Herzegovina is shortened to Bosnia or BiH. Two different federations comprise BiH. Republic Srpska is the federation nearly homogeneously comprised of Bosnian-Serbs, while the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina is comprised of Bosniaks and Bosnian-Croats.

My theoretical framework identifies interdisciplinary thematic discourses to answer the sources of corruptive stagnation in BiH. Factors that interconnect between each other encompass history, ethnic divisions, political corruption, economic underdevelopment and can be detailed as:

- Historical grievances that shape symbolic representations of ethnic religious identity
- Political structural paradox of ethnic division derived from western intervention
- Political corruption as core of deadlock for stabilization in society and the resulting effect on ethnic divisions and economic development, three factors that self-perpetuate each other

Research Methodology

The main thematic component of my methodology capitalizes on an interdisciplinary approach, both in interactive primary and secondary academic research—together encompassing multiple facets to analyze stagnation of corruption with a realistic look to the future. My research process included the strategic implementation of diverse primary interactive research to encompass multiple disciplines of: diplomacy, security, culture, EU policy, and specific Balkan expertise.

Multiple perspectives were necessary to address the complexity of Bosnia's perpetuating corruption and for evaluation of realistic future methods of stabilization. Secondary sources focused on Ottoman historical impact were foundational to rooted ethnic narratives that shape political influence. Academic sources saturated with political and economic discussion on Bosnia, and sources of EU and internal Bosnian perspective were pertinent.

My research process encompassed a three-month time span from September to November 2018 of primary and secondary research analysis. Recruitment, preparation, and interactive researched accumulated to 40 hours between seven different participants. With interviews widely conducted at the workplace of interviewees and further research conducted at the United Nations library in Geneva. Additional research and analysis from secondary sources surpassed 90 hours. My research was originally focused on assessment of EU integration for Bosnia. However, this became a challenge as it soon became clear that EU membership assessment was naïve and unrealistic due to the harsh political environment of both Bosnia and the EU. BiH has multidimensional complexities, and I found it more accurate to discuss the diverse integrated scope of issues do derive fundamental understanding of current affairs and evaluation of future stability.

During the interactive component of my research, ethical considerations were fundamental to ensuring high quality of data analysis. Informed consent, right for anonymity and confidentiality was discussed with each participant. Questions that were both respectful and culturally appropriate, manifested in a trusting, collaborative, and cooperative interactive research environment. When conducting research, I found it imperative not to impose my own surface layer impressions on the political and ethnic realities of the country. Clarification and note taking maintained the integrity of data for analysis and accurate comparison to identify trends and differentiations.

Literature Review

Literature surrounding corruption in Bosnia overall lacks a multi-disciplinary approach. Additionally, Bosnia requires historical background of factors that shaped the multi-ethnic-religious demographic of the country, for such is the source of severe grievances that translate into the ethnic and political polarization of the country. Sources failed to connect all components of the historical narrative of Bosnia, ethnic identity, and connection to political context. “Bosnian conflict European History” discusses recent history of ethnic rooted warfare in the 1990s and resulting deep ethnic divisions while “Encyclopedia Britannica” explains the historical roots of Slavic ethnicity converted to Islam as the ultimate source of ethnic division (Lampe, 2018b). Paired together, these sources analyze the historical narrative of BiH demographics. “The Ottoman Empire as Friend and Foe” excels in connecting Ottoman influence on Serbs and Bosniaks nationalisms and the resulting international alliances of both actors. This discussion is highly developed, however lacks connection to current context.

Political corruption prevents economic development and maintains ethnic divisions through nationalistic polarization. “Resilience in the Western Balkans” by Lange discusses the aggressive effect of economic underdevelopment on ethnic division. “Bosnia Burning” by Salem further connects political corruption through elite privatization and its driving of collective economic insecurity. Several articles and reports speak to Bosnian governmental deadlock and corruption (Nardelli, 2014; Secretary General, 2017; Shafer, 2000; Tampkin, 2018; United Nations, 2018). Clark highlights external actor involvement in Bosnia with a highly pessimistic outlook on the resulting vulnerabilities (2018). External actors involved in the country such as Russia and Turkey are discussed, but largely only at the surface level.

When future stabilization is analyzed, it is often at extremes. Naïve responses advocating EU membership (Emini, 2018; Gippert, 2017) neglect EU internal politics and lacking political

will. Extremes of return to violence are hashed out (Borger, 2012; Emini, 2018; Tampkin, 2018), while in reality international actors would likely intervene for regional security purposes. Thus, what many discussions failed to highlight is the stagnation of corruption—the frozen state that BiH remains in with little hope for progression—but enough capacity to remain outside of warfare.

Historical Relevancy

Ottoman Empire Lasting Influence

In order to effectively understand the intricacies of Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH) it is necessary to highlight the historical narrative of Ottoman influence. BiH has long been a geo-political buffer zone between Islam and Christianity with a violent history due to its multi-ethnic-religious roots confided in close quarters. The “largest of all iron curtains in history is the one that separated—and still separates—the Muslim world from the Christian” (Jovanović, 2017, p.72). The Balkan region was under Ottoman rule from the 14th and 15th century until control shifted to the Austria-Hungarian empire (Jovanović, 2017, p.71; Lampe, 2018b). Historical Ottoman and Turkish influence effectively directed the nationalistic narrative of Bosnian-Serbs hatred and historical grievances towards Islam, and contrastingly offered supportive Turkish tie for Bosniaks. The “perception of the Turk” for Bosniaks and Bosnian-Serbs “played a role in the development of their respective nationalisms” with “interactions, where one sees Turkey as an ally, and the other as an enemy” (Jovanović, 2017, p. 71).

The Serb discourse of Ottoman control is one of victimization and hatred that has assimilated towards the Bosnian Islam identity. The “Serbian view of the The Ottoman Empire and Turkey can be seen as singularly negative” with “hatred against the Turkish” who are viewed as an enemy and “perpetual adversary” among Serbs which is “intrinsic” to their nationalism (Jovanović, 2017, p. 72). Trends of nationalism heightened during the Balkan Wars in 1912-13, again in the 1990s Bosnian War, and remain pertinent in the current political environment.

Nationalist leaders have repeatedly utilized Ottoman historical grievances for political and ethnic inflammatory purposes between Serbs and Bosniaks. This targeted vengeance is misplaced, as Bosnian-Serbs, Bosnian-Croats, and Bosnian-Muslims all share the same Slavic ethnicity (Jovanović, 2017) and rather have different religious divisions under the same ethnic origins. The narrative of “suffering endured by the Christian Slavic population” during Ottoman rule in the Balkans, is remembered by Serbs as “centuries of anguish, misfortune and hardship” (Jovanović, 2017, p. 76), acting as discourse for Turkish hatred—which is now translated to the Bosniak population despite their shared Slavic origins with Serbs. Contrastingly, Bosniaks have a relatively positive Ottoman discourse and alliance with Turkey in modern political affairs (Jovanović, 2017, p.73) highlighted through efforts to adapt Turkish aspects of culture to Bosniak identity.

In order to grasp the depth of ethnic-religious divisions, it is important to understand the historical narrative of the region. Bosnia’s period of Ottoman control created two different experiences for Slav Christians and Slav Muslims. This historical Ottoman experience came to manifest persisting nationalisms for both Serbs and Bosniaks that translated into ethnic violence in the 1990s Bosnian War. Thus the historical aspect of Ottoman influence is a key factor in the unrest of Bosnia’s bloody past and current political ethnic polarization.

Yugoslavia Period

During the Yugoslavia period, President Tito’s leadership maintained rigid tolerance of peace between ethnicities (E. Fouéré, personal communication, October 2, 2018) and an evolving recognition of Bosnian-Muslims as a distinct ethnic identity (Ancic, 2004). Tito “[created] a presence of a Yugoslav identity through suppression—he was a hard and tough leader but he held everything together” (S. Chakravarti, personal communication, October 12, 2018). Many Bosnians now feel nostalgic for that time (Fouéré; Chakravarti). In efforts to encourage the “protection of [the] integrity and wholeness of BiH” and the therefore too the “protection of the

Muslim people” (Ancic, 2004), under Tito’s rule in the 1960s, Bosnian Muslims—for the first time—were recognized as a distinct nationality. By 1971 Muslims formed the “largest single component of the Bosnian population” (Lampe, 2018a). A minority of “Slavs converted to Islam under Turkish rule” (Barber, 1992) identified as Bosniaks, solidified the tri-ethnic composition of the country alongside Serbians and Croatians. Bosniak ethnicity is unique; it is the “youngest, most recent national identity produced by former Yugoslavia” and the “only European national identity that stemmed specifically from a religion (Jovanović, 2017, p. 78). While tolerance was maintained during the Yugoslavia era, “ethnic antagonisms were never far below the surface” (Barber, 1992). It was “inevitable that if you don’t have that leader anymore, things can just explode. Which is just what happened” (Fouéré); “when Tito died it all fell apart” (Chakravarti).

Bosnian War 1992-1995: Genocide and War Crimes

The most recent grievance of ethnic divisions in Bosnia can be attributed to the 1992 Bosnian War that ravaged the country for three years with war crimes and genocide. The most violent European conflict since World War II, the international community classified the Bosnian War as “inter-ethnic violence rooted in a history of ethnic hatred” sparked by clashes between “militant nationalisms” (Bojicic, 2015) in the breakup of Yugoslavia. Rapid economic decline in Yugoslavia in the 1980s and “manipulation of nationalist feelings by politicians” with fear-based rhetoric (Lampe, 2018a) increased destabilization and eventual war broke out throughout the region. Genocide on Bosniaks in addition to violent war crimes perpetrated on all parties are far from forgotten between ethnic communities. The 1995 Srebrenica genocide was the most devastating massacre during the war. Serb forces systemically murdered over 8,000 Bosniaks (Hoare, 2014, p. 58). A horrendous act of which is still dismissed by Serb politicians (H. Karcic, personal communication, October 8, 2018). Bosnia’s multiethnic composition has long been a vulnerability

to stability when exposed to “nationalist territorial aspirations” (Lampe, 2018b) with its geographical location in between Serbia and Croatia.

War deepened ethnic divisions and essentially made three very strict boxes of identity which corresponded with alliances and enemies. Religious affiliations “on all three warring sides” of Croats, Serbians, and Bosniaks, “played a key role in strengthening national identities—a Croat had to be Catholic, a Serb–Orthodox, while a Bosniak needed to be Muslim” (Jovanović, 2018, p. 79). Croats while in the middle eventually allied with Bosniaks against Serbs. War crimes and ethnic cleansing that magnified as genocide in Srebrenica 1995 tore the country apart. There was an undeniable “rehash of Serb nationalism based on anti-Turkish feelings and discourses”; Ratko Mladić’s exact words after the invasion of Srebrenica were, “Finally, the time has come to take revenge on the Turks”; the Serb army unleashed violence “against the imagined ‘Turks’ with a violence not seen in Europe in fifty years”. Graphic slogans circulated Serb armies including “I’ll be first, who’ll be second to drink some Turkish blood?” (Jovanović, 2017, p. 77). Bosniaks became synonymous with ‘the Turk’, justified as responsible for Serb historical grievances.

“In an orgy of nationalism bathed in alcohol, athletic contests, and Serbian songs, Serb soldiers threw Muslims off cliffs and from hotel roofs into rivers, carved Orthodox crosses into their chests, hacked off the arms or legs of their victims, made women clean up the mess from such amputations, and then raped the women on top of the blood-soaked rags. Destroying the Muslim Other became a prerogative and imperative. Killing a Muslim – a Turk– became a heroic deed, reminiscing of the golden ages of the Serbian state from six hundred years ago” (Jovanović, p. 77).

The extent of ethnic violence during the war was utterly evil and dehumanizing. Ethnic hatred propelled by nationalistic leadership in an instable area resulted with an all out blood-bath. The severity of the ethnic tensions is rooted deeply in Bosnia’s violent scarred past. At both the individual and collective level, “ethnically-motivated violence” and “institutional and symbolic aspects of insecurity” (Bojicic, 2015) are present. Absence of true reconciliation and normalization

leaves communities vulnerable to ethno-nationalistic rhetoric of aggressive leadership that thrives on ethnic division for power.

Analysis and Findings

Structural Paradox of Ethnic Divisions and Peace Agreement

In 1995 U.S. and EU involvement in Bosnia resulted with a cease fire to the war and the creation of the Dayton Peace Agreement which divided the country along ethnic warfront lines, with each region composed of nearly “homogenous ethnic territories carved out by brutal acts of violence” (Bojicic, 2015). The Federation of BiH with Croats and Bosniaks, and the Republic Srpska with Serbs as the majority. The Dayton outlined an ethnic power sharing structure of a government and tri-presidency based on consensus, compromised of one president of each ethnic representation. The intent was to introduce a foundation of “territorial self-government and power sharing” for initial temporary reconstruction to “provide for collective and individual security alignment over time” (Bojicic, 2015). This structural paradox inherently discourages integration by highlighting ethnic zones. The “goal was to create ethnically pure states. History shows that this is impossible” (M. Finaud, personal communication, September 14, 2018). The Dayton has been conducive to a “comprehensive separation of identities” with “incentivized exclusive ethnic politics” (Bojicic, 2015). The Western intervening “redrawing of the map” reflects a dilemma with the belief that “ethnic identities are fixed and irreconcilable” (Bojicic, 2015) and require bordered separation.

