

I am hungry in three languages

Neoliberal subjectivity in post conflict Bosnia and Herzegovina

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Map of the Republic of Bosnia Herzegovina¹



¹ The red part is Republika Srpska and the lighter part the federation, two political entities in one nation-state. I conducted my fieldwork in the Federation in the two largest cities; Sarajevo and Tuzla.

Introduction

Early 2014 a wave of protest breaks out in Bosnia Herzegovina. In all major cities massive demonstrations against the government are held. Soon the protest turn violent and government buildings are burned down. The images of the burned buildings were broadcasted worldwide and were especially worrying because the war of the early 90's has not yet been forgotten. What was going on here? Where ethno national groups again on the brink of war?

The dominant and simplifying explanation for the war that erupted in 1992 was the claim that ethno national groups were fighting each other in an endless violent spiral of ancient hatreds. This time Bosnian citizens were aware of the label they carried and left no coincidence in the representation of the protest to national and international media. They carried along banners with statements as: 'help us fight corrupt politicians and 'I'm hungry in three languages'. Their message was clear. This protest was no clash between barbarian ethno national groups. This was a struggle between classes: between the political elite and the mass. What happened in Bosnia-Herzegovina after the war?

In line with the rhetoric of the early 90s the post conflict international intervention in Bosnia (from now on I use the term Bosnia to refer to the whole Federation as well Republica Serpsak) was neoliberal. The idea was that if Bosnia had to become a democratic state with strong state institutions these goals could not be reached without a neoliberal transformation of the Bosnian economy. During this transformation the intervening parties did not take in account the highly fragmented political economy of post conflict Bosnia. The quick elections that were held installed the ethno national extremist political parties that were partly responsible for sparking the war back in political office (Divjak and Pugh 2008:373-386). Added to this the quick and massive privatizations of state enterprises lead to the further consolidation of the power of these parties in the economical domain. Nationalist political parties divided state assets along ethno national lines (Donais 2002:3-19). The neoliberal transformation has thus not so much lead to transfer of state institutions to the market as well to the political elite

In order to integrate their economies in to the global neoliberal market states deploy a set of 'neoliberal governance techniques' (Ong 2007:3-8). These techniques withdraw state boundaries from society by the transfer of state institutions to the market. For citizenship this means that the liberal free and rational citizen protected from the state by political, economical and social rights becomes a self actualizing entrepreneur that needs to build its own existence and protection around the logic of the market (Rose 1996:144-162). What does this mean for

the citizens of Bosnia? What does it mean to be an ‘self – actualizing entrepreneur’ of your own destiny in a context where the free market around which this is supposed to happen is highly fragmented along political divisions?

Bosnia has made some economic progress but is still not at pre war level. The bankruptcy of the privatised companies caused mass unemployment. The estimated in Bosnia unemployment is now around 40 percent (Divjak and Pugh 2008:373-386). The citizens that are hit hardest by this are the industrial workers that have little chance to find any other work. Whole towns run empty on the country side where state industry was once not only the employee but also the centre of social life and the protector of local values (Likić-Brborić et al. 2013:31-55). Citizens for who once labour was a right protected by the state are left behind with no pensions to survive their old days, Large segments of the population are now pushed into the informal economy for survival, depriving them from their basic rights and protection from the state (Pugh 2005).

But citizenship is not only about rights. How can we understand the lived experience of citizenship in a post conflict and neoliberal state as Bosnia is? How can we interpret the underlying perceptions and thoughts that lead to the massive protest as such? To do so this thesis makes use of the poststructuralist concepts of power, discourses and subjectivity. In the Foucault’s sense power is about governing the self as well as others enhancing it to an a conduct practiced within the whole of society. Discursive representations is where power is negotiated. Discourses are sites of struggle over hegemony by individuals groups and institutions. In this way power is no longer a force that is implemented from above as the subject can resist or go along with the social practices that are shaped by these discourses. The subjectivity of the individual shapes and resist the cultural and historical discourses that shape subjectivities and so on and on (Ortner 2005:31-52).

Subjectivities are found in discourses. Approaching citizenship as a discourse we can trace back these subjectivities that constitute the discourse. Citizenship as it is born in a liberal state was traditionally a construct that was constituted out of political subjectivities. Neoliberalism has the market central in its political philosophy and this changes the lived experience of citizenship. What it means to be a political subject becomes influenced by what it means to be an economic subject. The subjects political position in the world becomes affected by its economical position. By analyzing political and economical subjectivities separately and locate where they interact and influence each other can learn us a great deal about the lived experience of neoliberal citizenship.

The protest in Bosnia occurred in a post conflict and neoliberal state. Subjectivity can explain us the lived experience of citizenship. The main question of this thesis is: *How do the discourses on citizenship indicate the encounter between political and economical subjectivity in post conflict and neoliberal Bosnia Herzegovina?* The question is highly relevant because Bosnia Herzegovina was one of the first countries that went through a civil war in the new world order that appeared after the end of the cold war. Bosnia can reveal how effective post conflict interventions and neoliberal restructuring have been and what the main challenges for future intervention can be. The Bosnian protests are not an isolated event though. Local protests that mirrored the Bosnian uprising are not uncommon today. Bosnia can help us towards a better theoretical understanding of the imposition of this specific cultural and historical model upon differing local societies.

To answer this question I conducted qualitative fieldwork for three and a half months in early 2015 a year after the protest. Bosnia Herzegovina consists out of two political entities. My fieldwork took place in the Federation of Bosnia Herzegovina. This is the entity that is defined as for the Bosnian Croat people and Bosniaks (Bosnian Muslims). I carried out my fieldwork in the largest cities of the Federation; Sarajevo and Tuzla. Sarajevo is the capital of both the Federation and the state Bosnia Herzegovina. Tuzla is traditionally a mining city that has been hit hard by the privatizations and economic crisis.

Initially in Sarajevo I conducted in depth interviews with activist citizens, that is people who were trying to achieve political change or identified themselves as activists. These informants were high educated people between their early thirties and late fifties. Citizenship is hard to observe since it is a role who is contributed to everyone. A way to research citizenship is to talk with people about what they think of politics and their role as citizens in the state. A second method is observing citizenship in act. Since there was little citizenship in act in Sarajevo I decided to conduct my second period of fieldwork in Tuzla. My aim was to enrich my data collected by in depth interviews with participant observations. Another reason to go to Tuzla was the idea that I was not experiencing the hardship Bosnian citizens experienced. People in Sarajevo are relatively well off. More than once I was told that Sarajevo was not comparable to the rest of the country. I decided to go to get a better vision of what the 'real Bosnia' was.

In Tuzla I conducted my second period of fieldwork among a young group of students. This group learned me a lot about the political and economical subjectivity of the youngest generation. The period in Tuzla provided me data through participant observation which supplemented my findings in interviews.

After an theoretical chapter that further elaborates on the concepts and analytical tools that are used for the analysis. The thesis first sets the stage with an overview of the political and economical decisions that where made that lead up to the protest of February. Citizenship is the central theme in this overview of the Yugoslavian period, the war and post war transformation.

Added to this the thesis gives an overview of the reaction of the government to the protests of February, and official statements concerning the neoliberal transformation of the economy. I do so because the following chapters present the counter discourse constituted by activist citizens subjectivities. Since this discourse is constructed opposed to the official political discourse a general impression of cannot lack.

Discourses are not only about the representation of power; intellectual processes indicate problems and structures action (Lemke 2001:190-207). Discourse sparks action and as such there are two empirical chapters in which I present the counter discourse; citizenship in discourse, and citizenship in act and how they relate. The aim is to deconstruct the citizenship discourse to reveal my informants political and economical subjectivities. The concluding section answers the central question, contrast the findings with the theoretical discussion, and gives some recommendations for further research.

1. Theoretical framework

1.1 Citizens' rights

The idea of a citizenship has its roots in the liberal political rational that inspired the enlightenment in the 18th century. The rational and free individual that is central in liberal philosophy asked for new modes of governance. The Western liberal states that emerged from the social turmoil in the 18th century had to govern 'self-governing subjects' (Rose 1996:144-162). New individual freedoms requested for civil rights to protect the individual from exploiting powers. T.H Marshall (1950) is one of the first authors who developed a theory on civil rights. In his influential historical model he describes the accumulation of civil rights in Britain from the start of the enlightenment. Following his model the first civil rights that were achieved by individuals in the 18th century were economic rights. These rights related to basic resources as food and shelter. In the 19th century large segments of the population attained political rights. These political rights were again followed by the achievement of social rights in the 20th century (Marshall 1950).

The Marshallian model does not account for the 20th and 21st century in which the boundaries between economic, political and social rights become blurred (Isin 2009:367-388). This classic model of citizen rights has now lost its explanatory power in the 21st century. Marshall (1950) claim that each of the historical stages is a successful accumulation of citizenship rights is a very optimistic picture of the historical evolution of rights. One of the important debates emerging in contemporary democracies is whether previous rights can be sustained in a society, which is more and more dominated by the rhetoric of economic rationalism (Turner 1997:5-18).

The second problem with the Marshallian framework is that his model does not account for any form of diversity within a given society. For example while women achieved economic rights in the 18th century they were excluded from the achievement of political rights in the 19th century. Grounding his theory in pre industrial Britain his model of citizenship rights implicitly presupposes a homogenous society in gender, cultural, ethnical and religious terms (Turner 1997:5-18) (Werbner 1998:1-27).

The underlying liberal values of the enlightenment in which the concept of citizenship is rooted ignored any form of diversity in society. This false universalism can lead to the ignorance and the suppression of difference (Werbner 1998:1-27). It is obvious that a model that does not account for diversity has no explanatory power in the 21st century in which the vast majority of nations-states are radically diverse.

1.2 Discursive rationalization of power

What remains in modernity is that the concept of citizenship is rooted in liberal political rational and entails civil rights. The focus on citizen rights creates a static image of citizenship and renders it as a universal a-priori concept. In society what 'a citizenship' means is socially constructed and differs between social categories. This makes citizenship a socially constructed, dynamic process. It is an evolving and dynamical social construction, not an a-priori universal static concept (Marston and Mitchell 2004:93-112).

The question is how we can interpret this dynamical social construction? How can we understand the lived experience of citizenship? The analytical concepts that can help understand what citizenship means for individuals can be found in the poststructuralist concepts of power, discourses and subjectivity.

Citizenship is rooted in struggles over power as it entails the relations between the individual and the holder of the monopoly of force. Foucault approached power not as a top down imposed force. Foucault introduced the term governmentality to explain another concept of power. He traced the term government back to the 18th century when the term was not only associated with the political domain but also with control of the self, the family, the soul and other domains. In this sense governmentality is as well an activity of 'governing the self' as 'the governing others'. (Lemke 2001:190-207).

Important for the concept of governmentality is the connection between power and knowledge. Governmentality as a technology creates a discursive field in which the exercise of power is rationalized. An example of such a discursive field is for example the code of law in constitutional liberal states. But representation is not the only aspect of governmentality. A political rationality (as liberalism) generates intellectually in discursive representations of power a reality that creates structure for intervention, which can be followed by political technologies of governance (Lemke 2001:190-207). For example liberal political rational discursively represents the role of the individual within a political structure as free and self-governing, leading to the liberal technology of governance of constitutional liberalism which records its citizens rights.

Governmentality thus creates fields of discursive representations where we can find the representation of power in a political structure. In this line of thought the subject within a political structure is not deprived of agency as governmentality entails 'governing of the self' as well the 'governing of others'. Discourses are sites of struggle over which groups try to

gain hegemony by the intellectual production of meaning and ideology. Again, not only a representation of the truth but also it structures action in social practices.

In discursive formations and social practices diverse forms of subjectivities emerge due too a multiplicity of personal, individual desires in their social practices. Ortner (2005) explains subjectivity as ‘historical and cultural consciousness: ‘the ensemble of modes of perception, affect, thought, desire, fear, and so forth that animate acting subjects. But I always mean as well the cultural and social formations that shape, organize, and provoke those modes of affect, thought and so on’ (Ortner 2005:31-52). The subject is the bearer of cultural and historical discourses that both rationalizes as resists power (Lemke 2001:190-207). Trough human agencies individuals can pick up or resist certain subject positions that are available too them. Therefore a human subject is never a completely fixed outcome of its environment. Discourses constitute subjectivities and subjectivities constitute discourses. In Bosnia the economical subjectivity of decline around them and their fellow citizens combined with the great mistrust has lead to the protests as I will elaborate on further in my empirical chapters

With the concept governmentality we can better understand ‘how the modern sovereign state and the modern autonomous individual co-determine each other’s emergence’ (Lemke 2001:190-207) Citizenship is than ‘the cultural process of subjectification: self-making en being-made by power relations. ‘The cultural practices and believes produced out of negotiating the often ambivalent and contested relation within the state and its hegemonic forms that establish the criteria of belonging within a national population and territory (Ong et al. 1996:737-762). Top-down processes of ‘being made’ articulate with more bottom-up processes of ‘self-making’ or technologies of the self.

1.3 Flexible technologies of governance

Citizenship found its origin in liberal political rational, so what can we say about citizenship in the era of neoliberal political rational? The difference between neoliberalism and liberalism is that neoliberalism has not the rationality of the individual central but the rationality of the market (Rose 1996:144-162). Neoliberalism is the political philosophy that claims that the market is superior to the state in the distribution of public resources, and has ‘a primitive form of individualism’ central (Ong 2006a:499-505).

