The Unified Exception: The Success of Post-War Ethnic Integration in Bosnia's Brčko District

Mark Grujic

Introduction

The modern state of Bosnia and Herzegovina is best known for the horrific events that transpired as Yugoslavia descended into chaos in the 1990s, a time of brutal conflict between nationalist factions which reached its climax in ethnic cleansing. This period of war between rival ethnic groups created deep divides in the fabric of Bosnian society, and the reconstruction of a modern, functional state was only brought about with immense effort on the part of the international community. Yet almost thirty years later, true social and political integration continues to be an elusive goal. Much of the state's governing powers remain in the hands of entities that correspond to Bosnia's ethnic groups, and the widespread phenomenon of ethnically segregated schools persists to this day.[1] However, far greater levels of cohesion and unity than those seen throughout the country at large are today present in Bosnia's multiethnic Brčko (roughly pronounced "burch-koh") District, a situation perhaps best exemplified by Brčko's status as Bosnia's only region to have achieved a universally integrated school system.

In fact, Brčko is the only part of Bosnia to have integrated all public institutions to operate on the basis of a fully multicultural model.[2] Residents across all ethnic groups have shown high levels of support for these institutions, and the district likewise has experienced high levels of refugee return coupled with markedly low levels of post-war ethnic violence.[3] In this article, I contend that the roots of this disparity between Brčko and Bosnia at large lie in the nature of the distinct peacebuilding process that Brčko underwent, specifically the decisions of international administrators to exclude ethnocentric factions and aims starting with the early years of the peacebuilding process. In doing so, I focus on the impact

[1] European Commission. *Bosnia and Herzegovina 2020 Report* [SWD(2020) 350 final], October 6, 2020, 25.
[2] Gelazis, Nida, ed. *The Tenth Anniversary of the Dayton Accords and Afterwards*. Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 64.
[3] Moore, Adam. *Peacebuilding in Practice: Local Experience in Two Bosnian Towns*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013, 8-10.

of the internationally directed policy to delay substantive districtwide elections until 2004, which mitigated the influence of local nationalist sentiments in the building of sustainable, inclusive institutions in Brčko. Furthermore, I go on to examine the process by which Brčko's schools were integrated in the face of local nationalist opposition[4] to highlight the effective use of calculated noncollaboration in pushing forward a policy that today serves as a cornerstone of a unified Brčko. Central to this argument is the notion that Brčko did not vary from other regions of Bosnia to an extent which would have accounted for its integrative success, a point to later be established.

A Shared Homeland

The decisions that culminated in the unique and successful administration of Brčko were shaped by the events that transpired throughout the Bosnian War, a conflict between the three constituent ethnic groups in Bosnia. Although these groups—Croats, Serbs, and Bosniaks—share the common language often referred to as Serbo-Croatian, they are regarded as distinct peoples on the basis of little else but religion. Croats largely identify with Catholicism, Serbs with Eastern Orthodoxy, and Bosniaks, at times simply referred to as Bosnian Muslims,[5] with Islam. Severe ethnic conflict before the Yugoslav Wars did characterize the region in periods including World War II, which saw the systematic killings of hundreds of thousands of Serbs. Yet the almost fifty years which followed this period of chaos saw nationalist ideas brutally suppressed under the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Historically, Bosnia was not regarded as belonging to any one of these peoples but rather as a land its constituent peoples shared.[6] No ethnic group formed a majority in Bosnia, nor was the region cleanly divided along ethnic lines. Peoples were widely dispersed throughout the entirety of Bosnia, and in only a quarter of Bosnian municipalities was there an ethnic group that made up over seventy-five percent of the population.[7]

Bosnia's ethnic makeup thus made for a highly divisive issue when

[4] Clarke, Henry. "Brčko District: An Example of Progress in the Basic Reforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina." Woodrow Wilson Center, February 4, 2004.
[5] Glenny, Misha. *The Fall of Yugoslavia: The Third Balkan War*. New York: Penguin, 1996, 139.
[6] Moore, *Peacebuilding in Practice*, 40.
[7] Moore, *Peacebuilding in Practice*, 40.

