THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

'Ipak Može Zajedno!'
How a Grassroots Student Movement in Bosnia and Herzegovina Fought the System

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A group of high school students marched through the streets in Jajce protesting segregation based on ethnicity in their schools. This started a yearlong battle that they would eventually win, sparking a grassroots peacebuilding movement in Bosnia and Herzegovina. July 8, 2016, JAJCE ONLINE / Facebook.

“Every time internationals have talks with our politicians; it's absolutely necessary to bring young people into the decision-making processes. Currently, we have a council of elders running the country, you know? So young people must be brought to the table.”

– Samir Beharić, a protest leader from Jajce.

Abstract

Significant obstacles to sustainable peace exist in Bosnia and Herzegovina due to the ethnic partitions created by the 1995 Dayton Peace Agreement and the subsequent failures of the Bosnian government and international interventions to reform post-conflict education, particularly the "two schools under one roof" policy. This thesis explores a student-led education reform effort in Jajce, an ethnically mixed town in central Bosnia. It provides insights into local attitudes towards ethnic segregation and considers what constitutes a successful, locally-led protest while describing current barriers to education reform in Bosnian public schools. The students in Jajce sought to discourage further ethnic segregation in public schools by opposing an extension of the "two schools under one roof" policy to the high school in their hometown. Later, they protested the same policy in the Cantonal capital, Travnik.

The break-up of Yugoslavia and the war in Bosnia offers context for this research. The history of the education system in Bosnia is analyzed using two opposed political theories that deal with how to best organize the type of group diversity present in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Charles Taylors' politics of recognition (1994) and Brian Barry's liberal egalitarianism (2001). The student protest movement in Jajce lies at the nexus of recognizing a distinct ethno-specific identity concurrently with promoting multiculturalism. This seemingly complex intersection is what many have largely failed to understand.

Keywords: peacebuilding, post-conflict, education, Bosnia and Herzegovina, multiculturalism, ethnic identity

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To my mother—thank you for your endless support through yet another degree.
And in memory of my father—I wish you could be here to share in this accomplishment with me.

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2 Introduction

On a hot summer day in 2017,[1] around 100 young students and activists assembled in front of the Cantonal Ministry of Education in Travnik, the geographical center of Bosnia and Herzegovina.[2] The mood was victorious: two days earlier, the students had won a yearlong battle opposing the opening of a new segregated school in Jajce, a small town in the Central Bosnian Canton. The newly defunct school-to-be would have joined over fifty schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which operate under the system known as 'two schools under one roof' (*dvije skole pod jednim krovom*). In this system, students are segregated based on their ethnic identity. This is merely one of the most visible threads in the political Gordian knot fettering postwar Bosnia and Herzegovina twenty-five years after the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement (Crisis Group, 2012.)

As the crowd coalesced, students chatted animatedly with one another and the myriad of national and international media representatives. Some students wore paper cutout masks depicting the face of Hrvoje Jurina, a politically appointed school principal in Jajce. He had recently threatened "severe consequences" to anyone he saw in photos of the protest. Chants of "zajedno u školu!" ('together in school!') erupted periodically, as did enthusiastic renditions of the song *sistem te laže* ['the system is lying to you'] by Serbian hip-hop collective Beogradski Sindikat, which was a huge hit across the Balkans in 2016. The song's opening echoes Balkan folk music with characteristic trills of the accordion and a lilting keyboard ditty, which gives way to an intense rhythmic beat. Students emulated the lead rapper, Dare, by emphatically spitting out the chorus:

[1] Descriptions of the protests come from my interviews with participants as well as observations by Piersma (2019).
[2] I use "Bosnia" in this paper as a short form of "Bosnia and Herzegovina" where stylistically appropriate. This is with no intent to ignore the culturally rich and historical region of Herzegovina.

High school students during the protest in Travnik. The sign bearing the phrase "*IPAK MOŽE ZAJEDNO*" ('nevertheless, we go together') is prominent. June 20, 2017, REUTERS / Dado Ruvić

Sistem te laže,
ne veruj šta ti kaže.
Ovaj život je borba,
od rođenja do groba,
zato ustani odmah!

[The system is lying to you,
don't believe what it tells you.
This life is a struggle,
from birth until the grave,
so rise up now!]
(Beogradski Sindikat 2016)

The first verse also laments that after "wars, protests and reforms, democracy, internet, and new technology, everything is still as it was before" and that "still in the government we have lying

puppets, who follow their orders and steal everything for themselves." The song offers a poignant summation of students' grievances as they stood united to protest the system that perpetuates ethnic division to benefit political elites.

Students also hoisted up banners with slogans like, "Segregation is a bad investment" and, "Are we really doing this in the 21st century?" One particularly eye-catching sign included a colorful mix of pears and apples, reading "*Ipak može zajedno*!" ("Nevertheless, we go together"). This coy reference demonstrates the lasting impact the words of local politicians have on their citizens. In a remark made nearly a decade earlier, the former Cantonal Minister of Education Greta Kuna stated: "The system of 'two schools under one roof' is good because it prevents pears and apples from mixing" (Vice News, 2014). The students waited with bated breath to hear what their Cantonal representative had to say. As Katica Čerkez emerged from a meeting, the crowd flocked around her. Ms. Čerkez acknowledged that the education system is problematic, but her tone was disparaging as she insisted that Bosnian politicians did not have the power to change the system. She inculpated international actors, blaming the Dayton Peace Agreement and its *de facto* Constitution as the root of the problem, and suggested that students go "to the disco" instead of wasting their energy fighting a losing battle (Mišeljić 2017). She then accused the students of being "instruments of the international community" (Ibid).

The United States-led signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement in 1995 stopped the violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and this success brought a tenuous peace that lasted for over 25 years. However, the agreement also employed ethnic partitions to freeze the conflict in place, which has led to the long-term entrenchment of societal divides. Today, ethnonationalist politicians in Bosnia exploit religious, cultural, and ethnic divisions to the detriment of the population at large. One salient feature of the conflict frozen in place is the overt ethnic

segregation in public schools. Ignoring the often co-opted and political nature of public education has allowed old wounds to fester, and ethnonationalist sentiments have infiltrated the minds of the younger generation through public school education (see Low-Beer, 2001; Perry, 2003; Selenica, 2017; Torsti, 2003, 2007, 2009).

After the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, a Western-centric approach emerged to handle and resolve global conflicts. The 1990s saw a dramatic rise in the number of peace processes mediated by the United Nations and "great power" nations like the United States. The international intervention in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement are paradigmatic of "liberal peacebuilding," i.e., building peace through creating liberal democracies and free-market economies out of war-torn nations. Exploring the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina helps illustrate the complexities introduced through liberal peacebuilding and how societies fare decades after such interventions. This thesis explores peacebuilding theory and critiques of the liberal peace paradigm, particularly its inability to comprehend cultural nuances. It demonstrates how the Dayton Peace Agreement has led to insurmountable obstacles to sustainable peace through ethnic partitions that exacerbate rather than quell ethnic tensions and a failure to prioritize post-conflict education reform.

The 2016-2017 student protest movement offers a compelling case for examining complex relationships among grassroots peacebuilding movements, local politicians, and the international stakeholders in postwar Bosnia and Herzegovina. By drawing on historical research, discourse analysis, and one-on-one virtual interviews, this paper offers insight into the precarious nature of post-conflict education policy and how these three actors interrelate, unraveling some of the threads of Bosnia's Gordian knot. It argues that the students' desires to preserve their ethnic identity and live in a multicultural society are not mutually exclusive, but

the pernicious institutionalization of ethnic differences in Bosnia and Herzegovina, principally implemented through the Dayton Agreement, is untenable.

The paper proceeds as follows: the next section **(Section 2 – Methods)** describes the ethnographic methods used in this paper, including descriptions of my interlocutors and how they were selected.

The following section **(Section 3 – Literature Review)** contains definitions for "multiculturalism" and "ethnic identity." It also provides an overview of previous academic literature on international peacebuilding theories and summarizes arguments for including educational institutions as central aspects of peacebuilding. Research related to the requirement of local ownership of reforms, particularly in the education context, is also reviewed.

Section 4 – Historical Context sets forth the historical context, including an overview of the conflict, descriptions of the former Yugoslavia's education system, and the current educational quagmire in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It explores how two opposing theories of multiculturalism and ethnic identity help frame the issues concerning the public education system in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Charles Taylors' (1994) politics of recognition and Brian Barry's (2001) liberal egalitarianism. It describes the initial development and implementation of the "two schools under one roof" policy and how this policy has been rejected in theory but not in practice.

Section 5 – The Case of Jajce focuses on the specifics of the case in Jajce by tracing the student protest movement over its yearlong battle with local politicians, providing examples of the interaction among students, the political establishment, and international actors. While some political elites use ethnonationalist narratives to consolidate their power to the detriment of other groups, others in Bosnia and Herzegovina, like the students involved in the protest movement,

believe that preserving ethnic identity and embracing multiculturalism are *not* inherently incompatible ideas. International actors in Bosnia and Herzegovina, ever wary of ethnic tensions, have often failed to understand these different dynamics.

Conclusions follow in the final section.