The tri-presidency structure aimed to promote cooperation and equal representation; however, this has not been accomplished. Croats and Serbs coordinate political interests, explainable by their preferences to reform towards “different state arrangement, either integrating territories of neighboring states, populated by ethnic kin, or seceding to join them” (Lange, Nechev, & Trauner, 2017, p. 67) while the Bosniaks are pushing for collaborative integrative efforts. Collaborators of the agreement only needed to look to the past to see the writing on the

wall for the future. In 1990 when the League of Communists of Yugoslavia fragmented, Bosnia attempted an electoral coalition to form a multiparty leadership, “but their political and territorial ambitions were incompatible. The parliament failed to pass a single law, and war was stoked by neighboring nationalists in the spring of 1992” (Lampe, 2018b). Recent history highlights the failure of the multiethnic structure—a pattern neglected during Peace Agreements—that set Bosnia up to remain deadlocked and vulnerable to ethnic violence and political uncertainty.

Current Atmosphere in Bosnia-Herzegovina

An interrelated scheme of ethnic tension, political instability, economic insecurity, and inter-regional disputes contribute to a mutually re-enforcing security dilemma that threatens stability and advancement. These factors leave BiH vulnerable at both the individual and collective level. BiH continues to require international involvement towards stabilization. Bosnia is pending as “a potential candidate country for EU membership” (European Commission, 2014, p.4) but overall is still threatened by a “deep crisis of politics and state intuitions” that have halted the progression of EU integration (Stratulat, 2014). EU internal politics regarding enlargement determine the difference between how the EU *should* and how the EU *is* involved in Bosnia. At large, the interconnected factors that threaten security and lacking international involvement determine Bosnia’s future, and it appears to be a stagnant grim one at best.

Ethnic Atmosphere

The current state of ethnic divisions is stable yet vulnerable. Resilience in civil society is prominent, despite overwhelming challenges, the current ethnic atmosphere of the country has cooperation present; “Serbs and Croats come to live and work in Sarajevo; Bosniaks go in other parts of the country for work and trade” (Karcic). However, the political environment has radicalized more and increased polarization between people, while there is a lot of cooperation, “I wouldn’t say that people are living happily together” (Karcic). People go off to school and work

in other areas, “but at the end of the day, everyone goes back to their homes in their small polarized societies” (Karcic). Ethnic division remains a significant driving force behind politics, the economy, media, education, and social interactions (Bojicic, 2015) that all influence the stability. There are undoubtedly “wounds from the three-year conflict that claimed some 100,000 lives and displaced about 2 million people” (RFE/RL,&Balkan Service, 2018) that continue to “fester”.

This may be due to a lack of reconciliation and accountability for the past—people are not ready to fully accept what happened yet, and that is a process that must happen organically (Chakravarti). Serb nationalists reject the occurrence of genocide, which was formally recognized by the ICTY; and when they denounce such, there’s no reaction from the international community. “Serbian politicians know that if they recognize the genocide, they will lose votes among the general public. That’s why everyone is denying it” (Karcic). There is a refusal to acknowledge the severe grievances of Bosniaks from wartime and neglect blame for mass murder. In generalized terms, “everybody in RS is denying Srebrenica genocide: people of the local, middle, and leadership all deny it” which highlights that “ordinary people are not ready to come to terms with what happened” (Karcic). The in-cohesive nature of multi-ethnic communities remains uncomfortable and threatening to normalization and reconciliation. Society struggles to collectively recognize its recent history and move forward in a united manner. Prior to the war there was a difference of rural and urban areas with pockets of different ethnic groups; after the war the two entities are semi-autonomous and nearly homogenous. Within the entirety of Republic Srpska, there is only a 5% Bosniak demographic (Karcic). The majority of the Bosniak and Croat population are in the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina while the majority Serb population is in RS. At the collective level, ethnic tensions have further been manipulated by ethno-nationalistic

political agendas to maintain power and delay further state integration—leaving all citizens without sufficient collective security and unresolved pain from the past.

Political Inflammatory Dividing Effect

Political leaders in Bosnia have long since and continue to thrive off of ethnic divisions, utilizing nationalistic rhetoric to drive divisions and fear in order to maintain influence and power. Nationalisms are “entities in flux”, both “flexible and rigid at the same time, depending on the historical, political and social situation” (Jovanović, 2017, p.84). Bosnian politics are “dominated by ethno-nationalist parties who propagate divisive political agendas, thereby hindering the emergence of multicultural societies” (Emini, et al. 2018, p.12) rather than supporting coexistence and tolerance. During the Dayton process, international actors engaged with the same local parties that led the country into war by “inciting ethnic fear through a combination of inflammatory rhetoric and violent practice” (Bojicic, 2015)—setting the stage for corruption from the start. As in the past, a fostered ‘us’ versus ‘them’ mentality transcends from the elite where the main lines of contention “run along ethnic lines” (Donais, 2005, p.31). The manipulated ethnic polarizing effect is the foundation of nationalistic politics (Emini, et al. 2018, p.6), encouraging a fragile environment with outbursts of ethnic nationalism that keep threat of new armed conflicts alive.

Stagnant Political Corruption

Stagnant corruption in politics not only aggravates ethnic divisions, but polarizes and deadlocks society from advancement, leaving Bosnia in a vulnerable position in which little positive change is actualized and corruption is the norm and only avenue to function within. Leaders utilize ethnic security as a political tool to maintain power and in Republic Srpska’s case—threaten secession. The dangerous practice of espousing ethnicity introduces “arbitrariness and unpredictability” (Bojicic, 2015) in outcome and severity of impact with damaging polarizing effects on society. Ethnic tensions extend beyond symbolic unease and potential violence to discourses “linked to

specific dynamics of political, economic and coercive power” (Bojicic, 2015). Rade Dzeletovic, Serb veteran, highlights, “people, on all sides are forgotten by the politicians” (Borger, 2012). Semsadin Pojata, a Boniak war veteran, agrees: “the politicians want us to live in 1992, but I don’t want to live in 1992” (Borger, 2012). This is a popular opinion throughout all sides, a feeling of being “trapped by the grip the parties” (Borger, 2012). Bosnian political leaders of are “more invested in their short term personal futures than the long term future of the country” (P. Butcher, personal communication, October 9, 2018), leaving civil society struggling without help.

The Bosnian political system is permeated by corruption that destabilizes and deadlocks the country. The “entire failure of the constitutional settlement since Dayton that has frozen the country in 1995. There is no political cooperation that can get any kind of reform through” (Butcher). The fight against corruption is challenging; politicians are able to essentially “fake” democracy in a weak state institution environment of impunity (Lange et al, 2017, p. 13; Emini, et al, 2018, p. 48) where they remain committed to their polarized political competition “based on a zero-sum game” (Lange et al, 2017, p.68). Bosnia’s reconstruction period is rived with weak state institutions in which “the political class is still tied to the old regime which manifests corruption of strong cronies and nepotism” (Finaud). Bosnia is an “uniquely complex difficult situation” in which a multitude of multi-ethnic-religious populations are confined in a small ex-Yugoslavia territory with a violent recent war history where institutions of “state corruption from the top down makes it so that the only way to function and thrive is to be corrupt” (R. Imhoof, personal communication, October 10, 2018).

This is further damaging as the elites’ corruptive behavior extends into the rule of law and the media—two components that counter corruption. Judge selection “is the product of political patronage, and judges’ salaries are controlled by political party structures” (Shafer, Bruno, Kalkus,

& Espinola, 2000, p.4). There is obvious incentive to align with political agendas, and elites “often prevent cases involving organized crime and corruption from being heard” (Shafer et al, 2000, p.4). There is not developed “accountability through rule of law and checks and balances” which “allows corruption to persist and flourish” (Chakravarti). The corruption further extends into local police authority who often display incompetent response and ethnic selectivity and harassment with “alliance to ethnic political parties rather than to the public” (Shafer et al, 2000, p.3). Within the media, “most are owned and funded by local political parties”; while they have improved over the past 10 years, there is still “a lot of bigotry and fake news” (Karcic). Rule of law, local authority, and media have all been infiltrated and tainted by political corruption. This represents an environment incapable of purging corruption. The absence of credible intuitions and authority allows corruption to flourish without accountability. Political corruption in Bosnia has manifested in deadlock; “if officials are smart, the less they do, the less feathers they disturb and longer they are in power” (A. Vautravers, personal communication, September 24, 2018). The Dayton created a system in which official positions have “nothing to do with qualification or skill and *everything* to do with ethnicity. The cards are set in advance. This encourages a slow, bureaucratic system of corruption where no one will do anything dramatic to instil positive change” (Vautravers).

Economic Insecurity

Economic underdevelopment in Bosnia is both a result of perpetual political corruption and an inhibiting obstacle to progression and stabilization. Economic insecurity aggravates ethnic tensions, further destabilizing society. Studies highlight increased aggression and outbreaks of violence in communities under economic distress (Lange, S. K., Nechev, Z., & Trauner, 2017). This was exemplified in 2014 Tuzla protests over the closure of several formerly run state factories due to elite privation (Salem, 2014); protests of which resulted with no political change and were funded by political parties (Karcic). According to a 2018 Bosnian poll, 57% of citizens identify

unemployment as the biggest problem facing the country (Center for Insights in Survey Research, 2018). Nationwide, “joblessness stands at 44.5 percent” with 60 percent in the 15-24 age bracket. “The average wage is around \$545 per month—one of the lowest in Europe” (Salem, 2014). These statistics are *incredibly* frightening for the stability and prospects of BiH.

Economic development is not a singular isolated issue—it is heavily intertwined with political corruption. Bosnia’s political system is “mired in corruption and nepotism” in which embezzlement and incompetency flourishes. There is a steady trend of “mass privatization that has led to almost total de-industrialization and the dependence on imported goods and services” (Štiks, 2014). This manifests in a “combination of inefficient management, skimming, and the state turning a blind eye to it all”; and has driven “vitaly important local industries to the point of collapse” (Salem, 2014). Economic underdevelopment in the presence of stagnant corruption has created a top down system where corruptive behavior is necessary to remain afloat; “the only way to function is to be corrupt. So long as you are connected to one of the top heads, somewhere on the ladder, you will see benefit—if you are not there will be nothing” (Imhoof).

Bosnia has had little economic and political progress since the end of the war (Butcher). It is fair to acknowledge that “once the economic situation becomes better, nationalist parties tend to lose power. Bosnia’s economy is slowly becoming better, but there’s still a lot of corruption here” (Karcic). International involvement and integration is needed to improve economic development and advance the country: investments, regional trade, pressure on BiH government, maintenance of freedom of press, and prosecution of corruption are all needed in order to move forward (Karcic). Bosnia is a small country and needs increased economic and political integration with neighbor states. Economic investments and assistance are beneficial, however capacity for change is limited when corruption flourishes. The EU’s approach with economic reform neglects such:

“Radical political reform needs to happen before anything else can. However, the EU’s approach at the moment seems to be the opposite. It seems to be that the EU has given up on changing the Dayton settlement and instead is trying to improve economic opportunities. This needs to be done, but these economic issues are not completely divorced from the political problems of the country. When the two entities of the country are not cooperating on anything, that makes it very difficult to have a functioning economy” (Butcher).

This perpetuation of deadlock hurts the citizens the most. The EU’s economic development assistance neglects the roots of the issue, and therefore is not conducive nor productive. There is a balance of need for be “organic” transformation that “will take time” (Chakravarti). Increased development decreases capacity for inflammatory ethnic tensions and lower risks of radicalization. Proactive measures to encourage development before vulnerabilities escalate into conflict are needed beyond the current level of investment and assistance. Nothing is going to really change until the Dayton settlement is revised, but there is absolutely no political will to do that in the EU, the U.S., or in Bosnia (Butcher; Chakravarti). Bosnia may be a situation where in order for real change, things need to get worse before they can get better.

Inter-regional Instability: Threatening of Secession from Republic Srpska

Another source of uncertainty and corruptive stagnation is the Republic Srpska (RS) threat of secession, currently led by Serb nationalist Miloard Dokic. There is a balance of realities in which threat of RS secession is fairly continuous yet remains a boiling point of tension; despite all, lack of international support for secession inhibits its scope of reality and therefore another deadlock situation results. Newly reelected president of RS, Miloard Dokic is a long standing leader with increased nationalistic tendencies and a personal agenda of power. The United Nations (UN) report details Dokic’s goal for RS is “eventual independence and union with Serbia” (2017). Not far behind him Croat politicians are advocating for “reorganization of the country along ethnic lines” (Secretary General, 2017). The Peace Agreement details that “entities have no right to secede” and the “sovereignty and territorial integrity” (Secretary General, 2017) of Bosnia must remain.

Dodik's winning campaign was set against the ICTY ruling that the 1995 Srebrenica massacre was a genocide (Bojicic, 2015; Hoare, 2014, p. 516). His main aim is to be in power. However, "it is not only Dodik who is questionable. Each and every Serb political party wants to succeed from Bosnia. Dodik is not the only problem. The whole policy is the problem" (Karcic).

His aggressive ethno-nationalistic rhetoric has rekindled post-war polarization and presents a stabilization threat and severely inhibits progression of reconciliation. Dodik is highly pro-Russian; his continued leadership presence will "stagnate Bosnia's integration into NATO and the EU, which is very problematic" (Karcic). Dodik inflames matters further by denying the rule of law in Bosnia. According to 2017 UN report, RS has refused to register their defense inventory, "openly violating the principle of the rule of law"; RS high authorities have "no intention of implementing the final binding decision of the Court" (2017). To make matters more concerning, Russia has been identified as an arms supplier for RS and a financial counter-balance to U.S. sanctions: "Russia's recent \$125 million Yugoslav-era debt repayment to Bosnia, was primary a lifeline for Dodik, who in January was sanctioned by the U.S. Treasury for conducting an unconstitutional referendum in late 2016" (Mujanovic, 2017). There are "very concerning developments in RS with Russian influence in police and military training" however, in the end despite the surface layer of war preparation appearance, it is doubtful that Dodik would get any real international support from Russia or Serbia for secession and that is something that is needed to make the threat reality (Butcher). The threat from Dodik is nothing new, RS has wanted secession since 1991 (Vautravers). Dodik's provoking political behavior and incapacity to cooperate presents a security concern detailed by a UN report as "a worrying escalation in irresponsible and inflammatory rhetoric challenging the fundamentals" (2018) of the Peace Agreement. Dodik's statement in 2017 outlines clear intentions for secession:

“I believe that in this century the Serb people will have the right to be one, because of their suffering in the past. And that it is completely natural for us to be together. And when I say together, that means together in the territorial and state sense, to avoid any doubts. Because we are together anyway” (Secretary General, 2017).