The neo-liberal political philosophy that dominated both the political as the economical sphere in the Western democracies in the last decades, contest the state at two of its core concepts; its territoriality and its sovereignty. Intensification of cross-border flow of goods, capital, technology and people threatened the state control over its territory, while

supra-national institutions and multinational cooperation's and separatist demands challenge the state's sovereignty (Sharma and Gupta 2009:1-41).

But the reality is not as easy as the reductionist view often portrayed 'more globalisation equals less state sovereignty equals weak states' (Sharma and Gupta 2009:1-41). Within academic debate there is consensus on the fact that the bound that connects citizens and state is at the same time contested as reinforced (Sharma and Gupta 2009:1-41). The academic debate circles around questions of how state power becomes transformed within this transnational neoliberal context (Marston and Mitchell 2004:93-112). However influential Brubaker's (1992) concept of mutually exclusive and static forms of citizenships with congruent territories appears far from the political reality today (Brubaker 1992). What citizenship means in a globalizing neoliberal context seem to be more in flux than ever before in history (Isin 2009:367-388).

Sassen (1998) is one authors on this subject, defines a post national citizenship. In her view the contestation of state sovereignty comes from human right codes and organisations 'Human rights are not dependent on nationality, unlike political, social, and civil rights, which are predicated on the distinctions between national and alien (...) human rights override such distinctions and hence can be seen as potentially contesting state sovereignty and devaluing citizenship'(Sassen 1998). She calls this 'the unbundling of sovereignty' to describe these processes: the changing relations between the territoriality of the nation-state and its sovereignty cause that political power and regulatory practices, formally exclusive the concern of the state, are partly transferred to supranational and non-state organisations. In Bosnia as in other post conflict state this transfer of state sovereignty is often criticized as neo-colonial as this supranational and non-state organisations are mostly Western (Divjak and Pugh 2008:373-386).

In her earlier work she makes an similar argument concepts of territoriality and sovereignty remain important features in the transnational neoliberal context but 'sovereignty has been decentred and territory partly denationalized' (Sassen1996:29-30). The decentralization of sovereignty means that sovereignty is now in the hands of diverse local, national and supranational institutions (Sassen 1996). The denationalization of citizenship occurs when economic rights that where traditionally civil rights become addressed to global firms and markets. This notion is important in Bosnia, as the global market have no taken over an important socialist citizens right: the right to work (Divjak and Pugh 2008:373-386).

Ong (2006b) uses exceptions as an analytical category in her influential work. In her view, influenced by Foucault's governmentality neoliberalism is a 'flexible technology of governance' that is imposed upon diverse political contexts producing different outcomes (Ong 2006b). Ong (2006) argues that 'the neoliberal exception allows for a measure of sovereign flexibility in ways that both fragment and extend the space of the nation state' (Ong 2006:7). In states where there is no cultural or historical tradition of this technology, neoliberal governance techniques are deployed as an exception too enable global and national firms too maximize the outcome of human and social capital, creating spaces of exception. On the other hand individuals that do not have the right human capital become excluded from the neoliberal production process. Mobile individuals with the right attributes can now exercise citizen rights in diverse locations, while less skilled nationals can now be denied traditional citizen rights.

Collier and Ong (2005) argue that while we are used too thinking of citizenship multi dimensional concept but with its entitlements bound together. Globalization however makes that different dimensions of citizenship become disarticulated from each other; rights, a state, territoriality etc. These entitlements of citizenship become reassembled with each other within shifting 'sites of global assemblage' (Collier and Ong 2005:3-21). Creating sites of mutating citizenship. This new sites of assemblage are rather than the traditional national territory sites for new political claims and mobilization, citizens claiming political rights on both an universalising human right norms as the (previous) membership of a political community.

1.4 Neoliberal subjectivity

So far the discussion on how state power becomes transformed in the neoliberal context. The aim of the following paragraph is to explore the lived experience of neoliberal citizenship. Neoliberalism as political doctrine claims that the market is superior in the distribution of resources (Ong 2006b). This shifts the responsibility of the state to contribute rights to protect its free rational citizens to be able self-govern themselves, to the responsibility of the state to withdraw itself from society to let the market do its free and natural conduct. As subjects are now subject to the market they must become self-actualizing entrepreneurs rather than rational individuals. State institutions are operated by the logic of the market. Formerly state services and institution's become privatised, and run as an enterprise by self-governing communities and individuals(Rose 1996:144-162).

This focus on responsibility and entrepreneurship reduces the ability of citizens to make claims on the state (Ong 2006). This shift toward a neoliberal technology of governing

holds that their security, their welfare and even their quality of life, becomes increasingly dependent on their own capacities as free individuals by making rational calculations and investments. How does the change from liberal to neoliberal governance change lived experience of its subjects?

As explained the aim is to approach citizenship as a discursive representation of power, as a process of self-making and being made. (Ong et al. 1996:737-762). Subjectivities or the cultural and historical consciousness (Ortner 2005:31-52) of the subject are exposed in discourses. Prior to neoliberal political rational the discourse of citizenship was mainly informed by political subjectivity. Liberal political rational had a political conception of what citizenship entailed. What it meant to be a citizen was a political matter, a social contract between the individual and the state. In a neoliberal political rational the economic domain enters the political domain. Thus the discourse on citizenship in a neoliberal power structure will be constituted by as well economical as political subjectivities. The aim of this thesis is to deconstruct the discourse on citizenship according to these two separate subjectivities. Separate them and then analyse them one-on-one and see where they influence and encounter can reveal what the lived experience of neoliberal citizenship entails for my informants.

1.5 Bosnia state in transformation

Citizenship is a discourse that is born within the liberal state. The political model of the liberal state and its citizen is born in a specific cultural and historical context but is now the only political entity that is deemed legitimate within the global political community today (Sharma and Gupta 2009:1-41). International intervention in post conflict societies is based on the model of liberal peace and statebuilding. The idea is that the democratization combined with the transformation of the economy to a neoliberal model will lead to stability. Stability in the national political economy since the legitimized democratic elected leaders will establish the rule of law motivated by economic progress. And stability in the region since democracies do not tend to wage war against each other. The economic transformation should provide enough state resources to build and maintain sustainable state institutions (Paris 2010:337-365).

Neoliberal and post conflict Bosnia Herzegovina had a different economical and political model than that of the neoliberal state that was introduced by the post conflict intervention in Bosnia Herzegovina. This is an added dimension in the exploration of political and economical subjectivities that constitute the discourses on citizenship in Bosnia. The

Bosnian case does not only reveal political and economical subjectivities in a neoliberal context, but also in transformation from a socialist to a neoliberal political economy.

2. Context

To answer the central question of this thesis this chapter draws the history of the economical and political context in political and economical subjectivities emerge. To understand how subjects and governments understand the present it is important to know to what historical discourses they contrast their interpretations. People read the world by the past as well as the present. As such what the social construct citizenship meant in socialist Yugoslavia and how it was transformed during war and post war processes is essential to understand how political and economical subjectivity emerge today. The chapter concludes with an analysis of citizenship in present day Bosnia.

2.1 Cooperation in duality: citizenship in Yugoslavia

In order to solve the ‘national question’ that had haunted Yugoslavia and other nations in Europe in the 20th century citizenship in the Socialist Federation of the Republics of Yugoslavia was binary consisting out a republican and a federal status (Štiks 2006:483-500; Sarajlic 2010). The federal Yugoslavian citizenship gave a strong guarantee of citizens rights within its territory. This encouraged internal migration and the republican citizenship became of so little use that internal migrants often did not apply for their new republican citizenship. At the start of the disintegration of Yugoslavia all republics contain large populations of citizens from neighbouring republics.

All republics within the Federation had one *narod*² majority within its borders. Bosnia was the exception to the rule. The Muslim population got their entitlement as Bosniak *narod* relatively late in the history of Yugoslavia and shared their territory with Serbs and Croats (Stiks 2010). While there was a common conception of ethno national difference between these groups the population was deeply intermingled and inter ethnic marriage was very common (Bringa 1995).

2.2 Waging war

Soon after the death of Tito and the fall of communism the socialist discourse under which the Federation unites its republics and citizens is no longer sufficient. Ethno national

² Narod: nation very close to the Bosnian word narod: people

entrepreneurs on the republican level begin to declare solidarity to their *narodi* in order to mobilize support for their own political agendas. When Slovenia and Croatia declare independence in 1991 the Serbian dominated Yugoslavian army attacks their territory claiming to fight for the protection of the Serbian population living within its borders (MacDonald 2002).

Bosnia is caught in the middle of this ethno national violence; with no strong majority present both Croatia as Serbia make claims on its territory. In 1992 Bosnia declares independence from the rump state of Yugoslavia. Bosnian Serbian forces leaders begin to mobilize themselves openly backed by the Yugoslavian army. When the war erupts initially fought a between unification of Bosnian Croat and Bosniak (Muslim) forces, and Serbian forces. After 1993 the unification between Croat en Bosniak forces disrupt and a second war is starts. At the end of 1995 the deteriorating humanitarian situation on the ground finally leads to the international pressure that is needed to stop the war (Burg and Shoup 1999).

2.3 An institutional monster: the ‘Frankenstein state’³

The Dayton Peace Accords that is signed in November 1995 have been severely criticized. One thing it did achieve, it transferred the violent conflict to the political area. However its institutional complexity in order to balance ethno national power is notorious (Sarajlic 2010). First of all the Dayton Accords freeze the territorial situation on the ground by installing a unifying Bosnian state that consists out of two separate entities. The Federation defined as an entity of the Bosniak and Bosnian Croat people consists out of 51% of the territory, and Republica Serpska, which is defined as an entity for the Serbian people out of the remaining 49% (Burg and Shoup 1999).

Post war Bosnian citizenship mirrors its republican predecessor in duality. Nationality subscribes a Bosniak, Croat or Serbian citizenship to its people. The Dayton constitution subscribes an all Bosnian Herzegovinian citizenship in which all citizens are equally protected by the Bosnian state (Sarajlic 2010). It is not possible however to declare only an all Bosnian nationality even tough all Bosnian citizens have an all Bosnian citizenship. Citizenship and *narodi* are thus two different concepts in Bosnian post war society.

The site of my fieldwork, the federation is divided into ten cantons. These cantons all have their own constitution and democratically elected parliament with its own prime minister. The Bosnian state has the infamous reputation to be the most complex government

³ A schematic map of the government can be found in appendix I

in the world. It consists out of one state, two entities, three peoples, 3.9 million citizens, and five layers of governance led by 14 prime ministers and governments (Divjak and Pugh 2008:373-386). On all level of government the ethno national power is balanced by a system of representational proportion and rotation.

2.4 Ethno national democracy and quick privatizations

The ethno national power balance drafted in the Dayton constitution legitimized the political elites early after the war to use the well known ethno nationalist rhetoric to mobilize popular support (Belloni 2009:355-375). The quick elections that where held in 1996 installed the nationalist parties in office that where partly responsible for sparking the war (Richmond, Franks 2009). At the same time the Bosnian state was ‘democratised’ a neoliberal transition program was imposed by the same international actors (Richmond and Franks 2009). State enterprise become rapidly sold to forth come erosion of state capital, increase foreign investment and stimulate world market integration.

However, Bosnia was not only a state in neoliberal transformation, but also in post conflict transformation. As such the political situation was highly fragmented (Richmond, Franks 2009). The insistence of the international community on quick privatization has lead to a hastily coalition between nationalist political parties and international actors. Until today in Bosnia political and economical empires are deeply interwoven as the nationalist elites and their supporters hold a strong control over both the economic as the political domain (Pugh 2002:467-482). Formerly state enterprises are transferred to the market. Informally these enterprises are under control of directors who have as most important feature the membership to the right political party (Pugh 2002:467-482).

2.5 Subjectivity in post conflict and neoliberal Bosnia Herzegovina

Withdrawal of state boundaries has for citizens of Bosnia not lead to a thriving economy with a free market around which they can self actualize their lives as entrepreneurs of their own destiny (Rose 1996:144-162). Privatizations where often followed by a bail out of state asset and bankruptcy. Unemployment in Bosnia is estimated at 42 percent pushing large segments of the population in the grey economy for survival depriving them from basic rights and protection (Pugh 2005). Some scholars specialized in the region have argued that the socialist neoliberal transformation is not so much a process of transformation but a discourse of dominance. Transformation in their eyes is long over and the desert in which post socialist societies find themselves is the final outcome of their position within the capitalist system

(Horvat and Štiks 2012:38-48). The Croatian protest of 2009 where an uprising against the capitalist world order.

(Lemke 2001:190-207)

Luckily even when the political discourse is completely dominated by neoliberal rational the subject can still resist to this hegemony. In the Bosnian imagine a citizen that is deprived from his former (socialist) right to work and his pension now struggling to survive, while he sees the politicians filling their pockets, which they legitimize by a neoliberal rational. It is not easy to imagine that this citizen resists to the neoliberal discourse. Governmentality is about the governing of the self and of others. The state may be what we perceive as the sole holder of power (Rose 1996:144-162) but the subject has the agency to resist. The Bosnian protester where clearly demanding both economic as political claims to the government. The discourse of citizenship can reveal their political and economical subjectivity.

3. Political discourses

In the next chapters I focus on the political and economical subjectivity of my informants and how this shapes their citizenship discourse. Since their political and economical subjectivity constitutes a counter discourse opposed to that of the government a short overview of the official political discourse as represented by government officials is necessary to contrast to that of my informants. It is not my purpose to give an in-depth analysis or a representative sample of media statements from governmental officials. My intention is to set the stage for the subsequent chapters. Overall it can be said that the responses of government officials both national and international do not address any of the underlying political and economical grievances clearly formulated by the protesters.