3 Methods

The methodologies used as part of the study are a combination of semi-structured virtual interviews, historical research, and discourse analysis. Eighteen subjects participated in the study. Interviews were conducted both online and in-person. The group was ethnically mixed among those identifying as Croats and Bosniaks, and one Serb participated. This roughly reflects the population dynamics in Jajce, where around 45% of the population identifying as Croat, 45% identifying as Bosniak, and 10% identifying as Serb or "other" ("Jajce | Bosnia and Herzegovina | Britannica"). The interviewees included former students who participated in the protest, current students in both the Nikola Shop High School and the Secondary Vocational School, local politicians and city council members, teachers, and employees from international organizations. Ages ranged from 18 to 58. Twelve participants were female and six were male.

The Post-Conflict Research Center in Sarajevo provided support for this research. It assisted the author in contacting Samir Beharić, one of the prominent leaders of the student protest movement in Jajce. Snowball sampling was used to contact the other interviewees. No students identifying as Bosnian Serb were available for interviews. Each participant was interviewed several times from April 2021 to June 2022, ranging from one to three hours per interview. Interviews were conducted in Bosnian/Croatian or English. Interview questions in both English and Bosnian/Serbian/Croatian can be found in Appendices 7.1 and 7.2

Ethnography is particularly beneficial for understanding the day-to-day interactions among students, internationals, and politicians in Bosnia and Herzegovina and offers a unique ability to capture culturally embedded views on the current Bosnian public education system twenty-five years after the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement.

4 Literature Review

A Special Report from the United States Institute of Peace advocated for more research to evaluate post-conflict education reform (Cole and Barsalou 2006). While there is rich literature on the social aspects of international peacebuilding and how local ownership is vital for creating sustainable peace, much less has been written about successful, locally-led post-conflict education reforms. Instead, much of the existing research on post-conflict education, particularly in the former Yugoslavia, focuses on public education's co-opted and ethnocentric nature (for example, see Torsti 2007, 2009; Selenica 2017). My research connects and extends these two bodies of literature by examining a grassroots peacebuilding effort involving local youth in the town of Jajce. These students sought to discourage further ethnic segregation in Bosnia's public education institutions by opposing an extension of the "two schools under one roof" policy to the high school in their hometown.

4.1 Definitions: "Multiculturalism" and "Ethnic Identity"

"Multiculturalism" is a term with various meanings in different contexts. In sociology, a multicultural society is one in which people with ethnic, cultural, and religious differences can collaborate and live together harmoniously while still valuing these differences. The idea that a society possesses a single dominant culture into which all minorities must eventually merge is a

model contrary to multiculturalism. Society is viewed as a mosaic of different groups and their ways of life, none of which hold primacy over any other. When used in this sociological sense, multiculturalism is often used interchangeably with cultural pluralism and in opposition to a "melting pot," which describes the assimilation of minorities into the dominant culture (Ibid). In political science, "multiculturalism" refers to how the state deals with different ethnic groups, particularly by acknowledging ethnic differences within the dominant political culture (Ibid). In this paper, when I talk about how students view "multiculturalism," I refer to the definition akin to cultural pluralism, i.e., different ethnic groups can collaborate (and specifically, in this case, attend school together) without sacrificing their ethnic identity.

Ethnic identity is another term that merits definition. For this paper, I use Kanchan Chandra's description. For Chandra, "ethnic identities" are a subset of identity categories in which membership is determined by attributes associated with or believed to be associated with, descent (described here simply as descent-based attributes)" (2006). Chandra argues that "identity" is any social group in which someone is eligible for membership, and "ethnic identity" is determined by descent-based attributes. Ethnic identity in Bosnia and Herzegovina is usually reduced to three main categories, which are often tied to religious affiliation: Bosnian Serbs - Orthodox Christian (approximately 31% of the population), Bosnian Croats - Catholic (about 15% of the population), and Bosniaks - Muslims (approximately 51% of the population). Before the war, there were many mixed marriages, and children from those marriages did not fall neatly into the conventional categories. These ethnic and religious couplings are also not universal, and while religion and ethnic identity are inextricably linked for some, religion is immaterial for others. There are also several other ethnic or religious minorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, such as Jews, Turks, Romani, and Albanians. Ethnic identity is therefore highly individual, and

Chandra's simple emphasis on descent-based attributes fits the Bosnian context. I use the terms "Bosnian Croat," "Bosnian Serb," and "Bosniak" to refer to citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina who have identified with these common descent-based groups. I use the term "ethnonationalist" to describe the negative cooption of ethnic identity that elevates one's own ethnic identity over others. This is particularly applicable in the Bosnian context because the three constituent ethnic groups are often called nationalities; many ethnonationalists who wish to entrench ethnic divisions also align themselves with visions of "greater" ethnically clean territories that consolidate parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina with neighboring Serbia or Croatia. Because there is not a "dominate culture" in Bosnia, it is unrealistic to promote policies requiring assimilation or consider a "melting pot" as a desirable way of dealing with ethnic differences.

4.2 Peacebuilding Theory

In the aftermath of the Cold War, peacebuilding entered the United Nation's lexicon when U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali published *An Agenda for Peace* in 1992. In it, peacebuilding was defined as "an action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict" (Boutros-Ghali 1992). In the document, peacebuilding was also clearly and separately demarcated from preventive diplomacy, peacemaking (e.g., negotiating peace agreements), and peacekeeping (e.g., U.N. personnel deployed to support the implementation of a peace agreement) (Ibid).

The international intervention in Bosnia and Herzegovina after the war in 1995 represents an archetypical example of peacebuilding in a post-conflict society using the liberal peace paradigm. This theory posits that a democracy will be more peaceful than other types of governance in *both* its international and domestic affairs. The theory rests on two critical

assumptions: 1) a normative political assumption that liberal democracies with free and fair elections are more peaceful, and 2) an economic assumption that globalized free-market economies with interdependence and exchange are more peaceful (for example, see Doyle 2005).

However, this parochial focus on political and economic democratization often overlooks the social aspects of peacebuilding. Thus, "the social and human consequences of the process of constructing that peace" are ignored. (Pugh 2002). A review commissioned by the Peacebuilding Support Office of the United Nations recognizes that inequitable access to resources and a lack of social services are standard drivers of conflict (McCandless and Rogan 2013). Nevertheless, in their 2011 review of the role of education in peacebuilding, Novelli and Smith (2011) found that only 25 out of 192 projects financed by the U.N. Peacebuilding Fund were related to the social aspects of society. Compared with the security sector and political processes, social programming including education have not been prioritized in most peacebuilding contexts.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, Carlos Yordán also contends that equating state-building with peacebuilding typically diminishes the social aspects of the peacebuilding process (Yordán 2003). He argues that reconciliation lies fundamentally in social functions, so state-building with a narrow focus on the political and economic realms is insufficient to create conditions for long-term peace or address the conflict's root causes. Yordán observes that state-building efforts have not fostered interethnic cooperation and have made reconciliation more complex through the "separate but equal" treatment of ethnic groups institutionalized through the Dayton Peace Agreement. This demonstrates that the liberal peacebuilding agenda implemented in Bosnia lacks cultural nuance. The following section reviews the literature on international peacebuilding efforts in post-conflict education systems.

4.3 Peacebuilding and Post-Conflict Education

Bush and Saltarelli's 2000 report for UNICEF recognizes that there are "two faces" to education in ethnic conflict: constructive and deconstructive. Education can be constructive by bringing conflicting parties together, promoting reconciliation, and educating a new generation of citizens who embrace a pluralistic society and multiculturalism. However, education can also be deconstructive by perpetuating societal divisions, fomenting conflict, or contributing to oppression. Cole (2007) argues that schools can crystalize divisions through "hidden" curricula espousing narratives of inferiority and superiority. While teaching civics and democratic values in a post-conflict society may seem like a clear-cut objective, local views of history, religion, and politics may stand in the way.

Distinguishing between "conflict-sensitive" education reforms that attempt to "do no harm" and approaches that contribute to peacebuilding through post-conflict transformation is essential for any analysis. For example, a "conflict-sensitive" approach to reconstructing schools might simply rebuild schools in their former locations, even if this means that ethnic divisions among schools remain. However a "peacebuilding" approach to education involves a diagnosis of "the need for structural and institutional changes that involve changes to existing power relations within a society" (Roberts-Schweitzer et al., 2006, Smith et al., 2011).

One of the significant social aspects of peacebuilding often neglected by international efforts is reforming post-conflict education. International educational interventions tend towards a simple and one-dimensional approach focusing on whether schools are operational, often ignoring curricula, pedagogy, and ethnic integration. Harvey Weinstein, Sarah Warshauer Freedman, and Holly Hughson (2007) studied public education in five post-conflict societies that

underwent extensive ethnic cleansing and genocide during the 1990s: Croatia, the UN-administered province of Kosovo in Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia, and Herzegovina, and Rwanda. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, they highlight the international community's focus on "emergency" interventions for public schools (i.e., on the physical rebuilding of schools), ignoring conflict resolution, peace education, textbook editing, and curriculum reform. They argue that state-building must involve a more comprehensive set of interventions that recognizes the integrated nature of a society's institutions. Like political and economic institutions, public schools are essential for building long-term peace (Weinstein et al., 2007).