Despite such rhetoric, the lacking self-sufficiency in Bosnia discourages secession. BiH is supported by international donations, primarily from the EU, which could disappear if RS separated (E. Fouéré, personal communication, October 2, 2018). Threats of secession are inflammatory but primarily manifest in the “overly bureaucratic system with inefficient deadlock” (Vautravers). While Dodik strives to legitimize secession efforts, its primary use stands to be a “bargaining chip against his colleagues in BiH government. But “the reality is, that if something like that were to happen, it would be *huge*. The danger is of a domino effect. Tinkering with borders in Western Balkans is like put a match a fire. It would be very dangerous” (Fouéré)

Looking at the long-term intended evolution for the country, Bosnia is in its rebuilding and reconciliation stage following a highly violent ethnic regional war that had a dynamic impact on the ethnic relations of the territory. While violence in the country is not currently present, the potential for the pendulum to swing towards such is only more increased with inflammatory ethnocentric rhetoric. Dodik inflammatory behavior must be countered. There is a strong need for the presence of international engagement and dialogue. A “carrot and a stick approach with support from EU with warnings of consequences for such action” is necessary; the “unilateral threat is irrational and counterproductive.” Not even Russia or Serbia is on board for complete destabilization (Finaud). Logistically, Bosnia itself is quite small; “you can’t get through place A to place B without crossing the two entities. The federation lines were set long front lines.” Secession will not be better for the future; legitimate separation “is only going to polarize people even more” (Karcic). As long as RS is allowed to play off of the narrative of integration with greater Serbia, RS will continue to, “but once the West tells them to back off, they will back off.”

(Karcic). The source of corruption then comes back to the policies that have allowed such behavior to thrive. The reoccurring nationalist rhetoric in BiH is “a result of politicians finding that they can do very well holding onto power, enriching themselves and their friends, through whipping up fears about the ethnic fears in the country. It’s more about cronyism and corruption than it is about actual war mongering and beating the drum” (Butcher). Bosnia is frozen, and Bosnia is vulnerable.

External Actors Involved

There are two persisting themes in the discussion of external actors in Bosnia; one is the lack of Western involvement from the EU and the U.S. The other important theme is the presence of “meddling” (Clark, 2018) foreign powers of Russia, Turkey, and China. In the eyes of the West, BiH is relatively ‘fine’; no physical violence is occurring and there are no motivations to drive further assistance (Imhoof). For Western powers, while “Bosnia was further up on the agenda years ago, [it] has since moved down” (Finaud). The U.S. decreased responsibilities in BiH after Dayton, under the impression that the “democratic future lay in EU membership” and therefore handed over economic, political, and institutional development to Brussels (Clark, 2018).

In the absence of Western influence, Russia, China, and Turkey have taken the initiative to exert influence in Bosnia for a multitude of purposes. Such influences at large do not contribute an overall positive change for BiH, but instead flesh out polarization and propel state interest in relation to Europe rather than progress in Bosnia. These countries have taken advantage of Bosnia’s “lingering political conflicts over the ethno-religious character” and have capitalized on the “neglect by democracies that were instrumental in bringing the Yugoslav wars to an end” (Clark, 2018). Thus finding momentum to explore personal geopolitical interests in the wake of the “combustible mix of poor governance, economic stagnation and weak democratic institutions” (Clark, 2018) in Bosnia. “It all depends who is in power. We will see, nobody can say for sure. What is evident, is the role of Russia is increasing in Bosnia and that is not a good thing” (Karcic).

The EU appears to be blind to the current geopolitical positioning powers in the Balkans. In the event that these powerful countries coordinated with each other, perhaps the narrative of involvement in BiH would shift away from Western influence and towards a much different future under the influence of such actors (Krastev, 2018).

Russia

Russia has historical and consistent involvement in the Balkans, particularly in connection to the cultural, military, and political ties with Serbia and the Serbian population in Bosnia (Karcic; Chakravarti; Butcher). Russia's supportive influence with the Serb demographic correlates with a very strong geopolitical symbolic representation of a support-kin state. The seemingly continuous presence of Russia highlights that Bosnia's political environment is "not an isolated issue" (Finaud). Dodik is in Moscow often; Russia is exerting considerable influence of select leaders (Fouéré) in addition to supporting extremist groups and "anti-EU and anti-NATO sentiments" while "dispensing targeted military aid" (Clark, 2018) to RS. The Balkan region is an area where Russia "can work to destabilize the EU at very low political cost for itself, both in cash terms and in risking a confrontation with the U.S." (Krastev, 2018). It is a common misconception that Russia is highly economically active in Bosnia. In reality, "70% trade is with the EU, only under 5% is with Russia." For the time being, "Russia has strong weight because EU has been weak" (Fouéré, 2018). It is "not surprising that Russia is trying to push its own interests and influences" in the midst of a stage of "growing tensions and power politics" (Finaud). Russia is keen on decreasing EU and NATO involvement in the Balkans—BiH is apart of that agenda (Karcic). Yugoslavia, "was never in the Soviet block, not necessarily in the West either, but was always riding a balance between the two" (Butcher). There have been trends of influence from Western European influence in Bosnia, but consistent Russian influence as well. Bosnia itself is located in

an interesting geopolitical position, in many ways a clashing of continents, ethnicity, and religion—highlighting the possibilities for a diverse range of external influence and interest.

Turkey

Turkish involvement in Bosnia can be attributed to motivations categorized by the historical narrative with Bosniaks and geopolitical interests to increase access to Europe. Turkey’s “cultural influence is hard to miss” (Birnbaum, 2013) as they are the third largest investor in Bosnia (Clark, 2018) and frequent visitors to Sarajevo. Bosnia has a comparative increased likelihood of EU integration, and the Turks want influence in Europe. Bosnia is “European, but it still feels like home. The smell, the culture, it’s recognizably Turkish”(Birnbaum, 2013). Bosnia, “for all its problems, will be in the EU before Turkey is” (Birnbaum, 2013). Turkey is a big regional power, and “The Balkans was always their path to conquering Europe. They had to come through here” (Birnbaum, 2013). Bosnia also provides opportunity for economic growth and religious-cultural expansion. Turkey struggles with “ethnic violence that has engulfed neighboring Syria” (Birnbaum, 2013) and recognizes potential economic opportunity in Bosnia. Turkey is “very involved” (Chakravarti), “particularly in Sarajevo” (Butcher). Turkey funds building of schools, universities, and mosques in predominantly Muslims areas where they are likely to be appreciated (Jovanović, 2017, p.79; Chakravarti). This relationship is growing, and for the Bosnian youth, Turkey becomes appealing both culturally and economically as Bosnia continues to struggle with economic unemployment (Birnbaum, 2013).

China and the Gulf States

China stands as a primarily economic influencer in the region. China is heavily investing in infrastructure through the Balkan region in order to access the European market under the new Belt Road Initiative; as observed in Africa, “such investments almost always come with strings attached” (Clark, 2018). However, their involvement has other geopolitical interests with indirect

“influence in the EU in years to come” (Butcher). China is not involved for the betterment of Bosnia, but rather sees the country as a vulnerable avenue to advance their geo-economics agenda.

On the other end of the spectrum, Gulf States exert influence in Bosnia in accordance with religious cultural interests. Saudi Arabia and other Gulf States have “focused their contributions on supporting religious organizations, building new mosques and offering religious instruction to local imams” (Clark, 2018). A main concern is the vulnerability of influence under the “strict Wahhabi interpretation of Islam” that “bears little relation to the moderate tradition that has been practiced in the Balkans for centuries” (Clark, 2018). The last thing Bosnia needs is radical Islamic influence from external factors. However, the country is poor and needs donations and funding, who that comes from is relatively immaterial at this point.

Assessment of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Future Stabilization

Bosnia is in a stagnant corruptive state with optics of a downward spiral, and according to policy and Balkan experts, in need of international involvement to prevent further digression from stabilization (Fouéré; Butcher). The economy is drowning, ethnic tensions are rising, and politics have not been functional in decades. Within the tri-presidency, “agreements must be unanimous. They normally never agree on anything” (Karcic). Constitutional reform is needed. The Dayton ended the war but only had capacity for temporary constitutional transition following period of war and genocide—it was not intended to be a permanent governmental structure (Bojicic, 2015; Tamkin, 2018). BiH remains deadlocked in its “multi-layered dysfunctional governance structure and institutionally entrenched ethnic divisions” (Emini, et al. 2018, p. 44). There is threat of Croat politicians to create a third entity and continuous RS threat for secession (Fouéré). There is little political will from international actors to influence real change, and the reforms purposed with towards EU integration “have been opposed by the country’s nationalist leaders” (Lampe, 2018b) who are focused on short-term personal gain rather than stabilization for Bosnia.

Importance of Reconciliation

Another necessity for long-term stability is reconciliation. The ICTY intent to instill reconciliation for Bosnia through means of justice resulted with the conviction of several leaders for genocide and war crimes. While “justice is a necessary means of peace building” (Finaud), the verdicts must be acknowledged as credible for reconciliation to diffuse organically. Unfortunately, the recognition of ICTY verdicts have been consistently neglected by Serbs—without international backlash for such behavior (Karcic). Such dismissal of verdicts concerning the Srebrenica genocide, a highly sensitive and devastating event, are incredibly damaging to the cohesion of society. Serb dismissal of ICTY verdicts in essence removes any ounce of reconciliation that was intended to help the people of Bosnia move forward from their violent past. Reconciliation itself cannot be imposed; it requires “local ownership” (Fouéré) and willingness to accept the past—but Serbs are not willing nor ready to (Karcic). Reconciliation is imperative; “you will never have a stable solution to conflict unless there is reconciliation” (Finaud). However, “people still have not come to terms with what happened and aren’t ready to forgive each other—this must happen organically” (Chakravarti). Until civil society is willing to acknowledge past, old wounds will not heal (Finaud). People are divided and unsure as to how to heal and coexist with the recent grievances from an extremely violent ethnic war; there is a struggle for balancing the respect and grievances of the past, but also the need to leave the past behind in order to move forward (Colborne, 2018). This will take time and new generations of people detached from the severe pain that still is inflicted in Bosnia.

Educational structures are a tangible reform for reconciliation, however, still require reform. The Bosnian education system reinforces ethnic division. Schooling is drastically different in each federation with narratives of “self-victimization and apportioning blame to the other side, as shaped during the wars, have persisted and are reproduced in school textbooks and the media”

(Lange et al. 2017, p. 67). Bosnia must allow the new generations to distance themselves from ethnic hatred, a process that is greatly impeded on from prejudice schooling.

In order for true reconciliation, both the political and civil sphere must be ready. In Bosnia, “I’m not sure that its entirely possible to draw a distinction from the political and civil society sphere.” They are very closely connected. The fact that there is a lack of reconciliation in the political sphere means that “by default, there is not real reconciliation in civil society either” (Butcher). While there are many anti-nationalist political parties, these opposition parties are “completely disorganized” and “struggling to be effective towards change” (Butcher). There is weak support in civil society for change, but Bosnia is the “kind of country where political support is needed otherwise you are kind of stuck” (Butcher). Factors such as the “entrenched elite, political interference in public administration, and the rule of law” (Fouéré) are all mutually reinforcing issues that prevent political advancement. The current institutional capacity to encourage and guarantee long term stability and promote reconciliation is absent. The reemergence of nationalistic rhetoric in addition to the history of war in the 1990s has “created such deep wounds that it will take generations [for Bosnia] to overcome” (Fouéré). It is “imperative that there is an attention to the integration and reconciliation of civil society; ethnic tensions inflamed from nationalist rhetoric and must be acknowledged. It is equally important to promote reconciliation, multiethnic tolerance, and remembrance throughout the new generations to stabilize the country (Fouéré, 2018b). BiH “continues to produce more history than it can absorb” (Fouéré, 2018a) and requires consistent EU involvement to shape the progress in a positive direction to encourage long-term peace for the region. The leaders in place to create an ideal setting for reconciliation are overwhelmingly absent; “we need six Mandalas for the Western Balkans” (Fouéré).

Assessment of European Union Involvement in Bosnia-Herzegovina

In 2000 and 2003, the EU formally committed to integrate the Balkans into their enlargement plan. This decision was primarily to ensure regional stability; however, the organic shift towards reform did not materialize (European Commission, 2014; Fouéré, 2018). Current EU involvement has shifted from long-term strategy for progress in rule of law and democratic standards to merely maintaining surface stability (Butcher, Fouéré). The EU crisis management in BiH for the past 20 years has “remained both inconclusive and limited” (Emerson, 2007, p. 40). Most reform is focused on an “overly optimistic approach” on “stimulating economic growth” which assumed an “[automatic accompaniment on] increased efforts on rule of law” (Fouéré, 2018a); which did not occur. Without an effective rule of law, economic reform has limited impact (Fouéré, 2016). In the early post-war stages, the EU should have been more proactive in enforcing leadership standards in BiH (Fouéré). BiH is still held back by “weak state institutions, increased erosion of the democratic checks and balances, and alarming levels of corruption and unchecked authoritarian tendencies” (Fouéré, 2018a). This interconnected combination of unsettling factors demands the need for the EU to “renew its commitment to the region” (Fouéré, 2018b). The lack of EU voice has granted corruptive leadership a level of impunity (Fouéré). EU involvement in the reconstruction of BiH has been an “underwhelming performance” and “does not offer a good example of conflict management” on the EU and its failure to “grasp the depth of the crisis in time and not heeding the warning signs that were clearly visible for several years” (Fouéré, 2018a). This highlights the resulting effect of power politics on BiH, a small country that needs to be out of war—but does not need to be successful—in the interests of current world powers.