The following discussion I found exemplary. Member of the Presidency Bakir Izetbegovic claims that it is suspicious that the most enterprises at which the violence is targeted are Bosniaks. According to Izetbegovic this is strange because the political economical situation in the Federation is much better than in Republica Serpska. He insinuates that the protests might have been political spin from Republica Serpska⁴. The president of Republica Serpska Milorad Dodik respond to this by saying that if the violence that is rooted in the Federation spills over to the Republic there is no other solution than the separation of Republica Serpska from their dangerous neighbour⁵. Izetbegovic again response to this: 'Bosnia and Herzegovina will not disintegrate. Bosnian patriots have sacrificed so much for this country, there are more than 500 mass graves, and there are Srebrenica and Tomasica. Dodik can take from Bosnia only mud on his shoe if he is going to leave. Only that, nothing more'.⁶ This conversation is exemplary for the general response of the government officials to the protests. On all levels of the government officials claim that the violence that occurred during the protests was coming from the other ethno national group for political gain. Republica Serpska ads to this by rhetoric the probable separation of Republica Serpska.

Another common explanation was the criminalization of the protests. Government stood in line to condemn the violence and claim that the protesters are criminals and hooligans. A report of the protest written by protesters themselves:

'while Izetbegović, was stating one piece of misinformation through one media outlet, e.g. that 12 kilograms of drugs had been found among the protestors, a second media outlet

⁴ Source: Balkan insight, full article in appendix B

⁵ Source: Jutarni, full article in appendix B

⁶ Source: Balkan inside, full article in appendix B

covered a report Sarajevo Canton, which stated that, as a result of police action against drug traffickers, the 12 kilograms of drugs had actually been found in a completely different part of town, and that it had nothing to do with the demonstrations’⁷.

‘One thing, which definitely marked February, and even March, is the media “spin.” The word spin, which has barely been used in Bosnia and Herzegovina up until 2014, suddenly became as common a word as thank you. Truly, the sheer volume of unverified and false information being poured out of media outlets was such that one could only believe one’s eyes.’⁸

The response of the international community emphasizes the use of violence and the fact that citizens should behave ‘democratic’. Several responses of international actors as the OHR, the American Embassy and others claim that citizens have the right to express their opinions⁹ but should try to do so in a non-violent way¹⁰. The most in depth analysis is given by the OHR that states that protesters are just in their demands, and then point out to the inefficient bureaucratic system that according to them is the main cause for all problems¹¹.

The ethno national framing of the protests was very common in reactions of the government officials on the protests. This explanation states that citizens are on the edge of ethnic conflict between groups as literally argued by the Bosnian Presidency¹². The ‘criminal and hooligan explanation’ also draws the attention away from the underlying economic and political grievances. The same applies to the reaction coming from the international community. The economic and political structural causes for the massive demonstrations get obscured in all responses of government officials.

⁷ Unbriable Bosnia – fight for the commons can be read at:
http://www.academia.edu/9281884/Unbriable_Bosnia_and_Herzegovina--the_Fight_for_the_Commons

⁸ Unbriable Bosnia – fight for the commons

⁹ Source: Sarajevo times, full article appendix C

¹⁰ Source: Sarajevo times, full article appendix C

¹¹ Source Kurier, Full article appendix D

¹² Source: Sarajevo times, full article appendix D

4. Chapter 1 - Citizenship in discourse

To capture my informants political and economical subjectivities I analysed the citizenship discourse they constituted. The traditional focus on citizenship rights rendered it as a static social category, while there is now consensus over the fact that citizenship is a dynamical and evolving social process (Marston and Mitchell 2004:93-112). The focus on rights also implicitly assumes that there exists some all-powerful entity that contributes these rights to individuals deprived of agency. Modern political reality has already shown us that power within society is not as easily understood as a political domain of institutions imposing its force upon and a-political individual or community (Rose 1996:144-162).

The advantage of approaching citizenship as a discourse is that the discourse of citizenship includes human agency. The discursive approach also does not ask what is the truth, as if there exists one absolute fundamental verity, it argues that there is a contestation over hegemony. This contestation over meaning and ideology is found in discourses that reveal much about how power is negotiated in a society. Citizenship is a discursive representation of power that is not top down imposed force, but is negotiated between a constellation of state and non-state actors (Rose 1996:144-162).

The neoliberal political rational has made that national governments deploy neoliberal governance techniques (Ong 2007:3-8). What is neoliberal in this respect is that the government starts making economic claims on its citizens. Where hitherto the discourse on citizenship was informed by political subjectivities, now economic subjectivity comes into play. When we analytically distinct political and economical subjectivities, and observe where they encounter we can reveal a lot about the lived experience of citizenship in a neoliberal context.

For this purpose I wish to discuss my informants economical and political subjectivities as they were constituted in the discourse on citizenship of my informants. The separation and then unification of these two domains of subjectivity reveals a lot about the lived experience of neoliberal subjectivity. The main argument I wish to propose about the discourse on neoliberal citizenship as constituted by my informants is that they feel a great sense of economic decline. This sense of economic decline is associated with capitalism or right wing politics. In this light neoliberal policy is associated with corruption and other predatory strategies of the political elite. This great sense of distrust against conducted state power is not exclusively focused on national politics; the agenda of the international community is looked at with an equal suspicion. The idea is that a political elite hijacks the political discourse and by such both ignores and silences the population. The ethno national

frame is one of their tools, but this frame is also supported by a pragmatic strategy of its disillusioned citizens. In this way hegemony is found in the ethno national discourse. This general sense of distrust, disconnection and economic decline is the explanation for the protests of February 2014.

4.1 ‘Those people don’t have that Euro’

When talking about the economical situation in Bosnia Herzegovina my informants expressed a general sense of economic decline in both their and their fellow citizens economic situation. This decline is measured at two historical gauge points: right after the war, and socialist or Tito’s Yugoslavia. A quote from a conversation that I held early in my fieldwork demonstrates this conception. It is a quote from a young woman who just graduated from law school and was looking for a job:

‘So we had socialism. And everything was under control. Free schools, free health care, our parents had jobs, everybody had opportunities. If I wanted too study I could study or have a job. I had my choice. And my parents had their jobs. Everybody had what they needed. But they didn’t have luxury. Now people have millions. You cant have that regularly. Back than we had everything basic needs. If you worked had you had more.’¹³

This idea of the economic situation was often expressed by my informants. What I find important in this quote is that it demonstrates not only the perception that citizens where better off in Socialist Yugoslavia, but also that my informants where not recklessly glorifying the time under Tito in some form of oversimplified ‘Titostalgia’¹⁴. I was often told that the time under Tito’s rule was not ideal. Not political and not economical. The political rule was not glorified as well. I was told that he was a harsh dictator. For example the verb ‘Tita’ is a command in everyday language.¹⁵ The quote shows that there was no glorification of the economical situation under Tito. It says that people had basic needs but not much more. I find this important to emphasize because it demonstrates that people feel that in Yugoslavia the situation might not have been ideal, but people in Bosnia now fee deprived of so much more. It occurred to me as not so much a glorification of the past, but more a feeling of depriving in

¹³ Interview Sarajevo 19-02-15

¹⁴ Titostalgia refers to the term nostalgia and is used to explain the overtly sentimental longing to the time under Tito’s rule.

¹⁵ Tita: go do that

modernity. The words of the young woman also echo another economical subjectivity *'now people have millions you cant have that regular'* reflects a distrust against citizens in wealthy positions. This conception that links wealth to the irregular domain is understandable in the context of endemic corruption the Bosnian economy finds itself in.

The second historical gauge point at which my informants compared their current economical situation was the post war reconstruction that started twenty years ago. People thought twenty years after the war poverty is now wide spread too the point that people without any form of social protection are starving. I have not seen such poverty myself during fieldwork, but the common conception that the economical situation was deteriorating was prevalent trough my whole research. The following quote demonstrates the conception:

*'The ordinary wage is 400 euro's. The expanses are getting higher and higher. Its getting harder and harder. People are digging in the trash. You can't imagine that because everything is so cheap here and you can buy food for one euro. But those people don't have that euro.'*¹⁶

This quote demonstrates the conception that the economic situation for a lot of people is running backward to the point of that people have to rely on the dumpsters to survive. Another point that is demonstrated by this quote is the conception that average salary does not pay enough to survive especially if you have a family. Wages are not enough to make ends meet for the ordinary citizens. Moreover a lot of people are working for nothing or for a 'ridiculously low'¹⁷ pay because their right to retirement is connected to their employment. In order to survive it is not enough to work. Other strategies are necessary according to my informants. In this way any form of wealth or social mobility gets easily associated with corruption and crime.

As explained above I want to discuss my findings on political and economical subjectivities separately. My informants often emphasized that it is *'an luxury to be a citizen'*¹⁸ explaining to me that people who where even able to talk and think about politics and the state where the ones who are better of. This is why I chose to first draw the picture of my informant's economical subjectivity before heading to the political section.

¹⁶ Interview Sarajevo 12-02-2015

¹⁷ Interview Sarajevo 28-03-2015

¹⁸ Interview Sarajevo 05-03-2015

4.2 'We don't believe them'

The disappointment in the Social democrats that governed the country for four years prior to the elections in October 2014 revealed an interesting aspect of my informants' political subjectivities. The political left is no longer deemed as a legitimate option to the current neoliberal political rational. The social democratic party is seen as one of 'all the others' (read right wing nationalist) or obscured by both the interests of national political parties or the international community. The following quotes illustrate the huge level of distrust and disappointment in the social democrats:

*'They say they are all social democrats but in fact what they are doing nothing is happening. You can't say they are this or that but there is nothing actually happening. We have the best factories in the Balkans many people working and they are flops. Nothing new opening until I see that we don't believe them'*¹⁹.

The general conception was that even if there would be a political actor that wished to govern the country with a more left wing strategy, the international community that works along with the right wing political parties would never allow this. One person said to me when we talked about the past four years of rule by the Social democrats: *'that is not left they won't let you enter if you're still left'*²⁰ Here comes another theme in to play. Since the post war conception of economic decline is associated with right wing policies that were for a large part imposed by the international community the agenda of the international community in Bosnia Herzegovina is not trusted either and capitalism is associated with the war and the post war economic deprive. In all my informants looked with great distrust towards the neoliberal world economy even for some the cause of the war is even found in capitalism:

*'It was a plan. it was planned it had to be destroyed. We couldn't live in prosperity in the middle. It affected capitalism. It had to be destroyed.'*²¹

Political subjectivity is not just about how the subject sees itself in relation to the political structure it finds itself in. The general mistrust in the political national and international 'right' politics was extended in society. The idea is that 'the right' is criminal

¹⁹ Interview Sarajevo 05-03-2015

²⁰ Conversation Sarajevo 28-3-2015

²¹ Interview Sarajevo 19-2-2015

was common among my informants. One informant said to me *‘when I see someone with a expensive car we say to each other that’s a right!’*²²

4.3 ‘The head of the snake’

My informants expressed a great distrust against the body that governed them. My informants invested a lot of time to explain me the term ‘Steijla’²³. The first explanation was family; you need to have a lot of family to get somewhere in Bosnia. But later on a lot of nuances were added as Steijla can be bought. Point is that my informants expressed a general sense of distrust against the government. Corruption is strongly associated with the government. The government is in general seen as political and economical elite referred to as ‘the snake’²⁴. This ‘snake’ governs the country by pure self-interest, that is withdrawing public resources for their own gain. There was a huge mistrust against the ruling political parties as they are seen as ‘head of the snake’.

Second pillar in the relationship between citizens and the government, I found in the fact that people felt silenced in the political discourse constituted by political actors. The only way the government talks to its citizens is via the media according to my informants and this is a one-way monologue. And even this information was not considered as valuable as they told me that they only battled with other political parties on a public stage to mobilize political support. So either way the media is used for a political theatre against other parties or to spin any social unrest in an ethno national discourse²⁵. This ethno national is an effective way to silence the people was a common perception.

4.4 ‘It’s the most pragmatic thing to do’

None of my informant’s identified with the ethno-national division in citizenship. The common perception is that political parties supported by Dayton constitution and in co-opt with the international community the national political elite keep the country in deadlock by the ethno national discourse. The most prevalent idea is that ‘they’ gain by ‘it’ the following quote illustrates the thought:

²² Conversation Sarajevo 25-02-2015

²³ Steijla: Bosnian word for networks of patronage

²⁴ Interview Tuzla 20-01-2015

²⁵ Commonly when I asked what political colour a newspaper was resulted in the name of the owner and the ethno national party it belonged to

*'They say other states are inflicting Bosnia, they want too destroy it its like a mayhem of thoughts of theories, and than you have three people mixed in one, everywhere you turn its just like there is just arguing and misunderstanding everywhere you turn. And than they gain of the mayhem. They gain of the mayhem and everybody pools a sight of its own followers and than...'*²⁶

However the quote illustrates also a more nuanced political reality. My informant said: and than you have three people mixed in one. This reveals a political subjectivity that subscribes the idea that Bosnia consists out of three nations. And as the nationalist parties were elected again, if these elections where not one big fraud, there has to be some support in society for the nationalist parties. When I confronted people with the fact that the national parties where again elected I got a constellation of answers differing from: poverty, ignorance, elderly, peasants. But as my fieldwork continued I got a sense of what the explanation can be. All these answers that people gave me to explain why the nationalistic parties where still in power had one overarching theme was pragmatism. In this sense for most people who *'do the performance'* nationality is *'the most pragmatic thing'*²⁷ to do²⁸.