The following section reviews the literature on the importance of local ownership of reforms in peacebuilding.

4.4 The Need for Local Ownership

Nicolas Lemay-Hebert (2009) and Dominik Zaum (2007) both explore the contradictions inherent in an external intervention tasked with building legitimate domestic institutions from the "outside in." This results in a "sovereignty paradox" whereby international administrations aim to implement domestic reforms geared towards increasing local political institutions' legitimacy and sovereignty. However, the exogenous imposition of reforms also compromises the sovereignty of postwar states (Zaum 2007). This means that the state government has a "dual" responsibility to its citizens and the international community. Lemay-Hebert (2009) underscores the need for domestic buy-in and local ownership in the peacebuilding context to alleviate the worst symptoms of the "sovereignty paradox" and align local and international priorities.

Critics of the liberal peace paradigm also assert that current peacebuilding practices have "cookie-cutter" mandates that do not adapt to the specific context of the post-conflict societies or

recognize the importance of local ownership of reforms. Tschirgi (2004) argues that since the early 1990s, “external actors [have begun] to develop a peacebuilding template and a package of standard remedies to be applied in different contexts” (p. 5). MacGinty (2014) also affirms that “peacebuilding activity and discourse has been standardized and professionalized through ‘best practice’ and ‘lessons learned’” (p. 551). In Bosnia, Oliver Richmond and Jason Franks (2009) argue that the post-Dayton reconstruction process was dominated by Western liberal values, which undermined local voices' active participation and consideration. They assert that the Dayton Agreement has further fragmented Bosnian society through top-down reforms, eschewing genuine engagement with the historical and societal context.

While these critics argue that the social aspects of peacebuilding should not be overlooked, context-specific reforms are essential, and peacebuilding inherently depends on domestic actors' support and commitment, Donais (2014) highlights the nebulous role of international actors have in operationalizing local ownership of social reforms. International dominance in domestic policymaking is controversial since it may undermine the state’s legitimacy and sovereignty. State-centric approaches to peacebuilding also tend to engage former combatants and kleptocratic elites who perpetuate the conflict for their benefit, excluding other local actors and civil society from policy dialogues (O’Driscoll et al., 2018). Richmond and Franks (2009) argue that public support for the liberal peace agenda in Bosnia was almost nonexistent. They assert that local support was mobilized when war elites co-opted the international agenda, leading to exclusive power structures whereby internationals were not accountable to the local population. International actors, therefore, should play a supportive rather than leading role, establishing connections with a wide variety of local actors and allowing

locally generated decisions based on context-appropriate solutions (MacGinty 2014, Novelli et al. 2014, Richmond and Franks 2009).

In some situations, however, international actors can and should act to reduce the effects of local anti-progress spoilers who aim to disrupt the peacebuilding process or co-opt civil society initiatives (Perry 2003). Evidence has shown that decentralization in the post-conflict process can lead to political capture of local democracy and reinforce or create elites who use devolved power to pursue their selfish interests to the detriment of local and national interests. This is particularly true when restraints and accountability measures are absent (Eaton et al., 2011). Giles Mohan and Kristian Stokke (2000) emphasize the potential "dangers of localism," arguing that strategies are needed to simplify, separate, and reify the local aspects of peacebuilding while minimizing regional inequalities and power relations. Lilja and Höglund (2018) also identify the constructive functions of international organizations as "risk-absorbers" where local institutions and actors alone cannot address conflicts. For example, barring Ratko Mladić and Radovan Karadžić, two prominent Bosnian Serb war criminals and infamous anti-peace spoilers was, integral to the success of negotiating the Dayton Agreement and finally brokering a ceasefire (Hartwell, 2019). In the years since, international actors in Bosnia and Herzegovina have had to contend with the balancing act of including local voices and resisting the influence of kleptocratic elites (Hamilton, 2020).

As in other areas of peacebuilding, international actors must broaden their view of what is likely to impact the day-to-day working of post-conflict education systems by recognizing and responding to the opinions of those directly involved. In Jones' (2012) piece on education in the ethnically mixed Brčko district in Bosnia, she asserts that one must "listen to the voices of the teachers and students themselves and seek to understand their experiences." She continues:

"despite their ability to tell us about the meaning and effectiveness of reform processes, they are the voices which are the least heard in the discourse on education in postwar countries." (p. 133). This makes the in-depth analysis of any locally-led student movement for school integration (aligning with international peacebuilding interests) even more critical.

The United Nations Security Council adopted resolution 2250 in 2015, which recognizes "the importance of engaging young women and men in shaping and sustaining peace" ("U.N. Youth, Peace, and Security," 2015). As a result, there has been an uptick in civil society-led conferences and projects bringing together young people from different ethnic backgrounds and focusing on peace and human rights education outside public schools. However, Nicholas Micinski (2016) argues that international organizations in Bosnia recruit the same "NGO frequent flyers" in their youth-focused projects, contributing to an elitist environment that does not reach the general population. A national survey in 2012 showed that only 7% of youth respondents (age 15-30) were members of youth organizations, while 39% said no one had asked them to participate in youth organizations, and 15% did not know about any opportunities for participation (Micinski 2016). Micinski remarks that these "NGO frequent flyers" raise three critical considerations:

> *First, they legitimized the liberal peacebuilding agenda by providing a façade of local participation and ownership. Second, they provided biased intelligence about the situation on the ground because NGO frequent flyers, and civil society in general, reflected back to donors what they wanted to hear in order to continue receiving funding. Third, while NGO frequent flyers were genuine participants, the true targets of reintegration projects were nationalist youth and their families who do not support the liberal peacebuilding agenda (p. 102).*

This accentuates the critical need for public education reform, which can impact youth on a broader scale than boutique youth and reconciliation panels that only reach a certain educated elite.

Thus, the literature underscores the need to examine and understand how international actors can support local movements in the peacebuilding context while still considering local dynamics, possibilities for elite capture, and local anti-peace spoilers. This need is particularly acute in the post-war education reforms in Bosnia.

5 Historical Context

5.1 The Break-Up of Yugoslavia and the Bosnian War

Bosnia and Herzegovina, part of the former Yugoslavia, has long been a region with oscillating ethnocentric dominance. After the end of the Cold War, rising nationalism led to the rapid dissolution of Yugoslavia. On May 12, 1992, the then United States Ambassador to Yugoslavia sent his final cable to Washington, saying that "nationalism has put an arrow in the heart of Yugoslavia" (Zimmermann, 1999). An immediate cause of the 1990s war was the belief that the territory comprising most of Yugoslavia was rightly Serbian and the resulting moves by the Yugoslavian government to assert Serbian dominance throughout the region. It was stoked by ethno-nationalist politicians, particularly Slobodan Milošević, the Serbian president of Yugoslavia during the 1990s, who convinced people that their neighbors would threaten their rights and way of life (Silber, 1996).

Yugoslavia came into existence at the end of World War I, formed with the remnants of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Kingdom of Serbia. After World War II, a communist government was established in Yugoslavia over six republics (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Croatia, Slovenia, Serbia, and Macedonia) led by President Josip Broz Tito. During Tito's rule, various ethnic groups, including Serbs, Bosnians, and Croats, shared schools, offices, and other accommodations in relative harmony (Silber, 1996). Tito, however, struggled to

maintain stability among various ethnic groups. He banned the public promotion of nationalism and reduced the power of the Serb ruling class, particularly in areas such as Kosovo and parts of Bosnia. He also arrested (and sometimes executed) Croat nationalist protesters. After Tito died in 1980, the breakup of Yugoslavia began with each of the six Republics asserting greater independence. Economic problems in the 1980s exacerbated by the Yugoslavian government's mismanagement of debt and increasing nationalism intensified the demand for independence. Importantly, Serbian communist leader Slobodan Milošević began to reassert Serbian dominance over political and economic affairs in Yugoslavia, causing more ethnic conflict. War broke out when some of the Republics began to secede from the increasingly Serb-dominated Yugoslavian central government and create their own security forces. While some of the Republics seceded without significant conflict, other Republics, including Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo, suffered bloody wars.

The war in Bosnia and Herzegovina lasted from 1992 to 1995, but contrary to what is suggested by the term "Bosnian War," it was not a clear-cut civil war. Yugoslavia and Croatia were actively involved in the conflict. On March 25, 1991, Milošević and the then president of Croatia, Franjo Tuđman, met at Karađorđevo, where the two leaders allegedly agreed to partition Bosnia and Herzegovina along ethnic lines. Milošević and Tuđman wanted a Greater Serbia and a Greater Croatia, each ethnically pure. Despite the arbitrary nature of ethnicity, it became a defining feature of the Yugoslav conflicts (Silber, 1996).

According to Serbian propaganda, the Bosnian War was neatly divided along ethnic lines: Bosnia's Orthodox Serbs, Catholic Croats, and Bosniaks. However, when Yugoslavia collapsed, over one-fifth of its citizens had ethnically mixed parents (Zimmerman, 1999). According to a 1985 survey, as few as 17 percent of Bosnians considered themselves religious

(Ibid). However, fueled by propaganda, the war reconstructed these identity groups and hardened ethnic divisions in Bosnian society.