Inhibitors to EU involvement

Timing is everything. Not only does BiH lack the current democratic and rule of law standards, but EU “internal politics have gone off the rails” (Grygiel, 2016) which decreases EU attention

directed at Balkan enlargement. The Brexit vote highlights EU shortcomings and in-cohesive structure. The EU must “sort out its own internal issues and recapture its own heart and mind before it brings in countries that are overwhelmingly economically underdeveloped. The Balkans are more of a liability and security issue for the EU to give membership” (Butcher).

EU internal politics of regional differentiating geopolitical interests divide opinion on Balkan enlargement (Csurgai, 2018). The debate of ‘breadth versus depth’ in the EU will continue to delay the ‘picking sides’ for EU political votes “until the EU parliament elections next year” (Fouéré, 2018c). European countries neighboring Bosnia are supportive of enlargement for regional stabilization factors. However, countries geographically detached highlight only economic disadvantages from BiH integration—one of the poorest European countries. Within the EU, enlargement is incorrectly associated with populist political opinions on migration issues. Populism “is an existential threat to the EU” and its strengthening has resulted with an undermining of basic European and democratic values (Fouéré). The resulting victim of such internal politics is neglecting enlargement (Butcher; Fouéré; Chakavarti).

Another challenge is EU denial of failure in Bosnia. The U.S. and the EU were the “main architects of the peace deal and the parties responsible for halting conflict in the 90s. They want to show it as a success story; frankly, it’s not a success story. If there was a return to conflict, it would be very clear that Western policy failed in Bosnia” (Butcher). Further, the previous synergy between the U.S. and EU towards BiH has disappeared (Fouéré) which removes international pressure on the corrupt Bosnian government and institutions.

Need for Change with EU Involvement

The EU has failed to address corruptive politics in Bosnia that inhibit progression toward EU membership (Butcher; Fouéré; Imhoof; Vautravers). While commission reports since 2005 highlight Bosnia as a dysfunctional political system and society, there has not been sufficient

correcting response (European Commission, 2014; EPC, 2016). Balkan and EU Policy Expert Dr. Fouéré highlights, “no one has had the courage or the sufficient political weight to push for a much more comprehensive constitutional reform. I don’t see that happening in the foreseeable future” (2018c). Hesitation and reluctance from EU enlargement foreign policy has “led to a reduction in the attention span of the EU about the Western Balkans and has become very haphazard. It is quite clear that if the momentum is not there, the backsliding will just continue” (Fouéré).

Despite current EU underperformance in BiH, EU membership is a tangible legitimize solution towards stabilization that surpasses counterpart influence such as Russia, Turkey, and China in the region. Groups of “all political stripes realize that EU integration is the countries only hope” (Butcher). 86 percent of Bosnians “believe the country is heading in the wrong direction” and “64 percent of all Bosnians strongly support EU membership” (Lakic, 2018) to influence positive change for the country. While “the Bosnian-Serbs like to talk about ties to Russia, and the Bosniaks ties to Turkey; it is not a realistic replacement to the EU membership” (Butcher).

The primary motivation for EU involvement in BiH is prevention of return to conflict; however, the EU is not showing a depth of interest towards constitutional reform that would instill real change and progress toward EU membership for Bosnia (Chakravarti; Fouéré). The EU has a permanent geopolitical interest vested in BiH; unlike the U.S. who is geographically detached from Europe (Imhoof), the EU neighbors BiH. There is a “hole in the European map that needs to be filled in so it does not become an existential threat to the rest of the cohesion of the EU” (Butcher). It “clearly makes sense to integrate this region into the EU orbit” (Butcher). Economically speaking, Bosnia is highly relevant in German and Austrian markets, with many Bosnian citizens living and working abroad. Approximately 45% of Bosnian citizens live outside

of Bosnia, mainly in Croatia, Germany, Austria (Butcher). The EU must further integrate Bosnia; “It doesn’t need to mean full membership, although that is the ultimate aim” (Butcher).

The EU must shift to a very ‘hands on approach’ in which there is a consistent, sufficient, and proactive monitoring on BiH government with consequences when standards and deadlines are not met. Bosnia has a threatening combination of fragile state institutions, “deeply polarized societies”, entrenched corruptive elites, and boiling ethnic tensions that demand a much more “political and strategic approach” (Fouéré, 2018a) from the EU. EU involvement cannot be “a once off thing, it has to be permanent” (Fouéré). The approach cannot be involvement when things shift towards danger, it must be “consistent engagement” for “qualitative change” (Fouéré). *If and when* EU membership materializes for BiH, it will “certainly mean more [progression] towards stabilization and solving this frozen conflict” (Finaud). Economically, BiH would “gain dramatically” with full access to the single market and freedom of movement for workers (Finaud). EU membership has the capacity to resolve the first ‘hierarchy of need’ for Bosnian people, and that is income from economic development and increased job availability. Additionally, the ethnic tensions present within Bosnia—especially in regards to borders—could potentially deescalate with EU membership. Once Bosnia becomes apart of the EU, “apart of the larger family, any territorial differences don’t make sense anymore. In the EU the idea is to open up borders, not close them” (Karcic). EU membership is a move towards inclusion rather than exclusion—which is easy to then understand why RS is maximizing delay towards EU integration. While measures of EU membership certainly appear appealing, “the EU has currently been very quiet about everything” (Karcic) and does not show incentive to alter its absent presence.

Proposed EU membership does not solve all the problems of Bosnia, but it would be a step in the right direction. In the meantime, despite internal politics the EU is still a highly powerful

tool in ‘carrot-stick’ approach with reform in BiH (Finaud). Long-term, there is a need to balance “economic incentives, create new jobs, remove the temptations for this corruption, and promote the rule of law.” Such agendas require a magnitude of effort and resources to “put into place new generations of leaders and to remove threats and temptations of corruption.” BiH needs to reconstruct into “a viable state to then encourage stability in society” (Finaud). NATO membership would be an additional stabilizing factor for Bosnia; further integration into western influences will promote change and influence in Bosnia (Karcic). While all is true, the EU is not currently prioritizing enlargement for internal political reasons and EU reform is necessary prior to further enlargement—the right political timing is necessary for further EU integration (Butcher).

Conclusion

Root of the Problem

The root of the interconnected array of problems in Bosnia derives from stagnant political corruption that prevents constitutional reform, economic growth, and encouragement of ethnic reconciliation. Bosnia has a “hyper division in government structure based purely on ethnicity” (Vautravers) that benefits from a mutually reinforcing system of manipulated ethnic fear in civil society that further powers nationalism. Political deadlock maintains a frozen society in 1995—generating the perfect circumstances for corruption and impunity in the entrenched elite.

Before any dynamic change can materialize in economic development or reconciliation in civil society, the political system must be reformed. The revision and adaption of new constitutional frameworks will require time (Karcic) and new generations to “create a stabilized system” (Finaud). Only in the event of international influence will there be enough prevalent momentum to swing the pendulum towards such. Once there is clear presence of Western influence, negotiations towards consensus with promise for real change can occur. Shift towards dynamic positive change requires more than an ‘organic process’. The process itself is corrupt and

has been for decades. It is a bold decision to influence real change and must be powered by international actors that hold greater leverage than corrupt Bosnian officials. The EU has leverage in “conditioning support towards EU integration” (Finaud) and stands as an influential platform for reform; however as discussed earlier, the EU remains to display effectiveness. Diplomatically speaking, there is the needed presence of multiple international actors such as the U.S., NATO, UN, and Russia (Butcher; Karcic). It should be “understood by all parties that they cannot only rely on one actor to influence and change everything. It needs a compromising interactive approach to balance interests” (Finaud). A multi-diplomatic pressuring towards reform has the potential to actualize tangible advancement for Bosnia.

Why Nothing Will Change

As hypothesized, Western involvement has been insignificant and does not have a realistic outlook for dynamic involvement in the near future. Both the current state of the EU and the corruption that flourishes in Bosnia remain unopposed. In the relative short term, there is not an environment with the capacity to influence political reform to cleanse elite entrenchment and nationalistic influence from Bosnian government. International pressure is needed to do such when Bosnian society cannot, and there is no international pressure nor political motivation to influence such.

Also hypothesized was the negative direction of destabilization in Bosnia of which is supported throughout the paper via different thematic discourses of ethnic divisions, political corruption, internal regional disputes over RS secession, economic underdevelopment, negative external influences, and absent Western involvement. The structure of Bosnia was destined for deadlock and failure from the get-go; the Dayton Peace Agreement was created at large to prevent violence but did not have elements to encourage plausible advancement and success. The agreement was intended to be temporary, however, insufficient involvement from the U.S. and EU following Dayton left corruption to continue as it had. The Dayton allowed ethno-nationalist elite

leadership, “greatly responsible for the war” to remain in power, “rewarded in peace not only by ethnic partition, but also with all the wealth of the territories they control” (Štikš, 2014). These corrupt elite were the individuals that the international community and the EU set as “high representatives” and “treated as their main partners” (Štikš, 2014). It was highly naïve to assume that a war and genocide stricken country would progress successfully towards legitimate stabilization and democracy without highly integrated help of powerful western influence in such circumstances. The needed permanent involvement following the Dayton was absent, allowing two decades for stagnation in political, economic, and social realms of the country. Since all aspects are intertwined, it is impossible for true advancement in one area to occur without advancement in other areas. Realistically, “as long as there is international pressure in the country things will get better, but currently BiH is not so interesting for the West. The West has other problems” (Karcic).

A pressing thought to consider are the hidden political interests beyond lack of action from the U.S. and the EU, for it was “never in the U.S. nor Europe’s interest for Bosnia or the rest of the Balkans to be prosperous” (Chakravartti). A strong Balkan region is “opposite of their interests; they do not want a strong eastern Europe” (Chakravartti). Geographically, the Balkans have tremendous access to a variety of cultures and countries: Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, and not relatively far from Asia. There is a considerable extent of influence in the region, making Bosnia susceptible to influence of non-western countries: namely Russia, Turkey, and most recently China. The West perhaps has not heavily invested in BiH because such investments may in the end support a region more akin to Russia and Turkey rather than Western powers. The Balkans are highly interesting as they sit in the middle of Western and former Soviet blocks. Additionally, there is a considerable flow of energy thorough the region (Chakravartti; Krastev,

2018) that under a more stabilized state would be a highly useful geopolitical tool for leveraging. The hidden Western strategy has been to maintain divisions in the Balkan region in the post cold war era; “if you break up a region into many nationalistic enclaves, they will always be weak and never work together” (Chakravartti). Thus you have a frozen society, incapable of real advancement, yet stable enough to remain out of conflict. There will be enough attention and investment to prevent violence, however, “there will be no real help” (Chakravartti). Balancing such is the surface layer of credibility in which is it imperative for the U.S. and EU that Bosnia is not a “failed state” due to their involvement in the reconstruction and independence of the county. The case of Bosnia highlights that in order for things to truly get better, things may have to get worse in order for increased international involvement and sufficient external political will to have the necessary influence for ‘real change’ in constitutional reform. Once such happens, there is an improved environment and atmosphere to translate more advancement throughout the country.

The EU is concerned with its internal politics, rising populist and nationalist parties in its own Union, and lacks support for enlargement. Internal reform must first happen within the EU before successful enlargement can occur (Butcher). However, while EU membership is not currently on the table due to lack of political capacity and capital, EU integration, whether political or economic or both, would be beneficial to the stabilization of Bosnia in the time being. Bosnia is at risk for swinging further on a downward spiral, and efforts to preemptively redirect this momentum would be a wise strategy for the EU; if such will happen remains to be seen. Largely inhibiting such logical involvement is the lack of political will. There “will not be any international attention towards BiH until it is a necessity. As long as the people in communities live in relative peace, BiH will remain invisible” (Imhoof). International actors “have other agendas”; the EU is preoccupied with internal struggles and the migration crisis (Imfoof, Fouéré, Chakravartti,

Vautravers). BiH is caught in “a case of bad timing; everyone else has other agendas and there is no political will. It is sad, but it is the realist truth” (Imhoof).

Bosnia-Herzegovina, while off the Western international agenda, has a concerning perpetuating corruptive system that aggravates ethnic tension and ignores economic development which are threatening to long-term stability. The inter-related mutually reinforcing elements of perpetuated ethnic tensions, political corruption, economic insecurity, and most of all–threatening inter-regional disputes over secession–are red flags. While the country has not begun a deep dive into its violent 1990s past–the possibility for return is not impossible. In contrast to a relatively cooperative period, “now the pendulum has swung the other way. At the moment, we are in a negative spiral and we have not got to the bottom yet” (Borger, 2012). Bosnia still has time to be ‘saved’ from further harm. International dialogue and mediation would serve the country well in de-escalating a potential major setback. However, if the security issues that manifest instability remain ignored and unsolved, the future of the country is at risk for conflict. “At the end of the day, it’s a very fragile house of cards, and it just requires a little breath of air, and it will collapse on itself” (Tamkin, 2018). Bosnia is victim of a world where political motivations dictate real change in weak countries. It is not in the interest of the U.S. and the EU for Bosnia to be fully self-sufficient and successful, therefore involvement remains absent. There is enough political will to ensure that regional security remains, however so long as violence remains relatively absent the checkmark of regional security remains fulfilled and therefore irrelevant. The powerful nation states dictate where attention and involvement for help is given, who gets what and when essentially. It is the reality, and Bosnia does not have a seat at the table right now. It will be interesting to watch how Russian influence develops in the region, and if non-Western influences will shape the new narrative of Bosnia as the West has failed to do so in the reconstruction period.