Another revealing experiences concerning the ethno national divide was driving trough the country. The idea of two entities with the strict separation of ethno national groups seemed more diffuse in reality. Where you would have expected an Muslim or Croat majority in The Federation and a Serbian majority in Republika Serpska, in both entities diverse religious landmarks were present throughout the country site, and a lot of them where newly build. Where the political reality might seem segregated both in the landscape the situation in reality was more diffuse. A young informant told me that while everybody thought that Croats and Bosniaks had no rights in Republica Serpska that she found that all people where living together very peacefully²⁹. And I cant even remember the amount of times people began without asking explain to me that nationality was not an issue to them. This was usually followed with a description of their parental background of three generations of inter ethnic

²⁶ Interview Sarajevo 28-03-2015

²⁷ Conversation Tuzla 20-04-2015

²⁸ An few examples of the explanations: people are poor and sell their votes to political entrepreneurs: Tuzla conversation 20-04-2015, absence of any other political option Sarajevo interview 15-02-2015, Tuzla 17-04-2015, loyalty to national parties or absence of social mobility Tuzla conversation 20-04-2015

²⁹ Informal conversation Tuzla 18-04-2015

marriage. Because they brought up the subject themselves I concluded that they thought that I found this important and wanted to explain their position in the subject to me.

During my fieldwork I did not encounter one person who said to vote for the nationalist parties. As such, their explanation of the pragmatism that underlies the support for the national parties can be coloured by their moderate perception. However, I wish to further support my argument that nationality in Bosnia has become more a pragmatic performance than an identity with two news articles that demonstrate this pragmatic attitude of citizens.

This article from Balkan insights a critical internet portal reports in December 2014: 'The latest elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina have shown that being a Bosniak, a Serb, a Croat or an "Other" could also be a relative matter (...) Some MPs³⁰ have jumped ship in terms of ethnicity, declaring a different ethnicity this year from the one they claimed in previous elections'³¹. Apparently nationality is even for the political leaders that tend to mobilize their electorate in these 'national groups' is relative.

Another article from the same portal in November 2014 demonstrates the same attitude towards the importance of national identity in a whole different segment of the population: 'Bosnians Turn Election Fraud into Business Opportunity (..) A depressingly large number of Bosnians in the 2014 elections were more than happy to trade their votes for a cash payment.' This article reports on the practice of national leaders to buy vote from the impoverished population. One voter was quoted:

*'The three of us voted for one party and received €75. Who cares! Politicians do what they want anyway and this way at least we get some provisions for winter,' said one election profiteer who, with his two friends, sold their votes for €25 each'*³²

So while ethno nationality in the perception of my informants is a pragmatic political and economical tool or strategy, it is also a political tool to manipulate the discourse on citizenship by the political elite. Social unrest is consequently framed as agnostics between groups, that well serves the elite to withdraw attention from other problems within the political economy of Bosnia Herzegovina.

³⁰ MP: Minister president (Bosnia has one for each national group in order to balance power between ethno national groups)

³¹ Source: Balkan insight, full article appendix E

³² Source: Balkan insight, full article appendix E

Another dimension in the disconnection between citizens and the government was not only about the ethno national frame. My informants felt like they did not even exist for the ruling political elite or that they came from another planet '*they act like we are from mars and they are from Bosnia*'³³. They also had the feeling that the political elite was so detached from the reality of the Bosnian society that they could not even begin to understand what was going on in society. One of my informants explained the reaction of a political actor to the protests:

*'They said that because of the protests Zara did not wanted to open a new store anymore in Sarajevo.. ZARA! How can they think that this is important to the people here? No one can affords this clothes'*³⁴

Another theme I found when my informants talked about the government was that of disfunctionality. The enormous size of the government is being seen as contributing too as well corruption as a complete disfunctionality. More than one informant passionate scribbled the amount of governmental layers on a napkin for me. The common idea is that this enormous size makes the whole country unmanageable, and since every layer of government points to one another there is no one responsible. More than once my informants illustrated this disfunctionality of the government by explaining that a lot of people died due to the slow reaction of the government after the floods of May 2014.

4.5 Conclusion

After having discussed political and economical subjectivities in the citizenship discourse separated I now wish to bring them back together as they encounter in neoliberal political context. Ong's (1996) influential work on citizenship has defined neoliberalism as a 'flexible technology of governance' that produces different outcomes in different political contexts. For Bosnia Herzegovina this local political context is one where a lot has gone wrong in neoliberal transformation. As explained in the context of this thesis, while neoliberal governance techniques deployed by the international community had as purpose to transfer public resources and institutions to the market, in Bosnia the cooperation with the local warring elite and the nationalist parties not so much transferred these institutions to the market as well to a new elite that effectible consolidated its already achieved political power due to the early elections of 1996 in the economic domain.

³³ Conversation 15-04-2015

³⁴ Informal conversation Sarajevo 13-04

Bosnians tended to speak about themselves as the losers in the capitalist world economy. When I talked to my informants it seemed to me that they saw capitalism not so much as a technology imposed by their national political parties, but by the global world economy. Since they have no trust in any political rational that the government substituted in their discourse. As such they feel that they are more governed by neoliberal rational of the global institutions than that of their national government. And since the neoliberal discourse is used by the political elite to hide their corrupt activities they exposed a great distrust against ‘the right’.

The ethno nationalist discourse that these political parties deploy in the official political discourse is not seen as legitimate with concern to identity. However, and this is where political and economical subjectivities encounter, corruption is associated with political parties and political parties hijack the political discourse with a nationalist narrative. So any form of wealth is associated with corruption, since a normal job does not pay enough to make a decent living. *‘In order to get a good job you need to become of the evil people’*³⁵. This means since the political domain is fragmented in three national groups, that wealth and social mobility becomes associated with political identity. It is not perceived that this national identity is an identity matter as such, but a pragmatic tool.

The political subjectivity of distrust against the body that governs and being ‘silenced’ from the political discourse, combined with the economic subjectivity of decline for themselves and the people around them is what sparked the protest of last year February. Distrust in government policy striped my informants of any expectation of political change in the near future. Economic decline in this context is seen as a never ending process that leaves no other possibility to try and opt for change. And since there is no other way to communicate with the government that is completely indifferent to their citizens than protest they did.

³⁵ Conversation Sarajevo 13-04-2015

5. Empiric chapter 2 – Citizenship in act

Discourse inspires action. Power is not solely about the rationalization of force these rationalizations also diagnose what is perceived as illegitimate and by this intellectual process its structures action (Lemke 2001:190-207). Citizens of Bosnia feel silenced by the discourse constituted by the government and the international community. Excluded from the political discourse those circles around ethno national identity and neoliberal strategies. Their economic situation is deteriorating and they have no feeling of connection or any form of protection by the government. How else can it be than that they went on the streets to make themselves heard?

Acts by which the subject tries to change the political structure it finds itself in can thus contain information on the political and economical subjectivities of my informants as they constitute the discourse from which they act. What does this ultimately say about encounter between their political and economical subjectivity?

This chapter tries to answer these questions by presenting my empirical findings on the act of citizenship. First of all it argues that the protest and the plenums as acts of citizenship where a attempt to open up the political discourse and that citizens wanted to show themselves, their fellow citizens that change is possible even in their situation. The happenings of last year February also show that citizens of Bosnia found no other channel to communicate with the government than the streets. Talking with younger people about the protests, the plenums and other citizen acts revealed an interesting difference in political and economical subjectivity between the generations. Finally the chapter concludes by arguing that the encounter between political and economical subjectivity in a neoliberal state creates a new form of ‘hybrid citizen activism’ that is constituted by the cultural and historical subjectivities of the older generation. I set the stage for this chapter in Tuzla, since acts of citizenship are best in place in this city, the city of hope³⁶ and revolution³⁷.

5.1 We are still alive

In Tuzla the city where the unrest started remains of the protests are easy to see. The governmental building that was lit on fire by the angry crowd was left barley untouched after.

³⁶ Fieldnotes Sarajevo 23-02-2015

³⁷ Tuzla was an mining town with strong labour activism and rest against ethno national troops and politics during the war

Even a banner that the protesters upheld still lay on the ground with text: help us fight corrupt politicians. While the building looks like they can collapse at any moment it is still possible to enter it. On the walls graffiti with the cry: *jedan narod jedan nacija*³⁸. The crumbled buildings surrounding the burned government buildings are victim to another form of destruction. Buildings that have not been maintained for decades make walking the sidewalks risky business as signs warn for the break stone coming down everywhere. A hike down the main road and city centre of Tuzla it is easy to see that the city has been through hard times the past twenty years.

Tuzla was the place where the protest initially started. The massive demonstrations against the government spilled over and spread through the whole the Federation as well Republica Serpska. Tuzla is from origin an industrial city and was hit hardest by the bankruptcy of privatized state enterprises. The February 2014 protest in Bosnia were inspired by a general sense of never-ending economic decline combined with a great sense of distrust against and disconnection with the ruling political parties.

My informants spoke a lot about the buildings that were burned and the violence that was used during the protests. The images of the 10-story Tuzla government building lit on fire were seen on every major news channel in Europe. In the case of Bosnia Herzegovina one can imagine that these images are especially disturbing because the memory of the 1992-1995 war has not faded away. None of my informants thought that this vandalism was the way to achieve political change, but some expressed the feeling that all other means to achieve political change did not work either. It appeared to me that the protests as well as the violence were a desperate way to communicate with a government that has not paid attention to their grievances for years. Citizens of Bosnia felt that the only way to communicate with their government was to go out on the street and show that *'they were still alive'*³⁹.

5.2 True democracy

But the demonstrations and the vandalism were not the only acts of citizenship that were undertaken at the start of 2014. While the masses were demonstrating the plenums were set up but they continued after the protests. These plenums were set up in every major city where the protest hit the streets. The plenums were open podiums where all citizens could speak about their grievances against the government. The idea of the plenum was that everybody could speak for an equal amount of time: two minutes per person. In this two

³⁸ Bosnian: One people nation

³⁹ Informal conversation Tuzla 17-04-2015

minutes people were allowed to express their grievances and ideas on how they thought things could be changed. These expressions were recorded and a group of organizers distilled political and economical demands out of all conversations. These demands were presented to both the national government as the international community as they were translated in English and posted on blogs about the protests⁴⁰. This very clear representation of political economical demands was done to overcome the narrowing political discourse the government presented to explain the unrest, as they knew how what their reaction would be.

The achieved goals of the plenums were explained to me in different ways as I talked to people who attended them or helped organise them. The ‘exercise in democracy’ explanation of the plenums emphasized the democratic nature of the plenums. ‘*This was true democracy, everybody stood in line to speak even the famous*’⁴¹ said a woman in her early fifties who was in the organisations of the protests. However the people who explained the plenums as such went on with explaining to me that it was an exercise, not a real democracy. This reveals the political subjectivity that they did not think that the people who spoke on the plenums were living in a democracy, since they need to practice the exercise of it, which they would have done continuously in a political, structure that is democratic. This is noteworthy because the state of Bosnia Herzegovina does present itself as a constitutional democracy, a discourse that is both represented by the government as the international institutions. It also reveals the notion that I encountered more often during my fieldwork, that not only politics but also the people in Bosnia are ‘not suitable’ for democracy the idea that they are better served by authoritarian rule⁴². The people who explained the plenums as an exercise in democracy perceived that they were not living in a democracy, contrary to the official political discourse, and that democracy is an practice that needs to be exercised by people who do not know the practice of it.

Second the ‘exercise in democracy’ explanation reveals that the people, who explained the plenums as such, do believe in political change. Since this approach to the plenums has its eyes on the future, if we exercise this practice right now maybe we can achieve something in the future is the underlying assumption. The perception is however that this kind of change will happen very slow. The idea is that it was first time they were able to open up the discourse that has silenced Bosnian citizens for decades and to show that change is possible.

⁴⁰ Demands of the workers and citizens of the Tuzla Canton: appendix F
Demands of the plenum of citizens of Sarajevo for judicial institutions of Kanton Sarajevo:
Appendix F

⁴¹ Interview Sarajevo 05-03-2015

⁴² Interview Sarajevo 28-03-2015

The people who explained the plenums as an exercise in democracy where also the people who considered themselves as activists citizens.

Another line of thought when I asked people to reflect on the goals and the outcomes of the plenum was more negative. They explained the Plenums as utopian. These people emphasized the impractical nature the open stage that the plenums where. These people argued that the plenums might have been an exercise in democracy but than points out to the generated outcome and concludes that noting has changed. However, my informants that emphasized the fact that nothing has changed thanks to the plenums were not able formulate any political alternative for change either.

Whatever the attitude was to the outcomes of plenums of last year they was, all agreed on one aspect. The plenums were the first time that citizens of Bosnia united themselves against the oppressive neoliberal and ethno national political discourse. They showed that their grievances where rooted in the political economy of corruption and not identity. With the banners they upheld they tried to convince the international community that they are marginalized by the political discourse of the government '*Europe we are here the people with whom you should talk with*'. Other banners stated that this was not about national, ethnic or religious identity but about poverty: '*I was hungry in three languages*'. And emphasizing the endemic corruption that occurred in the post war period: '*robbed for twenty years and that is enough*'.

5.3 The great kids

Walking around Tuzla on my first day of arrival I had a conversation with a young student that introduced a new theme. He gave his perspective on the workers that where still protesting that I had not heard from the activist's citizens in Sarajevo. He told me '*the old people who are protesting are greedy*'. When I asked further he said that '*People have no jobs but still have everything but they still want more*'. He thought they still had everything because they where supported by their wives and children. According to him these protesting workers where '*half idiots half proud men*'. He concluded his observation with the notion that the people who really have nothing where not protesting but trying to earn their money⁴³.