By 1994, over 200,000 soldiers and civilians were dead or missing, and an estimated 2 million became refugees or displaced persons (Dobbins et al., 2003). Following the relaxation of an arms embargo against the Croatian army, they successfully drove the Serb army from their territory. Then, the Croatian military combined with Bosniak troops in a joint offensive against the Serbs. Coupled with NATO airstrikes, this led the warring parties to a negotiated ceasefire and the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement. As the fog of war lifted, the deeply traumatized, ethnically divided, and economically broken citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina began to navigate their post-conflict identities.

5.2 Theories of Multiculturalism and Ethnic Identity: The Bosnian Context

Two prominent and opposing political theories deal with organizing the type of group diversity in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Charles Taylor's (1994) politics of recognition and Brian Barry's (2001) liberal egalitarianism. Barry's approach to group diversity is "difference blind." Instead of emphasizing differences, he argues that different groups can live together harmoniously if individuals have equal rights and justice. While he accepts the reality of cultural diversity, he does not believe that cultural diversity should be institutionalized. Barry also recognizes a conflict between education committed to a shared value system and education as an elite orchestration of sectarian interests. He argues for a comprehensive curriculum and opposes the proliferation of different schools with different curricula. Charles Taylor's politics of recognition contends that this "blind" treatment of group diversity is often deaf to the voice of the "Other." Difference blindness, or in his words, "nonrecognition," often reifies the dominant

culture to the detriment of minorities. The politics of nonrecognition can "inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being" (Taylor 1994, pg. 25). Therefore, Taylor argues that minorities should be politically recognized through special rights. In Taylor's view, different groups have the right to educate their children in a way that recognizes their cultural identity, which includes specialized curricula.

The Dayton Peace Agreement, signed in 1995, is unique in the history of internationally facilitated agreements. It is both a peace agreement in the classical sense and provides a "blueprint" for the state through a *de facto* constitution (Torsti 2009). Bosnia's government structures were created based on the principle of a "multicultural" society with three constituent people (Bosnian Serbs, Bosnian Croats, and Bosniaks) even though Bosnia includes many people who identify as mixed ethnicity or other ethnicities such as Romani and Albanian. To this day, Bosnia has three presidents in rotation: one Bosnian Serb, one Bosnian Croat, and one Bosniak. The Bosnian state is comprised of two entities: the Republika Srpska (Serb Republic) and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Dayton Accords institutionalized ethnic differences in government structures, which technically aligns with Charles Taylor's politics of recognition. However, instead of a productive mutual recognition and reification of ethnic differences, the Dayton Agreement has often facilitated the entrenchment of ethnonationalism. Politicians in Bosnia have been inured to a system in which they must appeal to one and only one ethnic group for votes. The institutionalization of ethnic divides has proven detrimental to overcoming divisive narratives that intensified during the war.

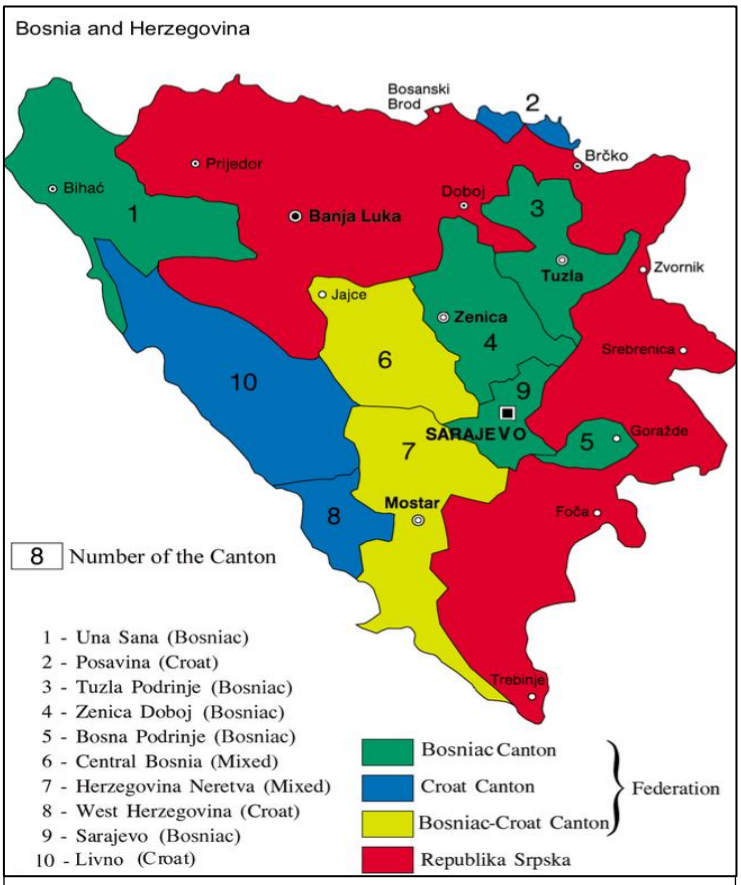
Selenica (2017) argues that in Kosovo, another war-torn region in the former Yugoslavia that has succumbed to ethnic divisions, the emphasis on equal collective rights and ethnic-based decentralization has led to further education division among ethnic lines. However, Selenica also

paints the "multiculturalism" debate in broad strokes, claiming that internationals aim to "engineer" a multicultural education system while locals only seek to support ethnonationalist curricula. The present study demonstrates that this is a false binary; while students value ethnic identity, many also pursue an integrated multicultural education.

5.3 History of Education Policy in the Region

During the latter half of the twentieth century, when the Yugoslavian government was operating the education system, the theoretical approach advocated by Brian Berry seemed to dominate education policy. Diegoli (2007), Taras (1999), and Bokovoy (1997) argue that nation-building efforts in Yugoslavia were principally implemented through the public education system. History education emphasized a Yugoslavia unified in communism, and the schools in what is now Bosnia and Herzegovina were part of this Yugoslavian system. Before the war in 1995, Serbs, Croats, and Bosniaks lived and attended school together in relative peace and harmony in Yugoslavia.

Since the Yugoslavian government used education to further political agendas, some have argued that it was easy to use education to instill nationalist sentiment during and after the war (Diegoli 2007, Tawil et al. 2004, Bringa 1995). During the war from 1992 to 1995, education became a network for spreading ethnonationalist sentiment. The curriculum was determined by which army controlled the area: Bosnian Serb-controlled areas started using the Serbian curriculum, Bosnian Croat-controlled areas started using the Croatian curriculum, and the Bosnian state army rapidly developed a new Bosnian public-school curriculum for the places they controlled (Torsti 2007).



A map of Bosnia and Herzegovina showing Republika Srpska and the Federation. Protests took place in Central Bosnia, a mixed ethnicity canton (6), October 3rd, 2003.

After the war, the institutionalization of ethnic differences in the public education system (ostensibly aligned with Charles Taylor's politics of recognition) like those in the political system began to intensify. Despite education's critical role in instilling feelings of "brotherhood and unity" in communist Yugoslavia and its cooption for spreading ethnonationalism during the war, the Dayton Peace Agreement did not establish a central or critical role for public education. The "right to education" is merely mentioned in Annex 6, Article 1 under "Fundamental Rights and Freedoms" ("Dayton Peace Agreement" 1995). Thus, the central government had no direct control over education. International actors in Bosnia and Herzegovina were not mandated to monitor or implement reforms in the education sector until 2002, seven years after the war. Without national or international oversight, local political leaders used public education as a patronage network to instill nationalist sentiments, just as they had during the hot conflict (*Balkan Insight* 2016).

In Republika Srpska, education management is more centralized at the entity level in a Ministry of Education, although local school boards in the seven regions are given significant

control (OSCE 2018). In the Federation, education policy is delegated to the ten cantons (Perry 2003); this has translated into four frequently fragmented levels of educational management: Federation, Canton, Municipality, and School. This decentralization has led to significant differences in education policy throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina. For example, schools in most Bosnian Croat territories are likely to respond to directions from Zagreb, the capital of Croatia, rather than Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Similarly, in the Serb Republic, schools are more likely to respond to directions from Belgrade.

In 2002, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) eventually did assume international leadership in the Bosnian education sector. Before that, there was no international or national coordination or strategy, only piecemeal programs and projects that primarily focused on rebuilding school structures destroyed during the war (Torsti 2009). The OSCE was "not a natural or obvious candidate to receive the mandate to lead education reform in Bosnia" (Perry 2003). OSCE was given leadership of education policy, not because it was qualified to lead in this area, but because it had staff and resources remaining after its role in monitoring elections in Bosnia was no longer necessary (Ibid).

By 2007, the international community's failures concerning education started to be publicly recognized. The OSCE Head of Mission representative in Bosnia stated that "the international community failed to respond to wartime curricula that contained messages, not in line with the Dayton Agreement. It failed to notice that schools began to threaten the country's long-term peace and stability from the early days of post-war reconstruction" (Premilovac 2007). The lack of centralized control and attention allowed ethnic segregation to take root in the Bosnian education system. Sufficient action was not taken to prevent elite capture of local Bosnian educational institutions: local anti-peace actors were often allowed to dominate the

public education system, excluding others with more pluralistic tendencies (Weinstein et al., 2007).