Bosnia is a diverse country with a historical narrative of upheaval and struggle, yet remains resilient to complete destruction.

Positive Outlook of Resilience: Why Bosnia Will Be Okay

As discussed throughout this paper, there are several concerning factors contributing to further de-escalation and international involvement is crucial to change to the momentum. However, in regards to the future of Bosnia, one must look at their track record. For all the up's and downs the country has faced throughout the past century, it is amazing to recognize that Bosnia is still functional. The Balkan Wars in the early 1900s transitioned the region out of Ottoman influence, shifting culture, leadership, and religious norms in the Balkans (Britannica, 2018). In addition to control from a variety of empires, the country was the location of the trigger of WWI (BBC News, 2018; History, 2018). Following the breakup of the former Yugoslavia and end of an era of communism, the most recent Bosnian War and genocide in the 1990s left the country with riveting ethnic divisions that will take generations to heal—but the fact that society remains functioning with mild cooperation is astounding when one considers the past and recent history. Bosnia, in many ways, is a clash of civilizations and culture. It is an incredibly small country with the two most prominent world religions swirling inside its demographics—Christianity and Islam. Bosnia continues to undergo influence from an incredibly diverse range of powerful states—the U.S., the EU, Turkey, China, Russian, and the Gulf States. Many interests are flowing in the region, and the people remain Bosnian. While the odds have always been stacked against this country, the people of Bosnia are strong and resilient—Bosnia-Herzegovina is still alive.

Limitations of Study

The limitations of this study connect with the theoretical framework of research. By utilizing a multidisciplinary approach of integrated issues that result in corruptive stagnation, there is an inherent lack of depth into certain thematic discourses. To counter such would be to thoroughly

discuss a singular discourse of destabilization. However, I believed that such an approach would fail to accurately depict the reality and complexity of Bosnia-Herzegovina and therefore do the topic injustice. One thematic discourse that was overall neglected was the Bosnian-Croatian discourse. While relevant, due to length constraints of research, its inclusion would have further complicated discussion and deviated from the main narrative of rivaling Bosnian-Serbs towards Bosniaks. Another short-coming of this research was the inability to gather more Bosnian native-interactive research. While both primary and secondary sources were included, more could have been useful to dictate the ‘need for change’ discussion. I must also acknowledge my bias, as I started my research after an academic study trip to Bosnia that was focused heavily on war crimes, genocide, and resulting international justice methods. This inherently started my own personal knowledge of Bosnia with the discourse of Bosnian-Serb politics as a source of injustice and corruption, as it turns out that is indeed part of the puzzle. I must thank my experience in Bosnia though, for it is was sparked my passion and curiosity in the region.

Recommendations for Further Study

My recommendation for further study on the corruptive stagnation and future stabilization in Bosnia-Herzegovina is to include more external opinion by expanding to include perspective from Croatia, Serbia, as well as other Balkan States. Any thematic discussions from the research could be explored in greater depth. The evolution of ethnic identity via religion is highly unique in Bosnia. Additionally, a comparative political discussion of leadership during the Yugoslavia period versus modern political structure would be relevant and interesting to overall evaluate what form of leadership best stabilizes a diverse instable region. Another area to explore is the Russian geopolitical interest in Bosnia, and the evolution of their presence. Bosnia-Herzegovina is rich with diverse interconnected topics for study—there is no shortage.

Abbreviations List

BiH= Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bosnia
Bosniaks= Bosnian Muslims
Croats=Bosnian-Croatian
Dayton=Dayton Peace Agreement, General Framework for Peace Agreement
EU= European Union
ICC= International Criminal Courts
ICTY= International criminal tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia
RS= Republic Srpska
Serbs=Bosnian-Serbian
UN= United Nations
U.S.=United State of America

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Appendices

Interactive Interview Work Log and Human Resource List

Organization	Contact name	Address/email	telephone	Date(s) & time	Formal/informal interview
Geneva Centre for Security Policy	Dr. Mark Finaud	<m.finaud@gcsp.ch>	+41 22 730 96 41	9/14/18 1pm	formal
Global Studies Institute (GSI)	Dr. Alexandre Vautravers	47ccurrenc.vautravers@unige.ch	N/A	9/24/18 2pm	formal
Centre European Policy Studies (CEPS)	Dr. Erwan Fouéré	erwan.fouere@ceps.eu	N/A	10/02/18 4pm	formal
Head of Research at EU Business School	Dr. Suddha Chakravarti	suddha.chakravarti@gmail.com	N/A	10/12/18 1:30pm	informal
PhD Genocide Studies	Dr. Hickmet Karcic	karcichikmet@gmail.com		10/8/18 5pm	formal
Foundation pour l'Histoire des Suisses	Ambassador Rodolphe Imhoof	<imhoof@penthes.ch>	(+41) (0) 76 524 63 76.	10/10/18 9am	informal
European Policy Center (EPC)	Paul Butcher (Junior Policy Analyst: Balkan Expert)	<P.Butcher@epc.eu>	+32 (0) 2 286 11 95	10/9/18 at 5pm	formal

Megan Uren ISP Work Journal

Interview Transcripts and Summaries

Dr. Mark Finaud, Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP). September 14, 2018.

1)What is the overall focus of discussion in GCSP in regards to Bosnia-Herzegovina?

We have a broad agenda of security policy with a broad spectrum of threat with crisis management.

Bosnia was further up on the agenda years ago but has since moved down. The current focus on Bosnia is peace building in its post conflict reconstruction, stabilization, and democratization. “It is still a working progress in Bosnia”. There is also the component of the new source of security concern on the negative role on the instrumentalization of religion and the risk of fundamentalism, both in the Muslim and Bosnian-Serb regions. This can reopen old wounds of conflict.

Then there’s also the institutional aspects. The Dayton Agreement sought to create a new state with new institutions while at the same time taking into account the ethnic divisions. Despite these divisions encourage integration. We have a program to train and educate military officers in Sarajevo, Bosnia once a year. One of the requirements is inviting officers from neighboring countries, their former enemies (Serbia and Croatia), which serves as a means of promoting inter-regional integration, cooperation, peace building. This is easier with military than it is with civilians. In the military, there is a common culture, training, and education part of the army. “This is still a working progress”. One of Bosnia’s successes is the integration of the military. “Bosnia now has a fully integrated military force of Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs.” There is a very “sophisticated complex system of power sharing and responsibilities to make this work.”

2)Republic Srpska violates agreements and refuses to report the details of their military defenses to the Bosnian courts, what level of threat is this deficiency?

Of course there will be difficulties and obstacles relating to the existing agreements. “More needs to be done. I don’t have a pessimistic view on the situation; “it does take time”. The military integration is a success. The rest of Bosnia’s problems will “require international support” in economic systems and reconstruction. The more you develop the economy, the less inflammation of ethnic tensions and lower risks of radicalization. There is a natural evolution that will occur in

this post war time after the recreation of borders. In practice, if you can travel freely between, gradually integration will come.

3) Do you consider Russia involvement with Republic Srpska a direct security threat to the stability of the country?

Russia's involvement highlights that this is not an isolated issue. These problems cannot be solved with only people from Bosnia. It was an international conflict. The Peace Agreements reflect such. More than 20 years later we live in a different world "with growing tensions and power politics" that have an effect. "It's not surprising that Russia is trying to push its own interests and influences." "Everyone already knows that without Russia, nothing can be achieved." With Russia, whether it can be done bilaterally between U.S. and Russia or with other key European countries, international dialogue will be needed for further improvement.

4) Milorad Dodik is an inflammatory leader in RS, what are the realities of his threats of secession?

There is the need for international engagement and dialogue. We need a carrot and a stick approach with support from EU with warnings of consequences for such action. There are good historical examples that highlight lessons and trends. Whenever looking at a conflict situation in which one of the parties acts and decides on unilateral action, it almost always is followed by a worse situation for the party that initiated unilateral action. Look at the Middle East. What is the lesson: if you have grievances, problems, or suffer from discrimination, use non violence resources. Appeal to international community and make your case publicly known. This foolish gesture of succession is not the way to have positive change. This unilateral threat is irrational and counter productive. Certainly even Russia will not actually support this in practice because it will start a new conflict in this region.

5) Looking to the long-term, do you realistically foresee a stable tolerant coexistence between the three ethnicities in Bosnia?

Yes. The institutional framework must first be reviewed and adopted. It takes time to create a stabilize system. It takes time to find a natural stabilization. You need representation so that the majority of citizens feel included and heard. You need constant negotiation. This is the only way to achieve consensus for decision so that there is shared interested and shared responsibility.

6)From a diplomatic perspective, what external countries would be influential in facilitating a dialogue in Bosnia-Herzegovina for reform?

The EU has been active and has a military presence in Bosnia. The EU has huge leverage in conditioning support towards EU integration. They are best to influence reform. You need also the broader supports of NATO, UN, Russia, US. It should be understood by all parties that they cannot only rely on one actor to influence and change everything. It needs a compromising interactive approach to balance interests.

7)Do you think potential EU membership will be a sufficient motivation for political and institutional reform within Bosnia?

In the long term yes. Right now however there are problems within the EU: the migration crisis, the Brexit, enlargement pushback. But it is still a very powerful tool, an incentive, a carrot. The candidate countries have an interest to continue to get closer to the EU.

8)Are there any disadvantages of Bosnia integrating into the EU?

“Honestly I don’t see any.” If and when this happens, that will certainly mean that there will be more progress towards stabilization and solving this frozen conflict. “In economic, obviously, Bosnia will gain dramatically.” Having full access to the market, freedom of movement for the workers, will be helpful to the current shortage of jobs. All the countries that have entered the EU in the past benefited. It will be the more effective way to influence economic development.

9)How does Kosovo set precedence in the region?

Some people say it was foolish to recognize Kosovo’s independence, “but you can’t go back. It’s a fact.” What remains to be done is to restore engagement and dialogue to influence good relations with Serbia and the Serbian minority, maybe re-draft the borders, ensure the full rights of the

minorities. Autonomy is often considered the best solution to conflict. In many places, you have can autonomous regions apart of the same state. There are many examples of success, but Kosovo is an example of a failure. Kosovo had a great level of cultural and other autonomous powers within Serbia. However, when nationalists came to power they wanted full independence which started the new civil war between Kosovo and Serbia. Because the civil war reached such a degree of violence, it was very difficult to go back and recreate the two regions together. In other similar situations where autonomy could present as a solution, we have to keep the case of Kosovo in mind. The risk is if you go back on autonomy, risks of violence and much greater conflict.

10)Do you foresee in the long-term Bosnia more stable if states are drawn along ethnic lines?
This idea of purely ethnic state was one of the solutions to put an end to the conflict. It's a bit of a paradox. The goal was to create ethnically pure states. History shows that this is impossible. You cannot make permanent decisions along ethnic lines. The choice to draw borders along ethnic lines in the Peace Agreement is temporary for transition. Some transitions are longer than others. Eventually, these divisions are bound to disappear because the new model of a state is a multinational state. Look at larger nations who have so many different communities loyal to the nation state yet hold onto their language and culture. You have to find a balance and that is not easy. The paradox is that it's always the immigrants of a previous generation to let a new generation of immigrants in because they are afraid to lose their place. In the new modernized state in a globalized world, borders only mean so much.

11)From a security perspective, Bosnia is an environment that enables corruption to persist. What are factors other than economic development that encourage stability?
It's a difficult phenomenon. Bosnia is a state affected by conflict and now is in reconstruction where the institutions are still weak, the political class is still tied to the old regime which manifests corruption, strong cronies and nepotism. Need to balance with economic incentives, create new jobs, remove the temptations for this corruption, and promote the rule of law. It takes a lot of effort

and resources to put into place new generations of leaders and to remove threats and temptations of corruption. You need to reconstruct a viable state to then encourage stability in society.

Generations of re-training people.

12) To what level do you consider the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) attempt at justice as a form of reconciliation effective in society?

Justice is a necessary means of peace building. You will never have a stable solution to conflict unless there is reconciliation, dealing with the past, and justice. Old wounds will not heal without it. The problem is how to do it. ICTY led to decisions that people can interpret as justice. The problem that the risk of double standards is given. This is happening with the ICC and its focus on African conflicts. ICTY was a necessity and was a fantastic evolution of the progress of international law.

Dr. Hikmet Karcic, Bosnian Native and PhD Genocide Studies. October 8, 2018

1) What is the political and ethnic environment after the October 2018 elections with Milorad Dodik win?

Tensions are a thing. All of these nationalist parties won again so we will be watching them for the next four years. Within the tri-presidency, agreements must be unanimous. They normally never agree on anything.

2) Dodik has similarities to Trump's inflammatory rhetoric, does Dodik have influence in general public emotions towards ethnic tensions?

The public, the people are acting as if nothing is going on. Nothing is going to happen. The problem is that the Serb member of the presidency, Dodik, very pro-Russian. He will stagnate Bosnia's integration into NATO and the EU integration, which is very problematic.

3) Do you think that ethnic atmosphere is different depending on urban versus rural location?

Before the war, you could talk about a difference between rural and urban areas. But after the war, the two entities are nearly homogenous. Within the whole Republika Srpska (RS), there is only 5% Bosniaks. It doesn't have to do with the urban/rural location; the two entities are semi-autonomous

regions that are practically homogeneous. There is a majority Bosnian and Croat population in Federation Bosnia and majority Serb in RS. There's a lot of cooperation, "but I wouldn't say that people are living happily together."