I became curious because this was the first time that someone spoke of the protesters in Tuzla as greedy. I did not encounter the same boy anymore but I got befriended with a group of young students of the same age. They where between nineteen and twenty four and my contact with them revealed more about the perspective of younger people on citizenship.

⁴³ Informal conversation fieldnotes 03-04-2015

Before that all people I spoke to where at youngest in their early thirties, activist citizens in Sarajevo. The next few weeks I hung out with this group of students talking with them about their political situation and how they thought about the government, the economy and their position within the political and economical structures. They where negative about both the economical as the political situation in their country. What occurred to me is that they did not expect anything to change in the near future⁴⁴. The protest initially sparked some hope but they saw their pessimistic outlook that nothing will ever change again confirmed when the plenums faded away.

Moreover they displayed sense of dissatisfaction with the older generations in general, not only with the political parties. *'The past few generations have screwed it up with the war, and now they try to fix a broken system, but they leave no space for us, we want to look ahead not to the past'*⁴⁵ one the students said to me. According to this group of younger people the people in the protest and the forms of activism that occurred out of the protests where all old (older than they are) and people of their generation only wanted to leave. The last one who goes *'turns the light down'*⁴⁶ is their saying they told to me. They also did not appear to have any interest in protests or activism. When I tried to talk to them about what could be done to change the situation in Bosnia the conversation froze more completely than once. Than it occurred to me that the people who I spoke to and that considered themselves as citizen activists where indeed in general much older than these group of students was. Where this group of older people still believed in change, I conclude out of the fact that they tried to achieve this chance, this younger generation seemed to have no perception on even the possibility of change. Their strategy is to leave the country as soon as the possibility occurs. They see no future in Bosnia for themselves and hold the former generations responsible for this.

But than some new findings in the field obscured this whole idea again. Two of the students who took me to the café Velika Djeca, 'The Great Kids'. This café breathed a sense of revolution and activism. First of all the logo of the shop is a fist with a raised middle finger. The revolutionary symbol that the famous portrait of Che Guevara became had a central place on the wall. Furthermore a lot of Yugoslavian and Bosnian relics ornamented the walls; the Bosniak patriot flag, the Bosnian all-national flag, a port ret of Tito and so on. The reason why they brought me here was because this was a café against the government they

⁴⁴ Fieldnotes 06-04-2015, 09-04-2015, 17-04-2015 etc.

⁴⁵ Fieldnotes 06-04-2015

⁴⁶ Fieldnotes 06-04-2015

told me. Then he adding in the same sentence that young people do not believe in any change. As this coffeeshop was central in the social life of the students I hang out with this confused me. Why would they centre their life's around an 'anti government café' as they had no believe in any political change? They where so passive towards the structures where they found themselves in. During my time with them almost all conversations about politics ended with the whole group looking bored and the saying: we don't know nothing will ever change. Even when I found out that the cafeteria staff was stealing all the food so they ate almost nothing but potato mush, and I asked why they did not protests, since they had little money to buy food on the streets, they said I don't know were just passive its just the way it is. Why would this group of people go to a revolutionary café?

It took some time for me to figure this out. The owner of the coffeeshop had fought in the war when he was very young, 18 years old. He explained to me that he was trying to mobilize the youth for a revolution by informing and educating them about the crimes of the government. That was why this was an anti government café with all revolutionary and Bosnian symbols. The owner did this with a few friends that where his age, and as het told me that he was 18 in 1992 he and his friends who where around the same age must have been in his late 30s or early 40s at least significantly older than the students I spoke to.

It occurred to me that mobilizing the youth for revolution as he claimed he was doing was not very successful. The students I spoke to found him '*o.k. but sometimes anoying*'. When I started asking them why they came in the cafe they said it was because it was a cool bar and the coffee was cheaper than somewhere else. So it appeared to me that it was again someone of a different generation that formulated the activist deed, while the students I talked to seemed to find the whole idea of a anti government bar kind of cool but did not participate in any activism at the same time.

5.4 The right to work

So while the young generation in Tuzla did not seem to have any believe in or strategy for change, I would like to contrast this with the activity of other generations. My general impression of the older generation was that people where actively aware of their citizenship rights and where prepared to undertake action if they did not found them fulfilled. Unemployed workers where protesting on a weekly basis since 2012. Out of the plenums of last years open Universities (Sarajevo) grew that tried to open up the public discourse. In Tuzla there where now open meetings held that tried unite the academic community with the continuously demonstrating unemployed workers in their strife against the government

policies. The privatized and bankrupt state mine Dita was occupied from 2012 on by the unemployed workers, currently running again without governmental consents. All this activity did not leave the impression on me that these people did not believe in change.

Governmentality enlarges the space of governance by claiming that is not only an act of the 'government' but it is an act of 'governing the self as governing others'. To do so people create a field of discursive field in which power is rationalized. Power is not only represented in this discourse, the discourse also feeds action. Individual subjectivities, constitute these discourses. People read the meaning of present with reference to the world around them as well as with reference to the past. People as the bearer of cultural and historical discourses can resist or co-opt with the existing discourses and the social practices that derive from them (Lemke 2001:190-207). My young informants read the meaning of the present with reference to their past experience and acted different in citizenship than the older generation. This reveals a contrast in subjectivity between the generations.

My young informants grew up in the post conflict neoliberal Bosnia Herzegovina of the past 20 years. They had never experienced any form of political or economical progress, only decline. They grew up in a context of endemic and growing corruption. In this context they never experienced something else than a government that only places demands on its citizen without returning any sense of protection. In this context its not strange they do not expect anything from the government. In that sense, their rejection of the entire political and economical structure that is in their eyes 'broken' is not so surprising. Because they only have seen the past twenty years in which no political change is achieved it is for them hard to believe it ever will. And since they have never experienced anything from the government besides corruption and loathing this is the last institute they would turn to demand change, even if they believed change existed. They have never experienced such a thing as citizen rights so they don't even appeal to it, as for them it have never existed.

The older generation who is talking about these rights is also the generation that in their eyes obstructs them in their own social progress '*the youth is always sitting in the back*⁴⁷', and by this the discourse they present is old fashioned, as in the eyes of every generation before them. Maybe my informants went to the café great kids because the coffee was cheap. Maybe the idea of a revolution in tradition of Cuban tradition appeals to them. However because it is hard for them to visualise any better form of political structure they occurred to me pretty passive and their exit strategy is 'out'. This was in sharp contrast with

⁴⁷ Conversation Tuzla 18-4-2015

the older generation activist. They had the Socialist rule to reflect on and believed that a government is obligated to protect certain citizen rights. Contrary to the younger generation this elderly people turned to the government when not provided these rights to hold them responsible for it. A quote from the book *Unbriable Bosnia* is exemplary.

*'We were protesting for the right on labour, the government had taken everything away from us and lost our pride, our self worth.... That's why we went on the streets'*⁴⁸

I can support my argument by explaining the different attitude towards unemployment between the differing generations. The workers that are still protesting until today on a weekly basis where unemployed because they lost their job during the privatisations. If this generation would have experienced their citizenship in the neoliberal line of thought; that they are active self actualizing entrepreneurs that where responsible for their own employment they would not have held the state responsible for their current situation. The demonstrations show that that they held the government responsible as their claims are 'lower your own pay checks so we can get back to work'⁴⁹

First this reveals that they hold the state responsible for the division of labour and not the market. Second it shows that they perceive the bankruptcy of the state industry as a direct outcome of state corruption, since they see the government payments as the cause. Holding the government responsible for their unemployment reveals their political subjectivity. Holding the government withdrawal of public resources responsible of their job loss is where their economical and political subjectivity encounter. State corruption affects their economical situation. And since formerly the state companies where responsible for their pensions their economic positions are affected by government neoliberal policy.

This contrast with the findings in political and economical subjectivity under young students who considered unemployment not as a state issue as such. They just see the political and economical structure as it is right now and don't expect anything from anyone, let alone the state. Unemployment is for them the normal course of events and since they do not expect any change they just want to leave in the hope that it will be better somewhere else. Their politico and economical subjectivity is in this sense 'global neoliberal' they want to follow the market to get employment somewhere else as the model self actualizing neoliberal citizen. Problem is here that markets are still obstructs by political borders and as such they must find an opportunity to leave their country. This can be considered as a citizen act since it is an act that is constituted out of their political and economical subjectivity. It is a strange act of

⁴⁸ *Unbriable Bosnia and Herzegovina – fight for the commons*

⁴⁹ Conversation Sarajevo 05-03

citizenship since they want to leave rather than build their country. Or in a sense is it truly neoliberal act and the obstructing of national borders is the 'un-neoliberal' part of the story?

5.5 The necessity to work

The act of demonstrating or not demonstrating revealed an interesting encounter between political and economical subjectivity in my informants discourse on citizenship. Younger people saw their economical situation as inevitable, as their political situation and have an exit strategy, they abandon the entire system, including the activism of the older generation. The older generation with the experience of a government that provided rights and protection holds the government responsible and opt for change and turn to the government to achieve this.

I wish to propose the idea of 'hybrid citizen activism' here. In the end I concluded that my informants, inspired not only by their political subjectivity but by their economic subjectivity acted out in citizenship. Their economic perception of themselves within the structures they find themselves, informs them that their situation has declined, inspiring them to action. Their political subjectivity rationalizes and legitimises their demands. That was why the first student I encountered in Tuzla thought the workers that were protesting were greedy. He had never experienced a world in which the government could be held responsible for economic decline, so he thought the demands of the workers asked for certain rights that did not exist in his eyes. In his eyes if you were able to protest you were able to work and should be trying to earn your own money. In the eyes of the older activist economical rights were their political right and the government was responsible for their economical decline. This two differing political subjectivities can be named as socialist citizenship and neoliberal citizenship.

The same form of hybrid citizen activism I had experienced in Sarajevo. Here seven cultural institutions are kept open by people working there for free or underpaid. My informants used the words occupying and working interchangeably to explain why the institutions were held open. When I was able to conduct an interview in one of these institutions I found out that these people indeed were both occupying as working indeed. People were working below the minimum of living standard (but thus were paid) because they had been thoroughly cut down by the government. They remained working there because they thought their work of preserving national cultural possessions was important, but also because while working there they would at least keep their rights on pension. Anyway, there was no other job available anyhow if they quit.

However, they did find their work important as an act against the government since they resisted against the neglect and lack of interest of the government in Bosnian cultural heritage. And that is how they represented their acts: as a political deed. So both their economical subjectivity and political subjectivity inspired them, but they explained their action in political terms. Thus while their work was explained as a political deed, in the institution where I was able to conduct an interview I was told that this work was also an economical decision. Since they had no prospect on any other job they thought this was their only option. On the other hand the employees did emphasize the importance of their work and told me they found it important to preserve the all Bosnian national cultural material.

5.1 Conclusion

Where economical and political subjectivities encounter in Bosnia in where in the discourse on citizenship my informants talk about work. Where young people consider unemployment as a problem of the individual, the older generation conceives this as a problem of the government and demands their rights. When more closely examined the political claim of the older generation protesters on the right to labour seems to be informed by the encounter between political and economical subjectivity. Young people who have never experienced a notion that there is an institution that can be held responsible for creating economical opportunities does not place any demands and just want to leave. The older generation still holds the government responsible and demand their right to work.

Concluding chapter

To conclude this thesis in this section I wish to answer the central question: *How do the discourses on citizenship indicate the encounter between political and economical subjectivity in neoliberal and post conflict Bosnia Herzegovina?* To answer this question the thesis has addressed theory on how state power becomes transformed in a neoliberal state. The main point is that the discourse of citizenship is constituted by political and economical subjectivity in neoliberal context. The official political discourse presented by the government in the media, that rationalizes the protests is touched upon in this thesis. This is solely to be able to contrast the counter discourse on citizenship constituted by my informants.

The most revealing encounter between political and economical subjectivity is found in the act of work (or not to work). My young informants in Tuzla inspired me when I found out that their political subjectivity differed from that of older generations. They have never seen any political or economic progress only decline, they have never experienced an institution that can be held responsible for unemployment or any other right. In this respect their political subjectivity did not inspire them to act and demand rights or change anything in the political structure they found themselves in. Their economical subjectivity told them to abandon the entire system since there is no prospect of any better situation in the near future.

The older generation activist citizens I interviewed had a different political and economical subjectivity. It informed them to demand the right to work and demand a healthy and fair place in the economy. Their past experience of a government that protected these rights in the former Yugoslavia and the post war period prior to the neoliberal transformation had shaped their political subjectivity that way. Their encounter of political and economical subjectivity told them to protest, and after the protest to continue their struggle. Young people might have appealed to the idea of a revolution in the romanticized 'Che Guevara' heroic struggle, when political change turned out harder than one major revolt they saw their perception of '*nothing will ever change*' again affirmed.

This political subjectivity that holds the government responsible for the provision of labour (among other rights) also inspired the older generation to rationalize a new form of 'hybrid citizen activism' in solely political terms. During my fieldwork I discovered that the act of working for free (or a symbolic salary) was inspired by both economical subjectivity: no other jobs available, right on pensions, as political subjectivity: importance to preserve the all Bosnian national heritage in order to maintain the nation. In seven national cultural institutions in Sarajevo this act of occupying was carried out, as well in the state mine Dita in Tuzla. Activists explained this deed of working 'for free' as an act against the government

using the term occupying. This frames the deed as an act of resistance as if the government is trying to remove this unwanted objects from the building. The government not so much wanted to remove the ‘national cultural heritage’, but saw no economical opportunities in maintain it. Thus while explained in political terms of occupying and resistance against the government the economical motivation was written out. Not that this down play their political activism. This observation just shows how their subjectivities encounter, and how the subjectivity of economical deprive and hopelessness can inspire political action.