The case of public education reform efforts in Jajce demonstrates that blanket erasure of ethnic identity is also not a solution, at least not for these students in 2016-17. While the institutionalization of ethnic differences has stalled progress towards sustainable peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the following case study demonstrates that students still value their ethnic identity and want it recognized as Charles Taylor argues it should be. This would typically be viewed as incompatible with Barry's liberal egalitarianism. Nevertheless, students interviewed in this study also want certain aspects of multiculturalism and equal treatment in their institutions. The competing ideas of these two schools of thought are at the heart of Bosnia's political quagmire, which has a particularly significant impact on public education and vice versa.

5.4 The "Two Schools Under One Roof" Policy

The international community has often preferred "quick fixes" rather than solutions aimed at longer-term strategy in their educational efforts in Bosnia (Diegoli 2007). One such "quick fix" was international support for a system in the Bosnian Federation called 'two schools under one roof" (*Dvije skole pod jednim krovom*). After the fighting, this system was used to entice refugees to return to their homes by promising that their children did not have to attend school with children from another ethnicity (OSCE 2018). An OSCE address from 2007 states: "the yardstick for success was merely the number of returnee children attending pre-war schools rather than any change in the things they were learning or in how they were being taught" (Premilovac 2007). Ethnic segregation in the "two schools under one roof" program differs by location: sometimes children attend schools in shifts (e.g., Bosniaks in the morning and Croats in

the afternoon), and sometimes children attend school at the same time with physical barriers separating them (e.g., barbed wire fencing between playgrounds and separate entrances for different ethnicities). The schools use different textbooks, the students are physically segregated, and they are often exposed to divisive and nationalistic ideologies (OSCE 2018). Even in so-called "unified" schools, students are separated into different classes for the "national" subjects such as literature, history, and language (Ibid).

International support for the 'two schools under one roof" system in Bosnia and Herzegovina is more understandable when examined in its historical context. The OSCE wanted to encourage as many displaced people as possible to return to their hometowns. The promise that children did not have to attend classes with the "enemy" helped persuade many families to return. Populations seeking to return would request a new 'two schools under one roof' system in their hometown, and the OSCE would facilitate their establishment. The OSCE hoped that, with time, the two schools under one roof could become one (OSCE 2018).

Under the "two schools under one roof" policy, ethnonational identity in Bosnia became more and more problematic in post-conflict school curricula. Even though Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian are all mutually intelligible variations of the same Southern Slavic language, an important marker in ethnic identity is which language one identifies as one's own. (*Balkan Insight* 2017a). Language has been used to define different ethnicities, and variations in the names of places and things have been magnified since the end of the war in 1995 (Ibid). In 2003, the Federation passed legislation asserting students' right to be educated in their own language and learn so-called "national" subjects, like literature, history, geography, music, and art, according to a curriculum specifically designed for their ethnic group and language (Ibid). As a

result, each curriculum highlights linguistic differences while de-emphasizing apparent similarities.

Dr. Pilvi Torsti (2003, 2007) and Ann Low-Beer (2001) have analyzed textbooks and curricula in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Both establish that the curricula in Bosnian schools perpetuate "us" versus "them" narratives. The textbooks have historical continuity, whereby divisive narratives concerning the war are not discussed in the past tense but are phrased as if they continue. For example, a textbook from the Serbian history curriculum states how "the Serbian people were *again* forced to defend their honor and dignity with weapons." The history curriculum in Bosnian states that "Serbian-chetnik genocide against Muslims *has* deep roots…Serb ideology and politicians have the will to create an ethnically clean territory at any cost" (Torsti 2003). Even in other parts of the curricula where hostile stereotypes of the major ethnic groups are not emphasized, the presence of different ethnic identities is "practically ignored" (Ibid). For example, the curriculum for Serbs inserts Republika Srpska into topics linked with Yugoslavia and Montenegro but never into the context of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

5.5 Rejection of Ethnic Segregation in Theory, But Not in Practice

The international community, including the OSCE, has distanced itself from the 'two schools under one roof' policy (OSCE 2018). Several branches of the United Nations, the Council of Europe, and other international bodies have condemned the practice, asserting that it violates international human rights, education conventions, and domestic legislation prohibiting discrimination. Soon after student-led protests in 2017, the OSCE issued a report that concluded that the 'two schools under one roof" policy was discriminatory and contrary to international conventions and Bosnian domestic laws (OSCE 2018). This OSCE Report asserted: "Under 'two

schools under one roof,' pupils legally have the option to attend either of the two co-located schools, but the practical reality is that the school environments, including curricula, are welcoming to only one ethnic group." In addition, the OSCE Report contains the following:

> *"At present, the situation is not getting better. On the contrary, there was recently an attempt to establish another 'two schools under one roof' in Jajce, against the wishes of the students. There are also cases of mono-ethnic schools being established in ethnically mixed areas and students being bused to schools in areas where they are the ethnic majority. These measures will not help either the process of reconciliation or the preparation of young people to prosper in the 21st century."*

In 2011, a Bosnian legal aid group, Vaša Prava (with international financial support), filed two discrimination-related court cases challenging the continuation of the "Two Schools Under One Roof" policy (OSCE 2018). Vaša Prava filed these lawsuits against the public schools in the Mostar and Travnik Cantons, alleging that the schools violated Bosnian and International laws due to illegal discrimination based on ethnicity. In 2014, the Bosnian Supreme Court held the 'Two Schools Under One Roof"' policy in the Stolac and Čapljina schools in the Mostar Canton discriminatory and in violation of Bosnian and international law (OSCE 2018). However, due to weak rule-of-law in Bosnia, this court ruling has not been enforced to date.

In the 2017 Travnik case, the Supreme Court ruled that Vaša Prava failed to provide sufficient evidence that children were segregated based on ethnicity and insufficient evidence of discriminatory practices (OSCE 2018). The case was remanded and retried in the Canton Municipal court. After a new trial, the lower Court found that Vaša Prava introduced sufficient evidence of discrimination, thus establishing violations of Bosnian and International law by the public schools. The Defendants filed an appeal of this Municipal Court ruling to the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina ("Vasa Prava Press Release" 2021).

In its 2020 ruling, the Constitutional Court considered three issues raised by the litigants: (1) the physical separation of children of different ethnicities, (2) the single ethnicity of each

school's administration and leadership, and (3) the curricula. In defense of the current system, the school administration and a group of parents who had intervened argued that the "Two Schools Under One Roof" policy was legal because children had a right to be educated in their own language under Bosnian law (Ibid). The defendant's position was that this law created an exception, allowing children to be segregated. The defendants also argued that the ethnicity of school administrators and teachers did not constitute discrimination against students because it was unrelated to the students' ethnicity. Finally, the defendants argued that there had been significant recent curriculum improvement. Seventy percent of the curriculum is "common core," so elements of ethnic discrimination had been removed from a large portion of the teaching material (Ibid).

The issue of who had the burden of proof was critical to the decision. The Court found that since Vaša Prava presented a prima facie case of discrimination by introducing international reports and conclusions, the school system had the burden of proving that discrimination did not exist.

The majority of the Constitutional Court concluded that the school's policies in Travnik violated Bosnian and International law; two judges dissented. The Court based its ruling on the Bosnian Supreme Court findings in the Mostar case and multiple reports that various international organizations had issued concluding that the "Two Schools Under One Roof" policy constituted unfair discrimination (Ibid).

Despite millions spent by international actors on cross-cultural education programs and the completion of successful litigation in Travnik, the "two schools under one roof" program remains prevalent in the central and southern parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Today there are

still 56 schools using the 'two schools under one roof system,' and nearly two generations of students across Bosnia and Herzegovina have been instilled with "us" versus "them" narratives.

Thus, national and international neglect of the education sector in Bosnia has perpetuated and even exacerbated ethnic tensions and hateful nationalist rhetoric among younger generations who were not a part of the hot conflict in the 1990s. This lack of attention allowed ethnic segregation to take root through the "two schools under one roof" program. Sufficient action was not taken to prevent elite capture of local Bosnian educational institutions: local anti-peace actors have often been allowed to dominate the public education system, excluding others with more pluralistic tendencies. While international actors can no longer directly reform public education (since they are no longer administrating Bosnia as an international protectorate), they can still support grassroots initiatives promoting greater ethnic integration in public education, like the student protests, which began in Jajce.

6 The Jajce Student Movement

One of my interlocutors, Samir, a local activist and alumnus of the Secondary Vocational High School in Jajce, described his childhood against the backdrop of the "two schools under one roof" system:

> *"I would play soccer with my friend, Dragan—I'm Bosniak, by the way, and Dragan is Croat. And so, in the morning, we would play soccer together here in the neighborhood, and then we would go together to our primary school. And then Dragan would basically enter one side of the building, and I would go to the other side of the building, you know, and we wouldn't even question it. Then in secondary school, when we started going to school together, then it became a question. Like, how are we here? Why did this happen?"*

This demonstrates one of the unique aspects of the education system in the idyllic town of Jajce in central Bosnia, which has around 7,000 residents in the town center and 30,000 in the municipality ("Jajce | Bosnia and Herzegovina | Britannica"). While the OSCE received a petition to create "two schools under one roof" for the primary school in Jajce immediately after the war, they never received a request to segregate the two high schools (Brljavac 2018). Despite being ethnically mixed (with around 45% of the population identifying as Croat, 45% identifying as Bosniak, and 10% identifying as Serb or "other"), both the Jajce Vocational High School and the "Nikola Shop" High School have operated under a Croatian curriculum since the end of the war ("Jajce | Bosnia and Herzegovina | Britannica").