4) Dodik continues to threaten secession; do you believe this to be a real intent of separation or rather just political leverage?

In my opinion, I am pretty sure he will go for secession in the next few years." Depending on his political situation we shall see how it unfolds. "His aim is to be in power. It's not only Dodik who is questionable. Each and every Serb political party wants to succeed from Bosnia. Dodik is not the only problem. The whole policy is the problem." For example, RS denies that genocide ever occurred in Srebrenica. "The political parties both deny that genocide occurred. I think that secession will occur in the near future for independence."

5) Do you think that long-term secession may be more stabilizing?

Bosnia is small. You can't get through place A to place B without crossing the two entities. The federation lines were set long front lines. So, no it will not be any better for the future. Yes, it might ease some of our current difficulties; Bosniaks could have own small territory to control and Serbs could have their own small territory to control. "But, that is only going to polarize people even more." I don't think it's a good idea. The aim of RS in the end is to become a part of Serbia. As long as Serbia feels it can do what it wants without the west blocking it, they will do it. There policies are going to change. "But once the west tells them to back off, they will back off."

6) Which voice of international pressure would be most effective?

The EU has currently been very quiet about everything. There is the new idea about the land-swap between Serbia and Kosovo. That Lands Swap proposal was supported by the US and Britain; Germany was the only country against it. "We don't know what will happen; especially with the current administration in the US It all depends who is in power." We will see nobody can say for sure. "What is evident, the role of Russia is increasing in Bosnia and that is not a good thing."

7) Beyond political aspects, where does Russia's influence lay?

Mainly military, political, and cultural ties. Russia influence in the Balkans has always been interesting for Russia. Right now they want to have a small proxy state that will support their influence in the Balkan region, "with the aim of any EU and NATO integration. That is the main aim. That is something that they tried to do in Macedonia and Montenegro; I am pretty sure they will try to do it in Bosnia."

8) What are short term avenues of beneficial change that the EU can pursue with Bosnia; membership is currently not in the foresight; what other methods are there to influence positive change?

I think that if Bulgaria and Romania can become candidate states, I don't see the problem for Bosnia becoming one. Bosnia has economic and political setbacks, "but once Bosnia becomes a part of the EU, apart of the larger family, any territorial differences don't make sense anymore. In the EU the idea is to open up borders, not close them."

9) Do you think EU membership would be stabilizing for Bosnia?

EU membership would be stabilizing, but also NATO membership. Especially NATO because right now the state army is trained and equipped by NATO. When it comes to standards, Bosnia is already fulfilling NATO standards and elements; I don't see why Bosnia can not be a NATO member at least.

10) Have you seen a different in the past 10 years with the ethnic and political environment?

The political environment has radicalized more in the sense that people are more and more polarized. But there is also more cooperation among people. Serbs and Croats come to live and work in Sarajevo; Bosniaks go in other parts of the country for work and trade. People go to other towns for education. So there are a lot of things happening. "But at the end of the day, everyone goes back to their homes in their small polarized societies to sleep there. It's not that there's not any cooperation whatsoever."

11) Do think it is necessary for politics to align for further steps of stabilization?

I don't think so. This region is very national oriented. Doesn't really matter whether to position or opposition comes to power, for example of power. Whoever comes from RS has the same opinion of Srebrenica not being genocide.

12) Is there international lash back against RS and Serbia for denying genocide in Srebrenica?

"There's no reaction whatsoever from any country at all or the international community." Serbian politicians know that if they recognize the genocide, they will lose votes among the general public. That's why everyone is denying it. Everybody in RS denying Srebrenica genocide: people of the local, middle, and leadership all deny it. There was politician who recognized it in 2003 and he has lost elections since then. "It shows you that ordinary people are not ready to come to terms with what happened."

13) What are other means of stabilization for Bosnia?

Economic investments. "Once the economic situation becomes better, the nationalist parties tend to lose power." So more investments, better economy would make the situation in Bosnia better. "Bosnia's economy is slowly becoming better, but there's still a lot of corruption here." There should be diverse involvement on a multiple scale: investments, regional trade, and also pressure of the government and society to maintain freedom of press and prosecute corruption.

14) What are the limitations of the press?

The problem with the press in Bosnia is that most medias are owned/funded by local political parties. There are a few independent medias. Things are better than they were 10 years ago, but we still have a lot of bigotry and fake news in the media. But there aren't assassinations on journalist or murders like that.

15) Did the 2014 riots have any lasting impact or was it a very temporary outburst?

That was a very temporary thing, it looked like it was supported, organized, and funded by one political opposition party. Since 2014 there has been no change whatsoever.

16) Generally speaking, what is going to take for change?

As long as there is international pressure in the country things will get better. “But currently Bosnia is not so interesting for the West.” The West has other problems.

Ambassador Rodolphe Imhoof. October 10, 2018.

It is the case that in many multi-ethnic, multi-religious societies that there’s is an institution on state corruption from the top down that in turn makes it so that the only way to function and thrive is to be corrupt. Bosnia-Herzegovina is a uniquely complex difficult situation in which it is a multitude of multi-ethnic, multi-religious populations confined in a very small ex-Yugoslavia territory with a violent recent war history.

1)How do you place the hierarchy of corruption in BiH

There is a top down, state of corruption in BiH. The only way to function is to be corrupt. In terms of money, so long as you are connected to one of the top heads, somewhere on the ladder, you will see benefit—if you are not there will be nothing. This also infects a bottom-up paradox as well in the example of the police. If the police take money, some then goes to the top as well. This further undermines the structure of society and rule of law, making it necessary to find your way into the corrupt system to better function.

2)What are means of motivation for international actors to draw their attention to Bosnia-Herzegovina?

There will not be any international attention towards BiH until it is a necessity. As long as the people in communities live in relative peace, BiH will remain invisible. Unfortunately, all the other international actors have other agendas. The EU is preoccupied with internal politics and the Migration Crisis. Additionally, the Enlargement discussion is not a popular topic currently. The U.S. is geographically too far away to warrant any direct attention. It will only be when an EU member state clashes with Bosnia or has a great interest in BiH that the country will gain any attention. It is a case of bad timing; everyone else has other agendas and there is no political will. It is sad, but it is the realistic truth.

Junior Policy Analyst Paul Butcher with European Policy Center. October 9, 2018

1)What are motivations to engage the EU and other International actors in Bosnia?

The main reason is security concerns. The region is still relatively unstable after the war in the 90s.

From a geopolitical perspective, it's the one part of the European continent that is not in the EU. Bosnia and the Balkans are surrounded by member states, it clearly makes sense to integrate this region into the EU orbit. Also for economic reasons. Croatia is in the EU and there are very close economic ties between Croatia and Bosnia. Much of Bosnia sees itself tied to Croatia due their trading across borders. There's an important motivation for the EU to bring Bosnia its own systems. "It doesn't need to mean full membership, although that is the ultimate aim." There are also obvious security concerns of preventing a return to conflict in the region as well as migration issues maybe more of an issue for Serbia and Macedonia. It's a matter of concern for Bosnia as well. To a great extent, Bosnia is already integrated into the EU in many ways. The region has always been closely tied to Germany and Austria. Getting closer to the formalized aspects of the EU is still a priority. That being said, enlargement is not as much as a priority as it used to be. But that is many due to public opinion in the EU.

The direction we see it no is that even though EU enlargement is formally on the table for Ba, in practice they probably are not going to join the EU any time soon. However, "that does not mean Bosnia cannot be integrated into EU structures." They don't need to be full EU members to be effectively part of the single market and other structures. There are different motivations for the EU as opposed to the U.S. The U.S. has their own motivations to sort out Bosnia; the EU shares those but has "more immediate geopolitical concerns"; there is a "hole in the European map that needs to be filled in" so it does become an existential threat to the rest of the cohesion of the EU.

2)What motivations do you identify for motivation from the United States?

It's very fashionable these days to talk about Russian influence in the Balkans and Eastern Europe.

Russian influence in the Balkan region is a big motivation for both the U.S. and EU to be involved.

The EU and U.S. have been closely involved in the Balkans since the early 1990s and the end of communism, maybe even before that. “Yugoslavia was never in the Soviet block, not necessarily in the West either, but was always riding a balance between the two”. The EU, Germany, British, French, and the U.S. have always had a lot of influence there, and the Russians too. But the Russians have cultural links with Serbia and the Serbian population in Bosnia. Russia is talked a lot about for Bosnia. But even more so is the presence of Turkey and China in Bosnia as other influences. Turkey through the Bosniaks community, particularly in Sarajevo. China for investment reasons. The main root for Chinese imports into Europe is through Greece and are putting a lot of investment in infrastructure through the Balkan region to reach their European market. But also as a political strategy to have influence in countries that are expected to be EU countries in the future, “which indirectly means that China will have influence in the EU in years’ time”. It’s more complex than Russian influence; it ignores the other aspects. Overall the motivation is preventing a return to conflict. Partly because U.S. and the EU were the main architects of the peace deal and the parties responsible for halting conflict in the 90s. They want to show it as a success story, “frankly, it’s not a success story”. “If there was a return to conflict, it would be very clear that Western policy failed in Bosnia.” That plus humanitarian reasons of preventing conflict are motivations.

3) With the recent elections of Dodik, do you foresee his increased leadership as a real threat to succession for Republic Srpska or more as political leveraging power?

Dodik has been around for a long time, “he has become a lot more extreme and nationalist in his rhetoric in the last few years.” Whether Dodik is doing this from an ideological belief or as a matter to means to stay in power is another question. “Most of the nationalist rhetoric in Bosnia is a result of politicians finding that they can do very well holding onto power, enriching themselves and their friends, through whipping up fears about the ethnic fears in the country.” “It’s more about

cronyism and corruption that it is about actual war mongering and beating the drum.” Vuchic knows where the line is, how to get the most benefit for himself while not upsetting the EU. Dodik is not quite as good as that as he has come too close to that line several times already. I think he is in it for whatever he can get. That being said, there have been very concerning developments in RS with Russian influence in police and military training. On the surface, it does look like preparing for war, but I don’t think Dodik would get international open support from Russia or Serbia. But I don’t think he will get that and he needs it. I don’t think he’s actually going to do anything really radical but is trying to change the balance of power in Bosnia. Dodik was attempting to do such with his Croat buddy, who didn’t win the election; “perhaps that is the silver lining of the election.”

4)How do you prioritize economic underdevelopment and political corruption in Bosnia?

Bosnia is the one of the countries in Europe “that has been held back the most.” When it comes to economic and political reforms; “it’s all a mess.” There has been very little progress since the end of the war. “There is not much scope for that to change in the near future.” Personally, “radical political reform needs to happen before anything else can.” However, the EU’s approach at the moment seems to be the opposite. It seems to be that the EU “has given up on changing the Dayton settlement and instead is trying to improve economic opportunities.” This needs to be done, but “these economic issues are not completely divorced from the political problems of the country. When the two entities of the country are not cooperating on anything, that makes it very difficult to have a functioning economy.” As a small country it needs to be better integrated with its neighbors. These are based on both economic and political relations. “Nothing is going to really change until the Dayton settlement is revised; but there is absolutely no political will to do that in the EU, the U.S., or in Bosnia.”

5) Understanding that reality, do you foresee integration into the EU, even if it is not membership, is the best option for increased stabilization? Is reconciliation still needed in society or is it still relatively stable?

“Reconciliation is definitely needed in the political sphere.” In Bosnia, “I’m not sure that its entirely possible to draw a distinction from the political and civil society sphere.” They are very closely connected. The fact that there is a lack of reconciliation in the political sphere means that “by default, there is not real reconciliation in civil society either.” There are many anti-nationalist political parties, but these opposition parties are “completely disorganized” and struggling to be effective towards change. Within civil society, there is support for reconciliation, but it is very weak. Bosnia is the kind of country and society where political support is needed otherwise you are kind of stuck.

I think all people of all political stripes realize that EU integration is the countries only hope. All the Bosnian-Serbs like to talk about ties to Russia, and the Bosniaks ties to Turkey; but it is not a realistic replacement to the EU membership. That is for “geographical and economic reasons.” Bosnia is very relevant, particularly on German and Austrian markets, it has so many people living abroad (around 45% Bosnian citizens live outside of Bosnia, mainly in Croatia, Germany, Austria). On the other hand, the EU is not prioritizing enlargement anymore. There is a lot of opposition for enlargement in the EU, and with parliament elections approaching, enlargement is a reluctant matter to discuss especially for the Balkans. Particularly France, the leader that matters, is against enlargement in Bosnia. He says what many are thinking but won’t say, that enlargement simply isn’t going to happen until the EU has reformed itself. The EU needs to sort out its own internal issues and recapture its own heart and mind before it brings in countries that are overwhelmingly economic underdeveloped. The Balkans are more of a liability and security issue for the EU to give membership. French voters hate that.

Populism is strengthening; this is an existential threat to the EU. French internal politics has a big impact of EU policy, and “enlargement is one of the victims of that.” There is also a lot of rhetoric towards external threats to the EU with Russia, Turkey, China, and the Gulf States. Politics these days don’t have to make sense as long as they play to emotions. There are a lot of Bosnian people skeptical that the EU could come through and actually accept them.

6) Do you foresee regional countries neighboring the Balkans increasing cooperation for stabilization?