Sassens’ (1998) concept of the ‘denationalization of citizenship’ takes an interesting turn here. She argues that in the context of neoliberal globalization economics right that where former citizen rights become addressed to global firms and markets (Sassen 1998). During the writing of this thesis the news came out that the Dita factory in Tuzla now was reopened by the workers that had occupied the enterprise since 2012. Workers that formerly had the citizen right to work, a right formerly protected by their socialist government, saw their rights evaporate by the rhetoric of free markets and neoliberal transformation. Their political subjectivity informed them to act. Now the factory is reopened we can in a way speak of the ‘renationalization of citizenship’. When their right to work was not provided by the state workers united and created their own body that does.

‘The narrative begins to change and the story of workers is becoming more and more important. Class cleavages supersede religious and ethnic ones and the ethno-capitalism of primitive accumulation and privatisation, of political clientelism and corruption have shown their limits. No one can explain the spirit of this mini-revolution better than the words of a “Dita” worker: “Industry is alive as long as there are workers ready to fight for their basic right – the right to work”⁵⁰

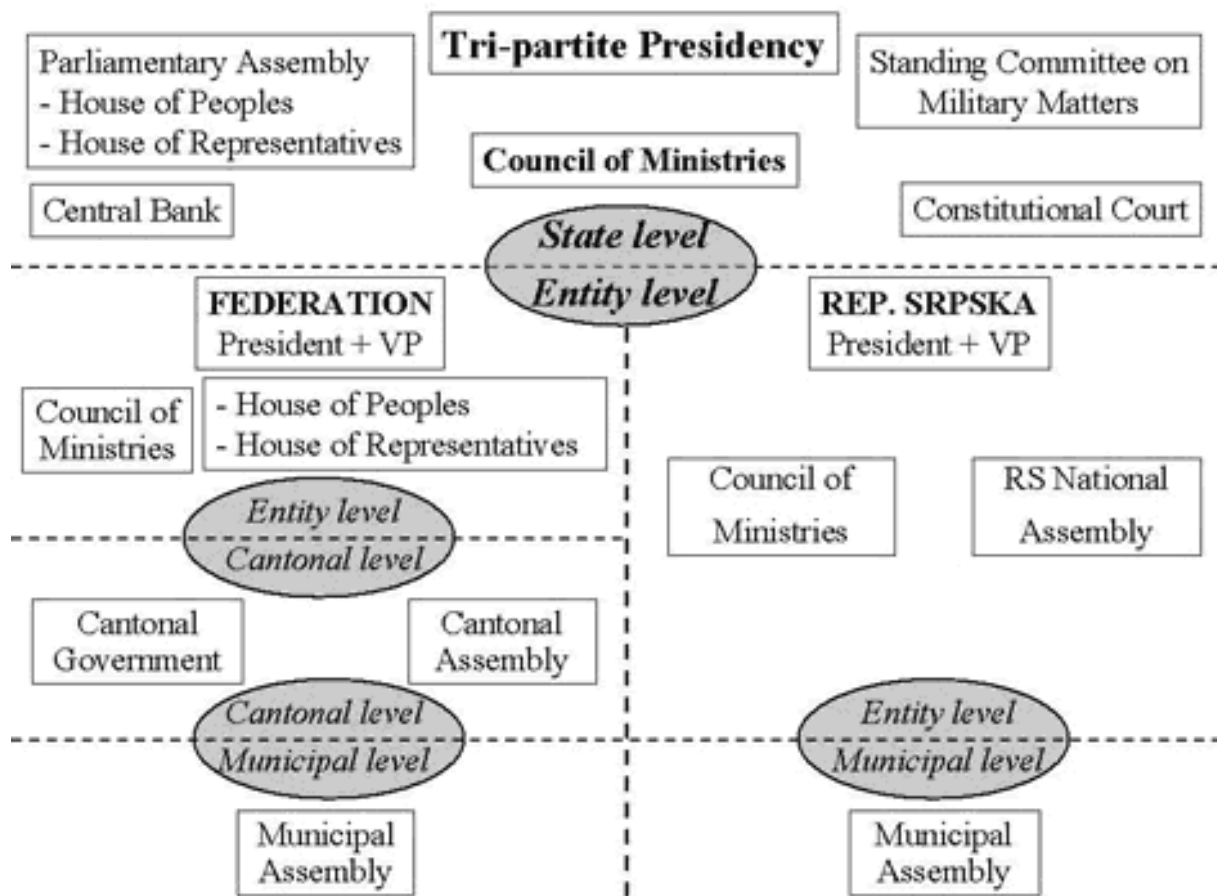
My informants found themselves marginalized in the economical and political discourse. A rhetoric of neoliberal transformation ethno national hatred had completely silenced their economic and political grievances for twenty years. The protests of February 2014 was the first time they were able to overcome this and were able to make their voices heard. To stand up and say to their fellow citizens that change was possible. They presented their demands clearly to the government as the international community but where again not heard. The political parties kept framing the protests as resentment between ethno national

⁵⁰ Source: Open Democracy, full article appendix

groups, as they had explained all political economical processes prior to the war, during the war and now after the war. Twenty years after the war the ethno national division has become a practical tool for a spectrum of political and economical advantages in society. Hegemony appears to be found in the ethno national divide. However, the protests where also the first time that the masses where able to overcome this hegemony. Now the protests continues not on the street but in other sites of struggle as the Dita facory that is reopened. The classic liberal citizen act is now transformed in a 'classic neoliberal activist act'

7. Appendix

A Schematic map of the government of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina



B. Government officials' response to the protests of February 2014

I. Member of the Presidency Bakir Izetbegovic response to the protests

Protests in Bosnia, citizens seeking resignation of Federal prime minister

February 9, 2014 Balkan Inside Bosnia and Herzegovina, Society No comments

20:10 (Update) Sarajevo: All protesters are released from detention

The prosecution has released ten protesters from detention, but they are ordered the house arrest, travel ban outside B&H, as well as a ban on contacting each other, Omar Mehmedbasic, a lawyer of released protesters, said.

One of the released prisoners, juvenile Alen Muslic, addressed the assembled journalists and citizens, to bring out the details of the last night's arrest of protesters.

As Muslic said, last night around 1:00, police forcibly entered his apartment and arrested him. He was held and beaten by four hours and he was released at 5:00 am.

Citizens of Sarajevo have blocked a main road in the city requesting an immediate resignation of prime minister of Federation B&H Nermin Niksic.

Nearly a thousand people are currently in front of the Presidency B&H building and those are seeking the resignations of top government officials.

B&H Presidency member Izetbegovic, Early elections are only option

"In such a situation, early elections are the only option," said Bakir Izetbegovic, member of the BiH Presidency and deputy president of the SDA party.

He explained that early elections should have taken place long ago, and that the SDA called for such an outcome a year ago.

Izetbegovic said that he "personally doesn't feel responsible at all for recent events."

Speaking of the future of BiH, Izetbegovic said that "BiH is too strong."

"This cohesion and patriotic forces are too strong for it to fall," says Izetbegovic, adding that if the system falls, a new one will be created after the next elections. He calls on politicians to not score cheap points, to work together, and benefit the country.

He considers significant that this is the only place where institutions are under attack and this is happening only in the Bosniak part of BiH.

It is persistently claimed, he stressed in the interview, that the problem is in FBiH.

“In FBiH the situation is much better, and human rights are at a higher level than in Republika Srpska,” believes Izetbegovic. He also adds that it is possible these protests were instituted from outside for politicians to resolve other issues, possibly even the issue of entities.

OHR: The protests are justified, EU should send troops to Bosnia-Herzegovina if the situation escalates

The High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina Valentin Inzko said that, if the situation in B&H escalates, EU should consider sending the troops to the country.

“We will consider the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina on Tuesday, February 11th. Austria will increase the number of the troops in Bosnia and Herzegovina. If the situation in the country escalates the European Union will consider sending its troops to Bosnia,” said Inzko

II. Response of the president of Republica Srpska Milorad Dodik

DODIK PRIJETI SILOM 'Spremni smo se usprotiviti svakom nasilju i uvozu nemira iz Federacije BiH'

Bruno Konjević / CROPIX

Autor: Hina

Objavljeno: 09.02.2014

SARAJEVO - Predsjednik Republike Srpske Milorad Dodik najavio je u nedjelju kako će policijskom silom biti spriječen svaki pokušaj "rušenja institucija" toga bosanskohercegovačkog entiteta, kao i da će spriječiti "uvoz" prosvjeda iz Federacije BiH.

Vijesti

"Mirni prosvjedi koji su najavljeni i koji se održavaju na mjestima koja su zakonom za to predviđena nisu problem. Zaustavljanje prometa i rušenje institucija u RS bit će spriječeno policijom, jer je to nezakonito", kazao je Dodik u Banjoj Luci gdje se tijekom dana sastao s ostalim srpskim dužnosnicima u tijelima vlasti entiteta i države kako bi razgovarali o krizi u BiH nakon masovnih prosvjeda održanih ranije ovog tjedna.

Dodik je ustvrdio kako su se sudionici toga sastanka "spremni usprotiviti svakom nasilju i uvozu nemira iz FBiH".

"Postoje inicije o takvim planovima", kazao je Dodik, dodajući kako će biti spriječen i podvrgnut kaznenom progonu svatko tko to pokuša učiniti.

Pozvao je da se odmah započne s razgovorima kako bi se smirilo i stanje u FBiH.

O trenutačnom stannu u zemlji u nedelju je raspravljalo i predsjedništvo Socijaldemokratske partije BiH (SDP BiH).

U priopćenju dostavljenom medijima stoji ocjena kako su "neodgovorne i antidemokratske snage grubo zlorabile opravdano višedesetljetno nezadovoljstvo radnika u BiH čime je ugrožena i država i sigurnost njezinih građana".

Navedeno je kako je SDP BiH odlučan zajedno s drugim odgovornim snagama uspostaviti red, mir i zakonitost u državi te stoga predlaže hitno usvajanje antikorupcijskih zakona koji bi to omogućili.

SDP drži kako bi prioritetno bilo procesuirati 20 najvećih sličajeva privatizacijske pljačke.

Ukoliko za takvo što ne bi bilo potrebne suglasnosti drugih stranaka, SDP poziva visokog predstavnika međunarodne zajednice u BiH Valentina Inzka da raspiše izvanredne izbore, jer on jedini za to ima potrebne ovlasti.

Osam udruga koje okupljaju Bošnjake iz Srebrenice, uključujući i pokret "Majke enklava Srebrenice i Žepe", u nedjelju su se oglasile zajedničkim priopćenjem u kojemu su oštro osudile nasilje koje se proteklih dana vidjelo na ulicama Sarajeva, Tuzle, Zenice, Bihaća i Mostara.

"Ono što je zapaljeno ovih dana, institucije su države za koje su naši najmiliji dali svoje živote", stoji u priopćenju udruga Srebreničana, koje drže kako su neke političke stranke instrumentalizirale sudionike prosvjeda s ciljem unošenja dodatnih nemira u već nestabilnu državu.

Broj preporuka: 14

III. Response Bakir Izetbegovic to Milorad Dodik

Bakir Izetbegovic, Dodik can take from Bosnia only mud on his shoes

February 10, 2014 Balkan Inside Bosnia and Herzegovina, Politics No comments We will defend the unity of the country, said in an interview given to the Anadolu Agency (AA) a member of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina Bakir Izetbegovic.

Izetbegovic thus commented ongoing protests throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Izetbegovic condemned the statement of Milorad Dodik, in which the president of Republic of Srpska had claimed that Bosnia-Herzegovina was going to break down.

"Bosnia and Herzegovina will not disintegrate. Bosnian patriots have sacrificed so much for this country, there are more than 500 mass graves, there are Srebrenica and Tomasica. Dodik can take from Bosnia only mud on his shoe if he is going to leave. Only that, nothing more", Izetbegovic stressed.

"Milorad Dodik blames Alija Izetbegovic and the defenders of BiH for the aggression. As concerns the collapse of the system, great systems have fallen across the region. They really are now falling around Birac, the railways in Republic of Srpska. So there are the lowest pensions in all of Europe, worse than in the Federation. I constantly urge him and other politicians in BiH to stop the arguments," said Izetbegovic.

Commenting on the protests in the country Izetbegovic said that citizens have the right to be unhappy but the hooligans have caused damage to the country.

IV. Official response of the US embassy to the protests

February 9, 2014 4:50 PM

This past week's protests in Tuzla, Sarajevo, Mostar, Zenica and other cities in the Federation of BiH and Brcko District were a demonstration of citizens' frustration with the current economic, social, and political situation in the Federation and BiH more generally. We have long called on the citizens of BiH to hold their elected leaders responsible through civic activism efforts and participating in elections. We have been and will continue to support the right of BiH citizens to assemble and protest peacefully. Strong public discourse and two way dialogue between citizens and leaders are the clearest signs of a healthy democracy.

At the same time, we must condemn violence in any form. Violence against protesters, police, journalists, and public property is not acceptable and must end. The use of violence distracts attention from the fundamental message we see the vast majority of protesters trying to make — that reform is necessary now.

Government leaders have the responsibility to listen to and hear citizens' very legitimate calls for reform. We call on government leaders at all levels in BiH to take the demands of citizens seriously, to reject efforts to use the protests to stoke fear and advance nationalist agendas, and to come together to make the difficult compromises necessary to move BiH forward. The necessary reforms can and should come from within the institutions of BiH and must respect Bosnia and Herzegovina's sovereignty and territorial integrity, as a state composed of two entities and Brcko District.