Samir spoke to me from his childhood home in Jajce. Though he left his hometown to study Political Science at the University of Sarajevo, moved to Germany to receive a master's degree, and lived in Washington D.C. for a Congressional Fellowship, he has returned to Jajce to "practice what he preaches." Samir has given a TEDx talk about the "brain drain" (a term for the exodus of highly trained youth) that has been plaguing postwar Bosnia and Herzegovina. He is boisterous in his support for democratic reforms and reminds me often that he is an optimist despite the political situation in his home country. He has nurtured the student movement from its infancy and has written extensively supporting school integration.

Samir tells me that when he attended high school in Jajce from 2008 to 2012, his curriculum was "pure Croatian." He learned that Zagreb was his capital, not Sarajevo. Although he is a Bosniak living in Bosnia and Herzegovina, his textbooks were "in the Croatia language." The curriculum focused on Croatian national narratives. My OSCE interlocutor worked with that organization since 1999, joining the Education Sector when it opened in 2002. When I asked her about the Croatian curriculum in Jajce before the protests in 2016, she corrected me: "The

official name is not the 'Croatian curriculum' because this would mean it's a curriculum performed in the Republic of Croatia. In our country, it's called a curriculum *in* the Croatian language." Despite the OSCE's theoretical attempts to distance the system it created from ethnonationalist tendencies; students are taught these types of narratives in practice.

Over the summer break in 2016, when most families living in Jajce had gone on vacation, a "petition" was ostensibly submitted to the Central Bosnian Canton requesting a new High School in Jajce that would follow the Bosnian curriculum. One student interviewed in this study called it a "phantom petition." The representative from the OSCE, who was the most pragmatic of my interlocutors and rarely transcended factual statements, recalled*:*

There was constant talk about such a request. But this request was never presented to us. And we believe that it was never put in writing. It was never clear in the whole story who requested it. What we believe is that it was more of a political story.

The local government insisted that they were responding to this "phantom" request from the community for a new school with the Bosnian curriculum. They further justified the proposal for a new school based on the legislation in the Federation granting students the right to be educated in their own language and learn "national" subjects based on their ethnic group.

However, the motivation for the petition was not to recognize and reify cultural differences. The real reason for coming up with this "story" is a tale as old as time—power and money. A new school following the Bosnian curriculum satisfied the Croat ethnonationalist politicians on the cantonal level like Ms. Katica Čerkez (from the Croatian Democratic Union of Bosnia and Herzegovina, or *Hrvatska Demokratska Zajednica Bosne i Hercegovine*, HDZ) because ridding the high schools of Bosniak students would consolidate Croatian power in the schools. There would no longer be any Bosniak students or parents complaining about the lack of Bosniak teachers or the exclusionary and ethnonationalist Croatian curriculum. The new school

also benefitted Bosniak ethnonationalist politicians locally in Jajce (from the Party of Democratic Action, or *Stranka demokratske akcije*, SDA) because opening a school created a slew of new politically appointed positions for teachers, administrators, and staff. As Samir says, "Here in Bosnia, people don't get jobs based on their merit, they get jobs based on their affiliation. Giving a job to someone means that this person and their family will be indebted, and they will need to return something which is usually, if not money, then with their vote."

In a precarious job market, a position in a school is one of the most common forms of public employment in Bosnia and Herzegovina, making up over 54% of the public sector ("Education Statistics | Bosnia and Herzegovina"). Although the student-led protests stopped the creation of the new Bosniak-run school, board members of the non-existent school had already been "hired." All five board members were also members of the SDA Bosniak nationalist party (Beharić 2017). Ms. Katica Čerkez insisted that this is not segregation based on ethnicity because students can enroll in whichever school they choose. However, by law, the ethnic makeup of school boards in Bosnia must reflect the student body's makeup (Ibid). Although no students ever enrolled in this newly proposed school, it is clear what ethnic makeup the local politicians anticipated. School budgets would also be split among the schools, so instead of investing the money in repairing existing infrastructure or buying more books and materials, the money would go into teacher's wages (Ibid). Those wages then supply the HDZ and the SDA with more money and votes, and the cycle would continue. While the policy of creating special rights for education is intended to 'recognize' ethnic differences in the Taylorian sense, it has instead led to the corrupt pursuit of power and money.

In response to the "phantom petition," students from the two high schools in Jajce prepared and submitted their own petition to the Central Bosnia Canton opposing the creation of

the new school. They also had two additional requests, which are noteworthy considering the two competing political theories of ethnic identity and multiculturalism. First, the students wanted options in the format of graduation diplomas. Previously, all diplomas from the Nikola Shop and Vocational High Schools in Jajce depicted a Croatian Coat of Arms. Students requested a choice between a Croatian-style diploma or a Bosniak-style diploma. Instead of one unified diploma, the students wanted their ethnicity to be recognized on their degree, leaning more towards Taylor's politics of recognition. Second, the students requested an expansion of the "national" group of subjects from two classes (language and religion) to five (language, religion, history, music, and geography). Again, this is an explicit acknowledgment of ethnic differences. Although students would not be segregated under their proposal, there would be more "soft" institutionalization of ethnic differences.

After the students filed the petition with Central Bosnian Canton, the debate continued in the community and the school about the proper course of action. Several teachers organized a survey for students, parents, and teachers in Jajce, asking them for their opinions on how the ministry should proceed (*Balkan Insight* 2017b). Participants could choose among three options: pursuing the proposed segregated system with the new Bosniak school, keeping the current Croatian curriculum, or developing a new integrated curriculum inclusive of all the ethnic groups. The overwhelming majority voted for the third option (Ibid).

Samir tells me that the students requested the expansion of national subjects as a compromise. They knew it would be difficult to win the battle against ethnonationalist politicians without such a request. For the students, expanding the national subjects so Bosniak students could choose courses that recognized their ethnic identity was preferable to the sole availability of a curriculum in Croatian. However, the students did see the potential for creating a unified

curriculum that recognized each ethnic group. For the students, valuing ethnic identity and attending a multicultural school were not incompatible.

The first protest in Jajce happened almost exactly a year before the rally in Travnik. It was much smaller, with about a dozen students marching from the Vocational High School to the Nikola Shop High School through Jajce's city center on July 8, 2016. Nikolas, a student from the Vocational High School and one of the core members of the protest group, told me about the Jajce dissent from his new home in Munich. Shortly after the protests started in 2016, his mother, father, and two brothers moved to Germany. Nikolas stayed in Jajce to "finish what he started" before moving to Sarajevo for his University studies. He has since moved to be with his family during the COVID-19 pandemic. The proposed school segregation and Nikolas' involvement in the protests were, he says, the "last drops in the barrel" for his family. He implied they were tired of the political battles they had to fight just to live and work in Jajce, so they made their way to Germany. When he tells me about the protest in his British-leaning English accent, his first recollection is not the students' raw enthusiasm or meeting with "the big boys," as he refers to prominent international stakeholders, but the controversy over the flags that were brought to the protest.

In what the students thought was a show of solidarity and promotion of multiculturalism, they brought the Serbian flag, the Croatian flag, and the flag of present-day Bosnia and Herzegovina. When photos with the flags appeared in local media after the protest, it "diminished the message of the students," according to my interlocutor from the OSCE. On a local news outlet's website, the top comment (with over 600 upvotes) on an article about the protests reads, "this picture is reminiscent of some international meeting of students from three different countries and not in Bosnia and Herzegovina" (Klix.ba 2016). Another reads,

> *"So there are the flags of both neighbors who committed genocide against the people who carried the [Bosniak] flag with lilies, and now look…the lilies were abolished and replaced with this quasi-European flag of Bosnia and Herzegovina, while these aggressive flags remain. This is the epitome of that injustice…this is the international community we rely on to defend and protect the weird Dayton Agreement while Dodik does what he wants and even belittles the constitution itself" (Ibid).*

Some Bosniaks and Serbs were upset about the Croatian flag. Some Bosniaks and Croats were upset about the Serbian flag. And members from all three groups were upset about the "quasi-European" flag of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which has a triangle representing the three constituent peoples and uses yellow stars with a blue background reminiscent of the E.U. logo. While some (mainly Serbs and Croats) feel that this flag represents the "internationally supported" Muslim-Bosniak cause during the war, some Bosniaks feel this flag usurps the traditional Bosniak flag, which has a blue shield decorated with lilies. Many locals think that the current official flag of Bosnia and Herzegovina has been pushed upon them by internationals. Milorad Dodik, the current Serbian president in rotation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, is a highly divisive political figure who often profits from the institutionalization of ethnic differences codified in the Dayton Agreement. The commenter mentioning him highlights the mismatch between the international community's aim to create a unified Bosnia and their tacit support of politicians who actively undermine the *de facto* constitution contained within the agreement. Nikolas tells me:

> *This created an outrage because nobody knew what the hell was going on. And, of course, the point of every protest is to have a clear message. It even became a bloody meme, somebody, you know, just Photoshopping that picture of us holding those three flags and putting the current flag of Bosnia and Herzegovina on all three.*

Below (top) is the original picture of the three students carrying the flags and the photoshopped version (bottom) [Photos provided by Nikolas]:

While the students felt that carrying three different flags at the protest would emphasize their unity and embrace of multiculturalism, the reaction to the flags was mixed. Local politicians took advantage of the protesters' flags to push back against the student movement, claiming the children were being “misused” by adults to represent ethnonationalist sentiments. Nikolas said that many failed to realize students also chose to carry a Serbian flag, even though no Serb students were present at the protest (they were all on summer vacation). It was a Croat boy carrying the Serbian flag through the streets of Jajce that day. The media never highlighted this

highly symbolic act, and it was also overlooked, both by the local commenters mentioned above and by international stakeholders.