The V4 is a tool of influence within the EU but have no intention of changing it. But these countries get a lot of funds from the EU and don’t want to get kicked out. It also affects cultural identities; if you are in the EU you are western and European and not in the Russian sphere. The v4 is advocating for the Balkans. Non-EU Balkan countries are working together to help one another on their EU paths. There is not an ultimate real alternative to EU membership. Half of what was Yugoslavia is already in the EU, and many other are already heavily integrated into EU economy. Bosnian “political leaders are more invested in their short term personal futures than the long term future of the country.” Vuchic is an example. He has the EU eating out of his hands while he does just enough political reform to appease them, but can continue to stay rich and in power. Many Balkan leaders are doing this, be lightly on the EU path but reaping personal benefits of power as long as possible. In Bosnia, “the entire failure of the constitutional settlement since Dayton that has frozen the country in 1995. There is no political cooperation that can get any kind of reform through.”

Dr. Suddah Chakravartti, European Union Business School. October 12, 2018.

1)What are motivations for involvement in Bosnia-Herzegovina?

It was never in the U.S. nor Europe’s interest for Bosnia or the rest of the Balkans to be prosperous. That is the opposite of their interests; they do not want a strong eastern Europe Yugoslavia.

Geographically, Yugoslavia has access to so many cultures and countries: Europe, Africa, middle east, and they are not far from Asia. Not to mention the energy flow and resources that transit through the region. No the strategy has been to keep the region divided in the post cold war time. If you break up a region into many nationalistic enclaves, they will always be weak and never work together. There will be enough interest and investment in the Bosnia to make sure war doesn't break out—but there will be no real help.

Then again, on the other hand, it is imperative for both the US and Europe that Bosnia-Herzegovina is not a failed state. The US and Europe were the creators of Dayton and the pathetic attempt of peace building and keeping in the area—it will reflect very poorly on both actors and their legitimacy of nation building if Bosnia becomes a failed state.

Turkey is very involved. Money towards schools and mosques. Russia has always been in the background. Dayton was made without the consideration of the general public. It was a half-hazardous peace agreement that compromised each sides goal to get a ceasefire.

2) What are elements to move towards diffusing nationalism?

Long-term, there needs to be a reconciliation, people still have not come to terms with what happened and aren't ready to forgive each other—this must happen organically. There cannot be true economic development until there is political reform, and no constitutional reform will fix that—it has to be organic, and it will take time. International pressure won't hurt. There is no political will to actually help them—and there will be no real internal change within the next 10 years.

3) Do you envision a shift toward a more authoritarian regime

No, it will stay a non functioning democracy. They have figured out the first part: who/how to vote. But they have not yet developed an element of accountability through rule of law and checks and balances which allows corruption to persist and flourish. Tito was able to create a presence of

a Yugoslav identity through suppression—he was a hard and tough leader but he held everything together. Many people are nostalgic for that time now. But when he died it all fell apart. With reconciliation, there is heavy blame fully on the Serb side. There is a lot of stuff that is the Serbs fault. But the Bosnian president was not free of guilt is egging on things as well.

Dr. Alexandre Vautravers, Global Studies Institute (GSI). September 24, 2018.

1) What are the political factors that affect Bosnia's capacity to advance to EU membership?

Kosovo and Bosnia are there are countries that will never be independent and never join the EU bc someone WILL VETO them. One has to understand the politics of EU; if one of 28 countries (Croatia) says no—then they cannot become a member. It would have to take some serious political leveraging to get their vote or an extensive political change to the current environment. Bosnia and Kosovo are two of Europe's poorest countries, why would EU want them. Long term, Bosnia has been supported by the international community; now they want EU to take its place.

2) Would it be advantageous for Bosnia to join the EU?

Bosnia needs to do things that will help them sustain independently in the long term, build industry, and not rely on outside help, esp if its not coming. Bosnia is corrupt. And it will stay that way under political system changes; there is a hyper division in government structure based purely on ethnicity; a community with a majority of one ethnicity has one official representing them (and then there's counter representative of different ethnicity and judge of a different one); this political representation does not mirror the demographics, and eliminates being selected off of personal quality but rather off of ethnicity

3) Can you describe the political corruption present in Bosnia's government system?

It is a highly ineffective, inefficient, bureaucratic, slow system. If officials are smart, the less they do, the less feathers they disturb and longer they are in power.

4) What are the dangers of a separate Republic Srpska, do you consider Dodik a real threat to secession?

The threat from Dodik about secession is nothing new; the Republic has wanted this since 1991. Western countries imposed what they thought to be a good idea on Bosnia and drew up boundary lines, of which a big chunk of the population was not in agreement with. The western countries thought everything would be fine, but no one from the Balkans participated in the border drawing. The result was the separation of two federations. Bosnia is supported by international donations (mainly EU) and is dependent on EU money. It would UPSET and frustrated donors if RS separated. Additionally, the Bosnian-Serb population don't necessarily want to be a greater Serbia. BiH political corruption remains problem and will continue to until the system changes. 35% of GDP goes to the administration; it is an overly bureaucratic system with an inefficient deadlock system.

5) How does the current system of government conflict with the reality of demographics and ethnic tensions?

The current system is NOT proportional to community demographics. If one place is majority ethnicity, their representative can be that ethnicity, but adjunct representative must be different ethnicity, and judge must be different ethnicity. This has nothing to do with qualification or skill and EVERYTHING to do with ethnicity. The cards are set in advance, and officials have to comply with EU guidelines to get funding. This encourages a slow, bureaucratic system of corruption where no one will do anything dramatic to instil positive change.

6) Why has the EU been relatively absent in the current corruptive behavior?

The EU produced this structure of instability for Bosnia and their power of denial is great.

The EU would have to admit that they made a mistake if they were to return to dialogue about change for Bosnia and they won't admit that they made a mistake. This is a reminder that foreign policy decisions are often made based on internal politics.

Dr. Erwan Fouere, Centre for European Policy Studies(CEPS) in Brussels. October 2, 2018.

1) Looking towards the future of stabilization, how could European Union membership materialize for Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH), and if that is not a short-term reality what are other avenues to encourage stability?

From European Union (EU) perspective: “In 2000 and then in 2003 the EU made a formal commitment to integrate all of the countries of the Western Balkan region because it was felt that this would be the best way to ensure stability in Europe’s nearest neighborhood. Through a reform process of enlargement strategy, it was hoped that the Western Balkans would eventually be ready to integrate into EU and thus extend the frontiers of peace and security to include those countries.

But, it didn’t really come as quickly as one hoped. The reasons for that are two-fold. Well there are many but I would look at it from two sides: from the region there’s no doubt that there was an up-surge of nationalistic rhetoric which really exacerbated the tensions that had been dormant in the previous years. On the EU side, there was a growing hesitation about the enlargement policy, and this hesitation and reluctance increased as we entered into the period of the migrant crisis in 2015 where many opinions of political populist parties equate the enlargement with immigration. This enlargement became quite unpopular despite the fact that the enlargement policy has been shown to be the EU’s most successful foreign policy. If you look what happened prior to 2004, the impact of the accession of 10 countries into the EU and it has extended the period of peace the European continent has known since after the second world war period and the creation of the EU. But this reluctance and hesitation unfortunately led to a reduction in the attention span of the EU about the Western Balkans. It became very haphazard. It was really more a question of maintaining stability rather than monitoring the progress in terms of rule of law and democratic standards. Despite the fact that many of us in the think tank community had been warning the EU that the signs of growing instability were becoming more and more visible in the Western Balkan region, whether it was Macedonia, the crisis there was continuous from 2012, to

Serbia where you can an increasingly authoritarian approach, and then in BiH where there was an increase in the nationalist rhetoric.

2) What sparked a re-interest in Bosnia-Herzegovina for the EU?

It was only in 2017 after the High Representative traveled to the Western Balkans, it was her first visit to some countries since 2014 and she realized that all was not well. Then the EU council, in one of its rare statements on the Western Balkans, spoke of fragility of the situation. There was finally a clear recognition that things were not going well and there had to be some action; that was followed by state of the union address last year, focusing on the Balkans. This year is supposed to be the year of increased momentum for the re-engagement of the EU in the Western Balkans, but we see that engagement is not as proactive as we had hoped. The EU council in June was supposed to have given the green light with opening accession with Macedonia and Albania didn't take place, instead it has been postponed till next year.

On the one hand, it is a clear situation where the EU has not been consistent in its strategy towards the Western Balkans and on the other, there are elite elements that are taking advantage of this vacuum to continue their very unorthodox activities, criminal networks, corruption...etc. Unfortunately, even when the EU engages in Bosnia, it is too much on the elite leadership and not enough on civil society.

The dysfunctional nature of the political environment in BiH has been evident for quite some years. Already in 2005, if you look at the Balkans in EU commission report, this was a commission established by several leading personalities and with a very small report but very clear. They already stated that BiH was facing a dysfunctional political system and that it needs to change. There have been attempts at constitutional discussion, but never materialized. Despite the odd flare up of unrest in Tuzla and Bana Lucka in 2014, you saw an increased entrenchment of the governing elite and that's still continuing. There is a basic calendar of activities to be undertaken

while attempting to gain EU membership, and BiH leadership has been failing; for example, it took them much longer to fulfil the questionnaire for the EU commission—the first step towards accession.

3) What is the current EU involvement and assessment of Bosnia-Herzegovina?

There was a joint initiative by the UK and Germany to focus on economic reforms, thinking that progress there might help to promote progress in other areas such as the rule of law, inter-ethnic cooperation, etc. But this didn't happen at all. And there again the EU should have been much more proactive at an early stage in putting its foot on the acceleration and making very clear to the leadership that they had to do much better than they have been doing. If you don't have that strong voice in the European Union, the entrenched elite will just continue. So we will see what happens in the next elections next week.

4) The current structure of the EU appears to be in need of reform to address its current diversity and breadth; I think it is fair to say that 'timing' is critical for decisions concerning enlargement. Is this the right timing for Bosnia to work to gain EU membership?

Absolutely, it is quite clear that if the momentum is not there, the backsliding will just continue.

If you look at the succession of country reports that the EU Commission has issued every year, you will see a repetition of all the problems and weaknesses, and not getting much better.

Commission reports recognize the dysfunctional nature of BiH but no one has had the courage or the sufficient political weight to push for a much more comprehensive constitutional reform. I don't see that happening in the foreseeable future. There used to be very strong synergy between the U.S. and EU on the Western Balkans and Bosnia but that's happening anymore. I think it has a lot to do with the new administration in the U.S.

5) In today's political environment, what are more soft means of power directed at BiH to influence positive change?

"Certainly the strategy that the EU has pursued needs to change. There needs to be much greater visibility from the EU and a much more consistent approach. There needs to be more monitoring;

a carrot and stick approach.” If BiH officials don’t deliver on what is promised or what the calendar says then there has to be some sort of either suspension of development assistance or consequence. “In addition, there needs to be a much stronger support for civil society and the role of civil society.” This is from a lack of appreciation within the EU on the fact that in the Western Balkans are all post-war conflict societies. “You have emerging from the conflict new countries, institutions that are finding their feet very slowly and are relatively weak institutions. There are very weak checks and balances and sometimes no checks and balances. In that vacuum, the role of civil society can be absolutely vital.” In the case of Macedonia, thanks to the very active role of civil society, in the end, the previous regime was put out of office. “There hasn’t been enough support from the EU on the grass roots, and this is an important factor, that civil society is one actor that can strengthen government accountability when the institutions don’t do it or when the checks and balances don’t work.” It can be another pressure point on the governments to deliver. I think there the EU has not been strong enough.

6) Does the rule of law need to be cleansed of corruption before politics can begin to?

There has not been a sufficient and consistent message about the rule of law. Yes, rule of law was deemed to be at the heart of the enlargement process already several years ago. But it is precisely in those areas that you have seen the most weaknesses and the most backsliding. This is a failure of the governments in question to leave aside their party political interests in order to promote those reforms and also failure on the EU not to have sufficient monitoring mechanisms and to let them off the hook.

In July 2014 Angela Merkel launched Berlin Process to mark every year of the duration of WWI. The first summit was with some EU and Western Balkans states. The idea of this Berlin process was to find new opportunities of bringing these countries together. The trouble is though, again, they made the same mistake of focusing all the energies of these summits on collectivity

issues, transport issues, economic development, but hardly anything on the rule of law. As has been seen in the Western Balkans, you cannot do one without the other. They are two sides of the same coin. This has been the mistake, the fact there was not sufficient focus on the rule of law. The EU commission strategy paper, published on the 6th of February, sets out in clear language the problems and what needs to be done. First time they didn't beat out the bush. Unfortunately, it really hasn't been followed up since then."

It's always a question of really zeroing in on the record of these countries; and it's "not just a once off moment like the country report. It has to be permanent monitoring process. This is where the EU has been failing in its exercise and that shows the limits of the soft power if they don't use it consistently and effectively." In that vacuum you have other actors that take advantage such as Russia. We all know how that happens, Bosnia officials and Dodik in Moscow.

7) How does the current debate of breadth versus depth in the EU contribute to the EU BiH discussion?

As we saw at the June EU Council, this debate re-emerging of deepening versus enlargement. False debate. It's a way of delaying the process until after the EU parliament elections. Many are afraid of the rise of populist parties and the fear that these populist parties might use the enlargement agenda against, (migrants...). It's unfortunately the reality of what we are facing at the moment and that will continue until the EU parliament elections next year.

8) Do you foresee Republic Srpska as a real threat of separation?

"Of course Mr. Dodik would like us to think so. He does a lot to try to justify that." He uses it as a bargaining chip against his other colleagues in the BiH government. "But, the reality is, that if something like that were to happen, it would be *huge*. It would have a huge impact in the region." The danger is of a domino effect. The debate over the proposed land swap with Kosovo and Serbia have been suggesting swapping and correcting the borders. "Tinkering with borders in Western

Balkans is like put a match a fire.” Would be very dangerous. “Any threat or talk of succession would have the same impact.”

9) During the Yugoslavia era, everyone was relatively tolerant of each other, how can BiH start to redefine collective identity; is it a bottom up approach from civil society?