In the coming days, we expect BiH leaders to ensure the peace while listening to and respecting the people. There is much work to be done for Bosnia and Herzegovina to become a prosperous and fully democratic state where institutions and political leaders serve the people effectively and are accountable.

V. Official Response of the EU forces to the protest

EUFOR: Protests Do Not Represent a Significant Threat for Safety in B&H

March 7, 2014 2:55 PM

The EU Forces (EUFOR) consider that protests of citizens that are lasting for already a month do not represent a significant threat for the safety of B&H.

“Citizens have the right to express their opinions in nonviolent legitimate gatherings”, said EUFOR for Fena.

They point out that the law is implemented and order at the law enforcement agencies in B&H is maintained, and EUFOR supervises the situation and is in contact with the law enforcement agencies in B&H.

(Source: Fena)

search...

VI. OHR reaction to the protests

Inzko: "EU-Truppen, wenn die Lage eskaliert" Der österreichische Spitzendiplomat fordert mehr Einsatz für Rechtsstaatlichkeit in Bosnien.

Dunkle Rauchwolken liegen über Sarajevo, am Samstag stand der Dachstuhl des Gebäudes des Staatspräsidiums immer noch in Flammen, im Keller verbrannten wertvolle Archivbestände.

Valentin Inzko - Foto: AP/Sulejman Omerbasic Nach schweren Ausschreitungen am Freitag wird der Ruf nach „politischer Revolution“ laut. In einem Fünf-Punkte-Programm fordern Demonstranten, die „kriminelle Privatisierungen“ rückgängig zu machen und kriminelle Wirtschaftsbosse vor Gericht zu stellen.

Der Hohe Repräsentant der internationalen Staatengemeinschaft, Valentin Inzko, erklärt die Ursachen der gewaltsamen Proteste.

KURIER: Herr Botschafter, brennt der Balkan?

Valentin Inzko: Nein. Serbien macht gute Fortschritte, aber das ist die schlimmste Lage seit Kriegsende in Bosnien-Herzegowina, seit dem Friedensabkommen von Dayton 1995.

Schreiten EU-Truppen ein?

Wir beraten die Lage am Dienstag im internationalen Lenkungsausschuss. Österreich wird seine Truppe in Bosnien aufstocken. Wenn die Lage eskaliert, werden wir eventuell an EU-Truppen denken müssen. Aber nicht jetzt.

Woran haben sich die Proteste entzündet?

Die gewaltsamen Ausschreitungen mit mehr als 100 Verletzten sind schärfstens zu verurteilen. Aber die Proteste sind berechtigt. Insbesondere die soziale Ungleichheit hat dazu geführt: Die Auflehnung gegen Bonzentum, Nepotismus und Freunderlwirtschaft. In der Industriestadt Tuzla haben viele gut Ausgebildete noch nie im Leben einen Job gehabt. Wenn Menschen sehen, dass Verwandte von Politikern leicht Arbeit bekommen, dann entsteht Wut. Jetzt ist das Maß voll. Lange haben die Menschen nicht protestiert, weil ihnen der Friede nach dem Krieg mit mehr als 100.000 Toten wichtig war. Die Träger der Proteste sind hauptsächlich Bosniaken, die Muslime. Alles ging von Tuzla aus, wo Arbeiter seit einem Jahr jeden Mittwoch demonstrieren, sie wurden aber nicht beachtet.

Ist das Chaos nicht auch Folge einer Staatenkonstruktion, die nicht funktioniert?

Zum Teil. Der Dayton-Vertrag ist ein Friedensvertrag, der sehr erfolgreich war. Als Verfassungsvertrag ist er jedoch sehr kompliziert. In der Bosniakischen-Kroatischen Föderation gibt es elf Regierungen, elf Premiers, elf Innenminister. Das ist ineffizient und teuer.

Der Präsident der Srbska Republika sprach kürzlich von einem failed state Bosnien?

Zerstörtes Amtsgebäude in Tuzla, wo die Proteste begannen - Foto: Reuters/SRDJAN ZIVULOVIC Es läuft nicht optimal. Korruption und organisierte Kriminalität sind ein Problem am ganzen Balkan. Die EU wird sich verstärkt für mehr Rechtsstaatlichkeit in der Region einsetzen müssen. Die Bürger erwarten das.

Für Außenminister Sebastian Kurz ist der Balkan eine Priorität. Was kann Österreich tun?

Österreich könnte eine verstärkte Rolle mit kreativen, unkonventionellen Ideen spielen.

Was sind kreative Ideen?

Mit noch größerem Nachdruck die Rechtsstaatlichkeit zu stärken, vor allem die Staatsanwaltschaft und die Polizei. Nicht der Zentralismus gehört gestärkt, sondern das Funktionieren des Staates. In der Vergangenheit wurde zu viel auf militärische Sicherheit Wert gelegt, zu wenige auf soft powers: Rechtsstaatlichkeit, Demokratie, Versöhnung und Bildung.

Valentin Inzko, der Statthalter in Bosnien

VII. Presidency of Bosnia Herzegovina reaction to the protests

Chairman of B&H Presidency and the Member of B&H Presidency Izetbegović: Protests Should Not Become Inter-Ethnic Conflict

February 11, 2014 1:23 PM

These protests are of a social -economic character, protests against injustice and corruption and should never get an element of a national conflict, said today in Sarajevo the Chairman of B&H Presidency Željko Komšić, after he and the member of B&H Presidency Bakir Izetbegović held a meeting with members of the Inter -Religious Council.

“This should not be allowed to turn into any kind of inter-ethnic conflict and from everything that we have seen yesterday, luckily that did not happen”, said Komšić.

He asks from the people who participate and who will participate in the protest to have this in mind.

“I am aware that people did not start these protests on the basis of any kind of national element, and just let the protests be that way”, said Komšić.

B&H Presidency member Bakir Izetbegović also emphasized that ” it is particularly important that things do not turn into an inter-ethnic conflict”.

“I am in constant contact with Radmanović, I heard from Čović today, and with Raguž we have this thing in mind. This cannot go in that direction. Thus, the reasonable requirements of protestors will have to be resolved through dialogue and will have to speed up the work on it, but also the state institutions must be protected”, said Izetbegović.

He added that members of Inter -Religious Council can certainly help in this and for “this to not turn where it should not”.

C. Ethno national pragmatism

I. Bosnia MP change ethnicity to get posts

Bosnia MPs Change Ethnicity to Get Posts

Some lawmakers in Bosnia are trying to change their declared ethnicity in order to get positions in legislative bodies by exploiting ethnic quota systems.

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The latest elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina have shown that being a Bosniak, a Serb, a Croat or an "Other" could also be a relative matter.

Some MPs have jumped ship in terms of ethnicity, declaring a different ethnicity this year from the one they claimed in previous elections.

Two MPs in Bosnia's mainly Serbian entity, Republika Srpska, have done so recently, as have members of some cantonal assemblies in the Federation entity.

Edhem Fejzic, for example, has now declared himself as an "Other" in order to become an MP in the Federation entity Parliament's House of Peoples. In the local elections, held two years ago, he declared himself to be a Bosniak.

Muamer Omanovic, who formerly declared he was a Bosniak has now said he is a Croat for the same reason.

The reason for the change is that in the Council of Peoples in the Republika Srpska - and the House of Peoples in the Federation - there are ethnic quota systems for MPs.

The lawmakers who declared their ethnicity differently were attempting to benefit from situations in which there are not expected to be enough candidates from a certain ethnicity to fill its quota in the legislature - giving them a better opportunity to secure a seat by filling the ethnic gap.

However, their attempts to take advantage of Bosnia's system of ethnic quotas may have misfired, after the election commission said it would not recognise the mandates of any MPs who had shifted ethnic allegiance within the last few years.

"If the MPs declare [their ethnicity] differently now, we are refusing to confirm their terms," said Maksida Piric of the election commission.

"Electoral law says national affiliation may not be changed within the same [four-year] electoral cycle," she added.

Adis Arapovic, an analyst from the Centres of Civil Initiatives, a non-governmental organization that monitors the work of institutions, said he sees attempts by politicians to change ethnic allegiance as purely political acts of pragmatism.

“People have recognized this possibility and used it in a most brutal way,” he said. “Morally this is reprehensible, ethically unacceptable - but it is very pragmatic.”

Arapovic said these manoeuvres were a consequence of Bosnia's flawed electoral system, which divided power between people defined as Bosniaks, Serbs, Croats or "Others".

“As long as our electoral laws are made on the basis of divisions by ethnic position, those loopholes will be filled,” he said.

II. Bosnian turn election fraud into business opportunity

Bosnians Turn Election Fraud into Business Opportunity

A depressingly large number of Bosnians in the 2014 elections were more than happy to trade their votes for a cash payment.

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Bosnia's recent general elections offered fresh, ample evidence of dysfunctionality, corruption and fraud. Yet, what was a cause of deep concern for local and international experts became a business opportunity for citizens who decided to game a system that they think they cannot change.

“The three of us voted for one party and received €75. Who cares! Politicians do what they want anyway and this way at least we get some provisions for winter,” said one election profiteer who, with his two friends, sold their votes for €25 each.

Bosnia's weak, divided and politically influenced judiciary failed to properly deal with cases of election fraud in previous years, even when election institutions and police provided ample evidence of fraud. As a result, the problem has escalated.

The 2014 elections witnessed numerous problems, starting with the ballots cast from abroad, frequent vote-rigging seen in and around many polling stations, as well as irregularities in the counting process after the elections.

Even before the elections started, local media reported that hundreds of ballots for people voting abroad had been sent to the wrong addresses. The Central Election Commission forwarded complaints to the Office of the Public Prosecutor for investigation.

Election day, meanwhile, created new business opportunities for the unscrupulous.

One eager election entrepreneur told Balkan Insight he pulled his pregnant wife out of hospital so that both of them could cast their votes and so earn €50 each. He brought her back just in time as her labour pains started.

Another hung around his local polling station, negotiating the price of his vote with representatives from different political parties. “I do not care who wins the elections because

all politicians are the same. I will sell my vote to whoever offers me more, just as I did in 2012 [local elections],” he told Balkan Insight.

Local and international experts have said that Bosnia’s 2014 general elections showed clear signs of dysfunctionality, corruption and fraud - in a system increasingly influenced by political parties.

The weakest links in the system seem to be the municipal election commissions and election boards. Municipal election commissions, appointed by municipal councils, appoint election boards that manage the election process at the polling stations in their municipality.

But, over the past few years, these institutions have been increasingly filled by people who are the servants of political parties, or who are willing to turn a blind eye to various fraudulent activities for a price.

“We have not received reports about buying or selling of seats in election boards, but it is already known that this is the weakest link of the election proces.”

Stjepan Mikic, president of the Election Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Growing political influence in municipal election commissions and election boards has created an election officials’ marketplace.

Ahead of each election, the parties trade positions in selected election boards. This way, political parties get “their people” into the polling stations, where they then can manipulate the process.

One common form of election fraud is the so-called “Bulgarian train”. Political “handlers” distribute pre-filled ballots in front of polling stations. Voters willing to sell their ballots then take them into the polling stations and cast their votes. They then take the empty ballots, which they have obtained in the polling stations, back outside and hand them to the handlers. The handlers then fill in the ballots and give them over to the next entrepreneur.

While the “Bulgarian train” requires the handler having a set of empty ballots to run the business, another model is even simpler.

This involves handlers passing around appropriate ballot codes - which refer to the code attached to each party on the ballot, and each party candidate on the party lists.

Every election profiteer who provides evidence of his or her vote in line with the agreed code – usually in form of a photographed ballot filled in an appropriate way taken in the polling station – gets an agreed price.

Officials at some polling stations have boasted off the record of election fraud on even larger scale.

“The ‘real elections’ only start after polling stations get closed,” one official told Balkan Insight.

He explained that election boards controlled by a single party are in a position to add or remove votes for parties or individual candidates, or invalidate ballots, by deliberately scribbling or jotting on them, or simply by providing an incorrect vote count.

Problems with municipal election commissions and local election boards were well known from previous years. That is why the Central Election Commission for the 2014 elections organised special training sessions and clear instructions for commissions and boards' staff, as well as improving the procedures for closing and sealing ballot bags.

“We have not received reports about buying or selling of seats in election boards, but it is already known that this is the weakest link of the election process, which is why we organised the education of their (election board) members,” the Mostar daily Dnevni List quoted Stjepan Mikic, president of the Election Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as saying on September 14, a month ahead of the ballot.

In spite of these safeguards, the performance of the election boards reached an all-time low in the 2014 elections. This was evident in the numerous mistakes which the Central Election Commission noted while receiving materials from election boards – bags with cast ballots, initial counts of votes from each polling station and ballots and votes summary sheets.

“This hasn't happened ever before,” Mikic, upset by the large number of irregularities in the counting process, told a Commission session on October 28 that was directly aired by several TV stations.

According to sources that are a part of the election system, in hundreds of cases, summary sheets displayed numbers that were at odds with the number of ballots and votes cast at that polling station.

There were also cases in which bags with cast ballots, which were supposed to be sealed in a specific way, to prevent tinkering, showed evidence of being reopened and resealed.

“There are many discrepancies between valid ballots and the number of votes won by political parties,” FENA news agency quoted Ermin Kos, director of the main counting centre, as saying on October 23.

He listed some anomalies noted in the process, including election boards counting votes for the candidates, but not for the parties on whose lists those candidates were standing.

“We do not know why all these mistakes occurred. Maybe it was because members of the election boards were inexperienced or tired, but maybe these were deliberate mistakes,” Kos concluded.