Nikolas believes that the squabbling about the flag-carrying discouraged international actors from supporting the movement in the beginning:

> *I mean, at first, everybody was wondering, well, if the international community wanted to help us out, they would have been with us from the very get-go. But they didn't because they didn't get a clear message. It was confusing. Nobody would step out and say, 'those kids are correct, and we need to help them.' It wouldn't happen. Because of the bloody picture with the flags. It was confusing. Nobody took it seriously. I mean, I don't blame them.*

Samir also told me that the OSCE was "mostly deaf" to their calls for support in the early months of the movement. My interlocutor from the OSCE insisted that they had supported the student protesters "from the moment it started" and that Johnathan Moore, the Head of Mission at the OSCE, had been "heavily invested" since he met with the students before their first protest of July 8, 2016. The disconnect between how the students perceived international support and how internationals viewed their own position seems to stem from the type of rhetoric internationals used to address the situation in Jajce. While Mr. Moore met with students and local politicians early on, he was "too diplomatic," according to Samir. Many international stakeholders in postwar Bosnia and Herzegovina are allergic to anything that smacks of ethnonationalist sentiment, and it seems that the OSCE did not want to "take sides." This demonstrates how they misunderstood the students' intentions, particularly regarding the flags at the protest. The OSCE's hesitance stemmed from the potential "parade" of ethnonationalist symbols (i.e., the flags). However, celebrating each other's ethnic identities through the flags symbolized unity for the students.

Samir called Johnathan Moore out in an article he wrote for a local news outlet in the spring of 2017:

> *OSCE Ambassador Jonathan Moore has been involved in the struggle of high school students from the beginning, but for too long he has been too lenient towards the main culprits who want Jajce to take a civilizational step backward. Ambassador Moore should know that his negotiators in Jajce and Travnik are not foreign ambassadors but former war generals, soldiers, politicians hardened in lies, who have been in politics for two decades and have long since become distant from their people. What is missing is political pressure to will the authorities to take the next step towards the integration of education, which they will obviously not do alone* (Beharić 2017).

When I asked my interlocutor from the OSCE if Ambassador Moore had "pressured" local authorities, she said, "I'm not sure that I would call it 'pressure.' I think the OSCE's approach was that everybody knows about the students and their demands." Samir tells me the type of rhetoric that he had hoped for eventually came from the Canadian Ambassador, who had been alerted to the student movement by the OSCE. She told local politicians that they would segregate the schools "over her dead body." While the OSCE support was more of a slow burn than a spectacular blaze, they did facilitate the meeting in June 2017 between the Minister of Education, Katica Čerkez, and the students. However, it took a full year for the students to meet with the politicians directly.

In the end, the three demands contained in the student petition were satisfied: the new high school was not opened; the students were given a choice of diploma, and the "national" group of subjects was expanded from two classes (language and religion) to five (language, religion, history, music, and geography). These three demands demonstrate that the students valued their ethnic identity and wanted to learn about their own language, religion, and culture. However, they did not see this as an excuse for ethnic segregation. They did not want to learn their ethnonational narratives at the *expense* of other ethnicities; they wanted to learn to celebrate

their differences together. Like the carrying of the flags, this request can be superficially confusing. The student protest movement in Jajce lies at the nexus of recognizing ethnic identity and multiculturalism. This seemingly discordant intersection is precisely what internationals have largely failed to understand.

4.1 Evaluating the Success of the Student-Led Movement

On the surface, it is easy to conclude that the 2016-17 student protests in Jajce and Travnik were both a success and a failure. In Jajce, all three elements in the petition submitted by the students were granted: a new segregated school was not opened, the students were given a choice of diplomas, and the number of "national subjects" expanded. This can be categorized as a complete success from the students' point of view. This is true even though the second and third items were proposed as "compromises" and recognize ethnic identity. In Travnik, the protests did not result in any immediate change: the Travnik schools remained segregated; the Two School Under One Roof policy remained in effect. Thus, this result could be categorized as a failure on the surface.

The literature on evaluating the success or failure of a particular attempted local reform effort must also be considered when assessing the success or failure of these local reform efforts. Karen Ross, Charla Burnett, Yuliya Raschupkina, and Darren Kew (2019) provide a conceptual model for assessing peacebuilding and social justice work. They propose "…broadening scholars' understanding of the success of nonviolent movements not only by analyzing the size of territorial span of the movements," but also by "…discussing societal changes that the very actions of social movement facilitate, regardless of whether the movement fails or succeeds in achieving its goals" (p. 497). Ross, Burnett, Raschupkina, and Kew (2019) also explore methods

for evaluating a particular movement, including how it promotes internal strength and external expansion and how the process can be extended through building coalitions across campaigns. Rather than viewing reform efforts as a linear or chronological process, their model promotes an "impact-oriented and an iterative process of social learning, where actions are shaped by reactions (by the government and/or other actors) to previous moves" (p. 497).

When using these types of theoretical models for assessing peacebuilding and social justice work, the student-led protests in Jajce and Travnik take on a much more successful sheen. The Jajce students got positive reactions from some of their teachers and parents through the teacher-led survey that was developed and published. They also ultimately recruited the OSCE to their side. The response of school administrators was not initially positive, but at least in Jajce, the school administration agreed to the changes the students proposed. The students learned more about successful messaging through the adverse reaction to their attempts to show solidarity using national flags.

The protest in Travnik involved more people, another sign of success even though, ultimately, nothing in Travnik seemed to change. At least two subsequent developments after the Travnik protest are indicators of the success of this phase of the student protests. These are 1. the change in position by the OSCE and other international actors from initially supporting the "Two Schools Under One Roof" policy to actively opposing it (OSCE 2018), and 2. The favorable court ruling in the lawsuit filed by a local legal aid group with international support against public school policy in Travnik; the court held that the segregated schools in Travnik violated Bosnian and international law. These developments indicate that the student protests had an impact and that an iterative process of action and reaction was begun.

7 Conclusion

My interlocutor Samir was the most enthusiastic supporter of school integration, multiculturalism, and democratic values. So, when he was talking to me about his history classes during his primary school years in Jajce, I was slightly taken aback as he went on a diatribe about Jajce's history and his own ethnic identity:

> *"Through the window of my history classroom, we could see the fortress of the last Bosniak King because Jajce was the stronghold and former capital of the [Bosnian] kingdom. And it was in 1463, in May, when the Ottomans came to Bosnia. When Jajce fell, the Bosnian Kingdom fell, and when the Bosnian King Stefan Tomašević was taken hostage and killed in Jajce, this was the end of the Bosnian kingdom. So, the capital of the Bosnian kingdom was in this city, and through the windows of our classroom, we were looking at the last fortress of the Bosnian kingdom, but we didn't learn anything about it. It was as if it didn't exist, you know. Instead, we were learning about Croatian history and the Croatian kings. We were learning about a neighboring country."*

Samir's insistence on relaying this to me underscores the ubiquity of ethnic narratives in Bosnia and Herzegovina. When asked about where he learned this history, if not in school, he hesitated. He felt like he had always known. Finally, he decides that his parents must have taught him this when he was a child. This was also the anecdote through which I realized that valuing ethnic identity and advocating for integration and multiculturalism are not mutually exclusive ideas, particularly among the young activists and students in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Only the political elites, who profit from segregation and identity politics at their worst, find them incompatible. Then, when confronted with a grassroots peacebuilding movement, the international actors could not seem to reconcile a simultaneous embrace of ethnic identity and multiculturalism. Instead of the enthusiastic support of a locally-led solution devised by youth, they hovered at "diplomatic neutral." These young students and activists in Bosnia and

Herzegovina embody both ideals and understand ipak može zajedno. “Nevertheless, they go together.”