Certainly during the old Yugoslav period it was very stable. The citizens of Yugoslavia could travel all over. “Tito, while seen as a very tough leader, managed to create a system where he brought them altogether and there was a coexistence policy of tolerance.” Many people feel nostalgic for that period and for Tito’s leadership. “It was inevitable that if you don’t have that leader anymore, things can just explode. Which is just what happened.” There was a “reemergence of nationalistic rhetoric and the wars created such deep wounds” in the mid 90s, that “will take generations to overcome.” Bottom up approach is necessary no doubt about it. Unfortunately, the leaders that would be ideal to create a more equitable tolerant society is very limited; “we need six Mandalas for the Western Balkans.”

In BiH because of a vacuum in leadership and entrenched elites, the reforms that could create a climate of tolerance and reconciliation are not there. As long as the leadership remains in place it is “very hard to envision reconciliation happening, however it is absolutely necessary for long-term stability in the region.” The reconciliation process would ensure an multiethnic societies being educated together and not being separated.

There are several initiatives put in place, such as the Rekom based in Belgrade, launched by several civil societies from across the region. They are trying to get governments to set up a commission to look at the past for a truth and reconciliation. It is “something that has to come from the region, you cannot impose reconciliation. If there is that local ownership, then local civil society can be fundamental in rebuilding its sphere.”

Education is critical. Kosovo and Serbia are proposing mono-ethnic territories which would be detrimental and back to the 19th century and further “undermines what society has been fighting for”, for a greater tolerance for multiethnic communities. “It’s a question of trying to persevere. But they’re up against a lot of problems: the entrenched elite, political interference in public administration, and the rule of law. “There is not the institutional capacity to guarantee long term stability for the moment.”

10) In the short term, if international community focuses on civil society, will there be a greater chance to stabilize the bedrock of the problem—ethnic tensions?

“Yes. But there also has to be much more consistent and proactive engagement of the international community. It can’t be a once off thing, it has to be permanent.” There was a sudden upsurge of interest from the EU and U.S. only when things were going wrong and that is not the right approach, there has to be a much more “consistent engagement from the EU interactions with the Bosnian for qualitative change”. Actors like Russia are happy to take advantage of this current vacuum. Russia is very active despite the lack of economic benefit, however the perception is that Serbians believe Russia is the biggest investor. This is far from the truth for the region, 70% trade is with the EU, only under 5% is with Russia. Russia has strong weight because EU has been weak

11) EU post Brexit has challenged commitment of member states. Long term there may need to be a reconstruction of what it means to be in the EU. Long term, do you see a regional union of the central European countries, the neighboring countries of the Balkans and the Western Balkans?

“There’s no doubt that the EU’s transformative power in aspiring country membership has been weakened. There is a growing trend of populism has been undermining the basic pillars of democracy and European values: civil society, independent judiciary, freedom of the media.” These are all things we took for granted and are now being taken advantage of in Hungary, Poland, and Italy as well. “The response of the EU institutions and governments has been very slow.” Article 7, the article that suspends the voting rights on an EU country if it is deemed to not be

respecting the basic values of the EU, that article has been evoked for Hungary and Poland. There is this threat even though it has not materialized. “The EU has been too complacent.” We have to be consistent with the criteria with member states and contain this issue. Countries aspiring to join must fulfill all of this criteria for membership. “In theory the EU is always in favor of enlargement. In practice, it is dependent on the timing.” There is still reluctance that surfaces. Some countries are consistently in favor of enlargement. Others are reluctant. The internal dynamic within the EU has an effect with its foreign policy and enlargement policy. The internal politics are a serve challenge.

Record of Entries

Sept 2, 2018

Brainstorming

- Bosnia
 - Geopolitics of Yugoslavia
 - Religious and ethnic unity and division over time with change of democracy and communism
 - Spurred on my reading for SPS session 1 (can use a few passages for sources)
- Middle East
 - Transnational terrorism and influence on worldview religion
 - Shifting alliances in middle east over time
- Terrorism
- How make relevant to career around law??
 - Bosnia and extend into ICTY??

Sept 3, 2018

Informal Chat with AD

- Bosnia
 - How to stabilize region
 - Become apart of EU or no
 - Should interview EU diplomats that are for it and against it (stabilize region or economic burden)
 - History of former Yugoslavia
 - Ethnic and religious/cultural diversity
 - War and genocide
 - Current day
 - Power states backing up either side

- I like the idea of researching Bosnia, I have background on the judicial aspect via international justice but want to learn more about the political environment and background of the country itself—especially since I was there in May

Sept 5, 2018

Reflection from RME Class

- Ideas for Research question for ISP
 - Broad: What is the future of Bosnia?
 - Understanding Bosnia’s diverse representation and recent war history, what are the best methods to promote stabilization in the country?
 - What is the impact of Bosnia’s political diversity in its future stabilization?
 - What is the impact of Bosnia’s diverse geopolitical representation in its evolving stabilization?
 - Is geopolitical and ethnic/religious same?
 - How will Bosnia’s diverse demographics and recent war history affect future stabilization?
 - Broad: What are the repercussions of the Bosnian war and genocide in the country today?
 - Broad: What is the best method to promote stabilization?
- Idea for LCS/Brussels
 - LCS: interview Swiss about their opinion on not being in the EU
 - Brussels/Paris: interview EU commission about advantages/disadvantages of Bosnia being apart of EU
 - ISP: integrate

Sept 6, 2018

Brainstorming

- The polarization of ethnicity and religion in politics and best system to maintain peace in ethnic and religious diverse regions
 - Case study on Bosnia
 - Can acknowledge others in intro
 - US Republicanism w/ “Christian values”
 - Shia/Sunni in Middle East
 - Are these wars over land and money, backed by identifying terms??
 - How does Leadership influence diverse regions?
 - Nationalism certainty doesn’t help
 - Serbs
 - Donald John (Trump)

Sept 10, 2018

1st advising meeting with Dr. Csurgai

- Good meeting, glad to get more narrowed focus for moving forward
- Intended title: Assessment of BiH integration into the EU
 - Past: Former Yugoslav, War and genocide

- Ethnic and religious polarization/demographics
- Present political leadership
- EU opinion
 - For it
 - Could increase stabilization of region (Croatia, Slovenia, Austria like)
 - Could increase econ development
 - Against it
 - Not enough \$ in EU budget
- How EU could use instrument of conditionality (Fight corruption , Provide aid)
- Support states: China, Turkey, Russia influence on this fragile vulnerable region

Sept 13, 2018

Interview planning

- Confirmed my first ISP interview with GCSP and it is so exciting to finally hear a YES
- I want to have a diversified approach to interviews to gain the widest range of perspectives towards my research question

Sept 14, 2018

Mountains of literature

- Been doing ALOT of reading...thinking I should work “sustainable stabilization for Bosnia” into title along with “Assessment of European Union Integration”

Sept 17, 2018

Two awesome lectures

- Have an abstract strategy with my interviews for ISP
- Want to get theoretical ideas about stabilization for Bosnia as well as Balkan experts
 - Ambassador Imhoof for his mediation expertise and its application to Bosnia’s issue with RS
 - Dr. Suddah and his lecture of china and civilization: How incorporate aspects of that into new leadership for BiH?
- Ideas for subthemes
 - Influence of leadership in country
 - Restructuring of government authority
 - Ethnic tension
 - Relevance
 - Intl western peace state building intervention
 - How did they do what’s the result
 - Problematic occurrence of border drawing
 - Understand why the borders were drawn
 - The agreement was to stop fighting; maybe there’s a better way to coexist in the region

Sept 21, 2018

Interview with Dr. Marc Finaud

- Very interesting to hear his ‘long term’ perspective
- Optimistic perspective, that it will take time to weed out corruption and econ develop
- EU integration would be great
- Reminder that Bosnia relatively just got out of a war, it is reasonable that they are still behind

Sept 24, 2018

Interview with Dr. Alexandre Vautravers

- Very pessimistic outlook/realist
- Reality of Balkan rivalries being political inhibitors
- Negative opinion on productivity and efficiency of EU
- Doesn’t think Bosnia will ever make it in EU

October 2, 2019

Interview with Erwan Fouere at CEPS in Brussels

- Very helpful and insightful
- Heavily focused on importance of reconciliation in civil society
- Need for EU to have more hands on approach
- Realistic perspective of hopes for future but real challenges at hand
- Issue of timing: bad timing for the EU

October 8, 2018

Interview with Dr. Hikmet Karcic

- VERY helpful; Local Bosniak who grew up during wartime
- Straightforward and blunt
- Elections with nationalist leader Dodik very bad news, Bosnia will have to wait out another 4 years with him in office
- In society, the two entities are nearly homogenous, people cooperate, work, school, transport together, but at end of the day everyone goes back to sleep in ethnic polarized community
- Takes time
- Intl help is needed for change, but they don’t care about Bosnia right now

October 8, 2018

Reflection

- Read a lot and learning a lot about Bosnia, and clear to understand the importance of timing, and combinations of leadership for positive change to occur
- Need for international involvement but the internal politics of outside nations inhibits immediate action or plain lack of motivation
- Bosnia is relatively okay, but needs to get better

October 12, 2018

Interview with Dr. Suddha Chakravartti

- Very thought provoking, BiH was never intended to be strong in the US and EU’s eyes
 - That is not in their best interest
 - They care that Bosnia is not violent and not a failed state and nothing more
 - No real political will to influence dramatic change

- Bosnia is stuck and likely will remain

October 19, 2018

Final Proposal meeting with Dr. Mattila

- Main priorities:
 - How strict is organization of the ISP with the literature review and layout?
 - Opinion on my topic

Outcome

- Reminder of importance of literature review; talk about how used sources, benefits of each and critiques. Most sources are singularly focused rather than integrative
- Necessity to integrate historical relevance in the beginning of the essay (can be in between introduction and literature review)
- Making great progress, now time to connect everything, I want to make map of how everything connects together

October 29, 2018

ISP Meeting with Class

- Check rubrics for checklist for ISP; look at necessities to capture all the elements
- Need to submit both hard and electronic copy
 - Including work log/journal (NEED A HARD COPY)
- Oral presentation
- Formatting importance
 - Title page (specific) ; publishing opportunity; keep around 30 pages
- In intro: explain context and importance of research
- ISP work journal objective: log the different aspects of progress during research design and finding relevant information (look at former ISP projects) ...research locations and most important contacts
- HOW IS MY TOPIC DIFFERENT AND RELEVANT, look for a unique angle

November 13, 2018

Brainstorm/reflection

- BiH is RESILENT
- They have made it through two regional wars, genocide, communist dictatorship
- Multi-religious, multi-ethnic demographic in small state
- Despite it all, they are functioning; not well, but they are not Syria

November 13, 2018

ISP meeting update with Dr. Csurgai

- Questions: Am I on the right track, what should I further develop, literature review
- Answers: yes right track, further develop the 'need for change' analysis
- Notes about literature review: talk about how my research is original and how a lot of literature lacks to include the historical relevancy of the country and the integrated nature of the issues that are mutually re-enforcing
- Citing question/answer: after fully cite the interviewee can just cite (last name) according to Dr. Mattila

November 14, 2018

Extensions of study

- It would be very interesting to further explore Russia's historical geopolitical interest in Bosnia and the true origins of the support-kin state relationship with Serbia and Bosnian-Serbs
- The Balkans are very unique, I would like to learn more about other countries in the region and the progress and digression of them throughout the century

November 15, 2018

ISP Revisions

- Struggling to condense information, there is a lot to say and not enough room
- Interesting how knowledge on BiH has evolved since May 2018 to now
- Curious about the finite details of EU policy and unfortunate of gap in time when discussions of policy actualized into academic literature
- Reorganization of paper to increase flow
-

Research Locations

United Nations Library in Geneva:

open Monday-Friday 8:30am-5:00pm

Address Avenue de la Paix 8-14, 1211 Geneva

Tips: set up account early to reserve desk space; take advantage of digital library as well

Human Resource List

Dr. Mark Finaud

Title

works at Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP)

m.finaud@gcsp.ch

+41 22 730 96 41

Expertise: Security and Diplomacy

Evaluation: comparative to other world affairs, optimistic of future for Bosnia

Dr. Alexandre Vautravers

Title

Global Studies Institute (GSI)

alexandre.vautravers@unige.ch

phone number N/A

Expertise: Security, Military

Evaluation: pessimistic of EU internal politics and Bosnia stabilization

Dr. Erwan Fouéré

Title

Centre European Policy Studies (CEPS)

erwan.fouere@ceps.eu

phone number N/A

Expertise: worked in EU for 38 years, Balkan expert, think tank researcher/writer

Evaluation: Realistic of future of Bosnia, focused on importance of integration and reconciliation, highly useful information

Dr. Suddah Chakravartti

Head of Research

EU Business School

suddha.chakravartti@gmail.com

phone number N/A

Expertise: Cultural comparative perspective on different civilizations, thorough background in international affairs

Evaluation: abstract and concrete opinions on Bosnia, very interesting perspective

Dr. Hickmet Karcic

Academic

karcichikmet@gmail.com

phone number N/A

Expertise: Bosnian Native, PhD Genocide Studies

Evaluation: highly useful internal Bosnian perspective

Rodolphe Imhoof

Former Ambassador

Foundation pour l'Histoire des Suisses

imhoof@penthes.ch

(+41) (0) 76 524 63 76.

Expertise: Diplomacy, International Affairs

Evaluation: good 'big picture' perspective

Paul Butcher

Junior Policy Analyst

European Policy Center (EPC)

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+32 (0) 2 286 11 95

Expertise: EU policy, Balkans

Evaluation: highly useful perspective, EU policy and critique, Balkan evaluation