“By 10am, the coalition received more than 60 calls from citizens through our phone hot line, mostly related to political activists who were pressuring people to vote for their sponsors as well as distributing ballots with already marked parties and candidates.”

Evidence of the dysfunctionality and corruption of Bosnia's election system has persuaded a number of Western countries to support the establishment of a local coalition of non-governmental organisations that would organise unbiased monitoring of the election process.

Dario Jovanovic, director of the “Under the magnifying glass” coalition

The “Under the magnifying glass” coalition was established a few months before the elections and managed in a relatively short period to train and organise more than 3,000 observers who were deployed on election day.

“By 10am, the coalition received more than 60 calls from citizens through our phone hot line, mostly related to political activists who were pressuring people to vote for their sponsors as well as distributing ballots with already marked parties and candidates - which is an example of the ‘Bulgarian train’,” Dario Jovanovic, director of the coalition, said on election day.

By October 31, the coalition submitted a list of 96 irregularities to the Central Election Commission, including those registered by observers as well as those reported by citizens.

In addition to local observers, international organisations and foreign embassies requested accreditation for a record high number of foreign observers - over 500.

“While the elections were efficiently administered, widespread credible allegations of electoral contestants manipulating the composition of polling station commissions reduced stakeholder confidence in the integrity of the process,” the preliminary report published by OSCE’s Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, ODIHR, said on October 13.

ODIHR, which had its own monitoring mission, noted the worst irregularities in the work of election boards, assessing the quality of work at 25 per cent of observed polling stations as “bad, or very bad.

“In 27 observations significant procedural errors were noted, in 43 per cent of observations transparent bags were not used accordingly, in 41 per cent of observations (election boards) accounting forms were not completed before the start of the count, in 14 per cent of observations protocols were pre-signed by (election boards) members and in 30 per cent of observations results did not reconcile,” the report listed.

These and other reports of numerous mistakes noted during and after election day forced the Central Election Commission to order recounts at more than 150 polling stations.

International organisations and foreign embassies requested accreditation for a record high number of foreign observers - over 500. | Photo by Beta

The Central Election Commission also forwarded 35 complaints and appeals against election irregularities to the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

However, by November 7 all those appeals were rejected and on November 10 the Central Election Commission confirmed the final election results.

While election fraud seems rampant in Bosnia, it represents only part of the problem. Bosnia’s complex administrative system and the political crisis that has plagued the country for the past eight year have created other problems in the election process.

One violation of basic human rights is not allowing equal rights to all ethnic groups to vote and be elected, growing disbalance in the value of votes cast in different ethnic communities, as well as calculation of compensation seats which were originally introduced to boost smaller parties but were eventually manipulated to help the biggest ones.

While the constantly expanding list of problems with Bosnia’s election system represents a major concern for many local and international experts, it remains a welcome opportunity for

a growing number of people who don't believe they can change the system - and who make most of it by selling their votes.

One election profiteer went as far as to organise an open party with barbeque and drinks after the elections.

“I do not care who wins,” he declared. “I promised my vote and the votes of my family to several different parties and now I am organising a party so that whoever has won can see that we have voted for them,” he told Balkan Insight.

D. Demands of the citizens

I. Demands of the Citizens of the Tuzla Canton

After successfully ousting the local government from the Tuzla Council, the citizens of Tuzla made a series of demands including the renationalisation of the regions factories.

Other demands include a reigning in of the financial benefits afforded to government officials, and increased proportionality when compared to normal worker wages.

The Demands of the Workers and Citizens of the Tuzla Canton

Today, in Tuzla, the people are creating a better future. The government has submitted their resignation and have ceded power; this was our first demand. By achieving this, we now have an open path for resolving our existing problems. Our anger and rage have accumulated and now cause this violent behaviour. The ignorant attitude of the government towards their citizens, has led to the anger and rage escalating.

Now we will try to focus on rebuilding a productive government system. We invite all citizens to support the implementation of the following requirements:

1. Maintaining the public order in cooperation with citizens, police and civil protection, in order to avoid any criminalization, politicization and manipulation of the protests.
2. Establishing a 'pragmatic government' made out of professional, non-partisan and uncorrupted members, which so far, have not had any mandate in any level of government. They would lead the government in the Tuzla Canton until the elections in 2014. This alternative Government will have a duty to submit weekly plans and reports on the activities, and it should achieve the given goals. The work of this Government would be supervised by all interested citizens.
3. Renationalisation of privatised factories: "Dita", "Polihem", "Poliolhem", "Gumara" and "Konjuh", with the following stipulations:
 - o Pensions and health care to be properly and fairly provided for workers
 - o Prosecution of the participants of economic crime
 - o Seize the illegally acquired assets
 - o Annul the privatization contracts
 - o Reassessment of the privatization
 - o Return the factories to the workers and place them under the control of public authorities in order to safeguard the public interest, and start production in those factories where possible.
4. Balancing the salaries of the government representatives with the salaries of employees in the public and private sectors.

5. Reversal of additional payments to the representatives of government, including the so called 'personal income' – which is paid on the basis of participation in committees or elsewhere, and other unreasonable and unjustified fees that other workers are not entitled to.

6. The abolition of the wage for ministers and other government officials after the expiration or termination of their mandate. (Officials are paid one year full salary after leaving office)

These demands are made by the workers and people of Tuzla Canton, and are for our common good.

7th February 2014

II Demands of the plenum of Citizens of Sarajevo

Demands of Plenum of Citizens of Sarajevo for Judicial Institutions of Kanton Sarajevo

14. 03. 2014 · More languages, Prevodi / Translations, Zahtjevi

At the 7th Plenum of Citizens of Sarajevo, Canton of Sarajevo, held at Dom mladih on Tuesday, 25 February 2014, the citizens of the Sarajevo Canton adopted the following demands:

Demands to Sarajevo municipal courts and the Cantonal Court in Sarajevo:

- The Plenum of Citizens of Sarajevo, Canton of Sarajevo, demands that the Sarajevo municipal courts and the Cantonal Court in Sarajevo publish a report within 7 days on all privatisation, economic crime, bankruptcy proceedings, and illegally acquired property and corruption cases in their dockets and the stage of proceedings for each case.
- The citizens of the Sarajevo Canton take this opportunity to draw the Court's attention to the fact that the reasons for their assembly and the Plenum of Citizens of Sarajevo, Canton of Sarajevo, are closely related to the above demand. We want to make it quite clear that the inertness certain individuals have exhibited towards their duties has led to the abyss our society finds itself in at present, and has given rise to the rebellion and social unrest in Sarajevo and elsewhere in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Zahtjevi gradjana i gradjanki od 25.2.2014._Sud

Demands to the Sarajevo Cantonal Prosecutor's Office:

- The Plenum of Citizens of Sarajevo, Canton of Sarajevo, demands that the Sarajevo Cantonal Prosecutor's Office urgently process all criminal charges, and especially those pertaining to economic crime, privatisation, abuse of office in public administration bodies and other state bodies and produce a report on the current state of cases initiated in these areas.
- The Plenum of Citizens of Sarajevo, Canton of Sarajevo, demands that within 48 hours, the Sarajevo Cantonal Prosecutor's Office publish a report on the number of initiated cases against responsible persons suspected of having committed economic crimes and the progress made in each of these cases.

- The Plenum of Citizens of Sarajevo, Canton of Sarajevo, demands the immediate resignation of the Chief Prosecutor and her deputies in all sectors, as well as all other responsible officers for failing to undertake legally prescribed actions within legally prescribed deadlines, which negligence caused the failure to prosecute a large number of criminal charges for organised crime, privatisation crime and illegal acquisition of property to the detriment of the citizens of the Sarajevo Canton.

Zahtjevi gradjana i gradjanki od 25.2.2014._Tuzilastvo KS

Demands to the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council and High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council Secretariat:

- The Plenum of Citizens of Sarajevo, Canton of Sarajevo, demands that the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council initiate a revision of gridlocked proceedings within the competences of Sarajevo Canton prosecutors, and that it review the inertness of the Sarajevo Canton Public Attorney's Office relevant to cases of privatisation, corruption, organised crime, economic crime and irregularities in the work of the managements of public enterprises, institutions and funds.
- The Plenum of Citizens of Sarajevo, Canton of Sarajevo, demands that the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council, within its competences, urgently process disciplinary complaints filed against judges and prosecutors, and that it obtain performance reports from the prosecutor's office and courts in the Sarajevo Canton for each judge and prosecutor based on completed cases and confirmed judgements.

The citizens of the Sarajevo Canton take this opportunity to inform the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council that the reasons for their assembly and the Plenum of Citizens of Sarajevo, Canton of Sarajevo, which has initiated a new form of communication between the population and the state — that of direct democracy, arose out of the mass protests of citizens in the streets of Sarajevo and other towns and cities in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and that these protests are closely related to the demands hereby submitted to the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council. We want to make it quite clear that the inertness certain individuals have exhibited towards their duties has led to the abyss our society finds itself in at present, and has given rise to the rebellion and social unrest in Sarajevo and elsewhere in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

E. Reclaiming the factory Dita

Reclaiming the factory: a story from Bosnia

Andjela Pepic 15 June 2015

Privatisation processes in Bosnia and Herzegovina have gradually destroyed workers' rights and ownership. But there are stories of hope and resistance emerging from this battered country.

Workers on break in Tuzla, Bosnia. Flickr/Kingmoor Klickr. Some rights reserved. Privatisation processes in Bosnia and Herzegovina from the 1990s onwards have gradually transferred ownership and power from the socialist state to private entrepreneurs. As elsewhere in Europe and the rest of the world, this process, in most cases, was accompanied by a large number of lay-offs. Company assets floated in the market and were bought and sold at unusually low prices, dismantling large factories and industrial giants of former Yugoslavia.

Financialisation/globalisation became embedded in Bosnia especially in the wake of the Dayton Accords. The workers, who were once deemed to be the owners of the enterprise, overnight became proletarians, deprived of fundamental rights and any form of possession over the production process. This was pretty much the case across the entire East-Central Europe, although the case of Yugoslav socialism was different, as the workers, through the self-management system, had had a much more direct control of the means and objects of their production units than anywhere else in the so-called countries of “really-existing socialism”.

Yugoslavia's dissolution and transition to free market capitalism was also different in that it set in motion a bizarre process of primitive ethno-accumulation, i.e. primitive accumulation on the basis of ethnocentric-conflictual lines. Bosnia and Herzegovina is a typical example.

Among the many examples of the negative effects of privatisation processes in Bosnia and Herzegovina, one that was under the media spotlight in the past two years, is the case of “Dita” detergents factory from Tuzla, an industrial city in the central part of North-East Bosnia. The factory was privatised in two rounds (2001 and 2005) and became part of retail chain, “Lora”, from Sarajevo, who owned the majority of shares. The privatisation of “Dita” resulted in more than 20 million Euros in debt for the enterprise and over 20 wages being unpaid, affecting a four-year retirement plan, also due.

In the end, this led to the official bankruptcy of the enterprise. A series of workers' strikes ensued in 2012, 2013 and 2014. The 2014 February protests started as joint protests of workers from several factories and enterprises in Tuzla (Dita, Konjuh, Aida) requesting the government of the Tuzla Canton to resolve the outstanding issues and waive the blame attributed to workers. The workers claimed that the cause of the crisis was and is the privatisation process and irresponsible management. These protests turned out to be the trigger for wider social protests in several cities in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In early 2015, the Tuzla Canton government decided to revise the privatisation process of several enterprises, including “Dita”, starting an orderly bankruptcy procedure in view of enabling the creditors to get their money back while creating possibilities for re-launching and reviving production. The problem with the bankruptcy procedure (according to the existing

legal framework) is that the workers are the last in the list of priorities: the “investors” and bureaucratic agencies will have to be paid first, and whatever is left over would go to the unpaid wages, pensions etc.

A sparkle of hope for the workers themselves is actually their own efforts for restarting production and trying to save what is possible to be saved in order to keep their jobs and eventually have their salaries paid. In June 2015, the Union of Workers of “Dita”, and the bankruptcy manager, reached an agreement to restart some of the production lines (since much of the production lines are in need of repairs for which there is no money available).

The plan is to start with production of some famous (in former Yugoslavia) products and support for this initiative is enlisted by civil society actors and people across the country (mainly expressed through support on Facebook and calls for support for purchasing “Dita” products). Some of the supermarket chains have already decided to support the efforts of “Dita” workers by buying their products and making them available on their stores' shelves. However, this all is just a trial version of activities to be tested and any form of continuity has to be decided by the shareholders' assembly to be held on 30 June 2015.

Will these efforts take root or quickly fade away? Does this mean that the spirit of the workers' self-management is coming back in advanced and mature post-socialist colours, emblematically in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the most ethnically fragmented region of the former Yugoslavia in which primitive accumulation was criss-crossed with vicious ethnic war?

After years of their voices being unheard, struggles to keep the factory under collective ownership seem to bear some fruits. These struggles exposed corrupt governments and managers and brought to the fore the class issue as opposed to the ethnic and religious division which, if anything, divert attention from the real social issues.

Prior to 2014, there were numerous cases of workers' rights violations that were only seen as a by-product of “transition“ and “post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina”, which were mostly related to ethnic, religious and political divisions. This is no longer the case after the protests of February 2014.

The narrative begins to change and the story of workers is becoming more and more important. Class cleavages supersede religious and ethnic ones and the ethno-capitalism of primitive accumulation and privatisation, of political clientelism and corruption have shown their limits. No one can explain the spirit of this mini-revolution better than the words of a “Dita” worker: “Industry is alive as long as there are workers ready to fight for their basic right – the right to work”.

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