High school students during the protest in Travnik. The sign bearing the phrase “*IPAK MOŽE ZAJEDNO*” is prominent. June 20, 2017, REUTERS / Dado Ruvić

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9 Appendix

9.1 IRB Protocol: Interview Questions

University of Chicago IRB Interview Questions
Student

Study Number: IRB21-0372
Study Title: BiH School Integration
Researcher(s): Josephine Mintel
Collaborating Institutions: Post-Conflict Research Center

To be collected via email before virtual interview:

- Name
- Phone
- Email
- School Affiliation (e.g., former student, staff, international interlocutor)
- Ethnicity (if applicable)
- Religion (if applicable)
- Age

All questions will not be asked during an interview. The interviewer will select questions from each category based on the flow of the interview.

Virtual Interview Questions targeted towards a student enrolled during the 2016-17 school year in the Jajce public schools:

Background of subject:

1. Please describe how you are affiliated with the public school in Jajce.
2. What are you doing now? How did your experiences with the Jajce public schools help you going forward in your education, career, and life?

Information re 2016-17 protests:

3. What is your opinion about the protests in Jajce in 2016-17?
4. When did you first hear about the push to avoid segregation of some of the classes?
5. Whose idea was it to organize the protests? What was your involvement in organizing or participating in the protests?
6. Why didn't you want a separate school for Bosniak students in Jajce?
7. If you participated in or observed the protests, describe them: was it a one-day event or did it last several days or weeks? Were there meetings and written communications advocating the protesters' point of view along with the street protest? If so, what were they? What about the school boycott threat; was that a good idea?
8. Who was the target of the student advocacy: the administration, the government, the community? Or someone else?

9. How many students participated? Did the students use different messages for different audiences?
10. When the street protests happened, what were they like? Was it sunny or rainy? Where exactly were they and why was that location chosen? How many protest signs were displayed and who made them? What did the signs say? What about flags? Did the protesters chant in unison and if so, what did the chant say? Describe the dress of the participants? What else do you remember about the protests that stood out to you?
11. Did you participate in other protests related to school segregation, for example in Travnik? What do you know about other student-led protests against school segregation? What was your involvement, if any?
12. How did your family react to the push for integration? Your friends? Your teachers? Your community? Who supported the protests? Who opposed them?
13. In your view were the protests successful or not? Why?
14. Have you been in any integrated classes since 2017? How successful do you feel the integrated classes are?

Questions re Outside Interest & Support

15. What non-student support do you think is most important in the effort to integrate schools? Help from teachers? Community support? Support from school administrators or the government, support from religious leaders? Support from outside your community? Support from internationals? What kind of support is most helpful? (advice, money, recognition, pressure on politicians and other government officials, other resources?).
16. What kind of opposition to greater school integration do you see as being most effective in preventing school integration?

Questions re Curriculum & Pedagogy

17. Did you perceive any changes to what was taught and how it was taught after the student protests compared to before?
18. Would you prefer one integrated curriculum in Bosnia and Herzegovina, instead of separate curricula (e.g., Bosniak-, Serb-, and Croat-specific curricula)?
19. Do you take classes in religion?

General Questions re Scalability and Effectiveness going Forward:

20. What or who do you believe are the biggest barriers to more school integration? Why is that the case? (Legal requirements, religious beliefs, politicians? lingering conflict?).
21. Do you think there are more effective ways than student protests to make schools more integrated? If so, what are they?
22. Do you think other schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina should be integrated? Why or why not? Do you think more integrated schools are possible in some places, but not others? Why?
23. Do you know of any integrated schools and if so, what can you tell me about how they got that way? Do you believe they are more successful than segregated schools?

24. Do you think all classes could be integrated (e.g., history and music)? Why or why not?
25. What improvements in public education do you think are the most important right now?
26. What do you feel the role of public education is in creating or maintaining a peaceful society?
27. Have you attended any internationally organized or NGO organized panels on youth and reconciliation/youth and peacebuilding? If so, which events or panels have you attended? How do you feel these events have influenced your motivations to participate in the protests?
28. What else do you want me to know about these protests and their outcomes? What else in general do you want me to know about public education in BiH?

General Questions re Legal Impediments

29. During the student protest, a representative of "Naša stranka" party in the House of Representatives of the Parliament of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina proposed a revision to the laws of the Federation that would promote greater school integration; was this law ever considered? Was it enacted? Is similar legislation being considered now?

9.2 IRB Protocol: Interview Questions in Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian

Pitanja za intervju sa IRB sa Univerziteta u Čikagu
Za studente

Broj studije: IRB21-0372
Naslov: Obrazovna integracija u BiH
Istraživačica: Josephine Mintel
Partnerska organizacija: Centar za postkonfliktna istraživanja

Sljedeće podatke je potrebno poslati putem e-maila prije zakazanog intervjua

- Ime
- Telefon
- Email
- Status (npr., bivši učenik, osoblje, međunarodni sagovornik)
- Nacionalnost (ako je primjenjivo)
- Religija (ako je primjenjivo)
- Starost

Pitanja za učenike koji su škole u Jajcu pohađali 2016-2017 školske godine

Pozadina ispitanika

30. Molimo Vas da opišete način na koji ste povezani sa državnim školama u Jajcu.
31. Čime se sada bavite? Kako Vam je obrazovanje u državnoj školi pomoglo u daljnjem obrazovanju, karijeri?

Informacije o protestima 2016-17:

32. Koje je Vaše mišljenje o protestima srednjoškolaca u Jajcu 2016/17. godine?
33. Kada ste prvi put čuli za ideju zaustavljanja segregacije u razredima?

5. Čija je bila ideja da se protesti organizuju? Da li ste Vi učestvovali ili organizovali proteste?

34. Ako ste organizovali ili učestvovali u protestima, opišite kako: da li je to trajalo jedan dan, nekoliko dana ili sedmica? Da li su se održavali sastanci ili da li se pisalo o idejama koje reflektuju ideje demonstranata? Ako je odgovor da, koje ideje su to bile? Šta mislite o ideji obrazovnog bojkota; je li to bila dobra ideja?
35. Ko je bila meta protesta: administracija, vlada, društvo? Ili neko drugi?
36. Koliko je srednjoškolaca učestvovalo na protestu? Da li su korištene različite poruke upućene različitim akterima?
37. Kako su ulični protesti izgledali? Je li bio kišan ili sunčan dan? Gdje su se održali i zašto baš na toj lokaciji? Koliko je protestnih znakova napravljeno i ko ih je napravio? Šta je na njima pisalo? Da li su zastave korištene? Da li su demonstranti jednoglasno uzvikivali i šta? Šta su nosili od odjeće? Šta se po Vašem mišljenju isticalo na protestima?
38. Da li ste učestvovali na drugim protestima iz istih razloga, npr. u Mostaru ili Travniku? Ako jeste, na koji način?
39. Kako je Vaša porodica reagovala na proteste? Prijatelji? Nastavnici? Zajednica? Ko je proteste podržao? Ko se protestima protivio?
40. Po Vašem mišljenju da li su protesti bili uspješni? Zašto?
41. Da li ste bili učenik integrisanog razreda od završetka protesta? Koliko su uspješni takvi razredi?

Lično mišljenje

42. Koja vrsta podrške je još značajna u borbi za obrazovnu integraciju? Da li je to pomoć nastavnika? Podrška zajednice? Podrška školske administracije ili vlade, ili vjerskih lidera? Podrška koja dolazi van granica Vaše zajednice? Podrška međunarodnih organizacija? Koja vrsta pomoći je najefikasnija? (savjetodavna, novčana, podrška u vidu priznanja, pritisak na političare i vladine zvaničnike?).
43. Koja vrsta opozicije je najefikasnija u borbi protiv ovog problema?

Kurikulum & Pedagogija

44. Da li ste uočili neke promjene u obrazovnom sistemu u odnosu na prije?

Skalabilnost & Efikasnost

45. Koje su, po Vašem mišljenju, najveće prepreke ka obrazovnoj integraciji? Zbog čega je to tako? (Pravna struktura, vjerska uvjerenja, političari? Dugotrajni sukob?).
46. Da li postoje efikasnije metode od protesta u borbi za obrazovnu integraciju? Ako je Vaš odgovor da, koji su to razlozi?
47. Da li bi i ostale škole na području Bosne i Hercegovine trebale pristupiti integraciji? Ako da, zašto da? Ako ne, zašto ne? Da li mislite da je obrazovna integracija realnost u nekim školama, ali ne u drugim? Zašto?
48. Da li ste Vi upoznati sa obrazovnom integracijom i u kojim školama? Da li su uspješnije od onih sa segregacijom?

49. Da li mislite da svi časovi u školi mogu biti integrisani (npr., historija i muzička kultura)? Ako da, zašto da? Ako ne, zašto ne?
50. Šta mislite da je prijeko potrebno promijeniti u državnim školama?
51. Koja je uloga državnog obrazovnog sistema u stvaranju ili održavanju miroljubivog društva?
52. Da li ste učestvovali na međunarodnim panelima ili panelima koji su organizovale nevladine organizacije na temu mladih i pomirenja/mladih i izgradnje mira? Ako je Vaš odgovor da, koji su to događaji bili? Jesu li ti paneli uticali na Vašu odluku da učestvujete na protestima?
53. Šta mislite da je bitno da znam o protestima srednjoškolaca u Jajcu? Šta mislite da je bitno da znam o obrazovnom sistemu u BiH?