it came time for the region to decide its fate amidst secessionist movements throughout Yugoslavia and war in Croatia. At the start of 1992, the Serb Democratic Party (SDS), Bosnia's ethnic Serbian party, proclaimed an autonomous Serbian republic later to be known as the Republika Srpska (RS). Backed by the Yugoslav government in Belgrade, the RS came to control about seventy percent of Bosnia's territory in a three-way civil war between Serbs, Croats, and Bosniaks.[8] Brčko at this time fell under RS control and was subject to ethnic cleansing of non-Serbs in the downtown area. This took place in large part through forced relocations in line with the atrocities wrought throughout the rest of Bosnia, stopping short of the massacres which occurred in certain locations like Srebrenica. Brčko occupied a strategic position as part of a narrow corridor which connected the western and eastern portions of the RS and was therefore highly contested throughout the course of the war. The city remained in Serbian hands until the formal end of the war, the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement (DPA) in late 1995.[9]

At Dayton, it was agreed that the territory of Bosnia would consist of a single state split into two separate entities—the aforementioned Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, a Bosniak-Croat state agreed upon by its two ethnic groups in 1994. The Office of the High Representative (OHR) was tasked with ensuring the civilian execution of the DPA. The office derived its authority from the consent of the Dayton signatories and its major officials were appointed by the United States and the European Union. Though OHR was not officially a body of the United Nations, the Security Council endorsed the responsibility of the High Representative, which further granted the international administration legitimacy.[10] The wartime governing structures of the entities were largely left intact, and within the entities, the preexisting elite were granted broad discretion over their internal affairs,[11] reflecting a focus on a pragmatic end to the conflict over the establishment of a strong federal government able to protect regional minorities and

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[8] Moore, *Peacebuilding in Practice,* 44.

[9] Jeffrey, Alex. "Building State Capacity in Post-Conflict Bosnia and Herzegovina: The Case of Brčko District." *Political Geography* 25, no. 2 (2006): 208.

[10] Banning, Tim. "The 'Bonn Powers' of the High Representative in Bosnia Herzegovina: Tracing a Legal Figment." *Goettingen Journal of International Law* 6, no. 2 (2014): 263.

[11] Zupcevic, Merima, and Fikret Causevic, *Case Study: Bosnia and Herzegovina.* Centre for Developing Area Studies, September 2009, 11.

promote positive interethnic relations. However, it was expected that substantial reform would eventually come about from within, and the Dayton constitution thus included provisions that allowed for measures to easily strengthen the central government.[12]

Yet a significant, perhaps the greatest, point of contention in the Dayton negotiations was the post-war territorial status of Brčko, the Bosnian Serbs wanting a contiguous territory in part motivated by secessionist aims, and the other ethnic groups unwilling to empower the RS as such. The Agreement was only signed when both parties decided to commit to solving the question of Brčko via international arbitration within one year's time.[13] Although it ended up taking well over a year to achieve a final decision, it was the model of governance that emerged from these arbitration proceedings that permitted Brčko to enjoy its relative success in the years to come. The American lawyer Roberts Owen, a man who drafted a great deal of the DPA, was selected to direct the arbitration process. He was in large part responsible for the stipulations of the 1999 Final Brčko Award, which gave the district full autonomy from the entities and placed the region directly under the control of Bosnia's federal government. This decision reflected an aversion toward empowering either of the entities due to noncooperation on the part of the entities regarding refugee returns[14] and a controversial election in parts of Brčko then held by the RS.[15] The OHR position of the Brčko International Supervisor, established to administer the district when arbitration was pending, was charged once more with governing the district.

The international administration was specifically tasked with creating multiethnic, democratic institutions in the region, in stark contrast to the approach taken at the statewide level where ethnic autonomy was largely preserved. To achieve these lofty aims, the Supervisor was granted comprehensive authority to reshape the structures of government in Brčko and even implement policy decisions unilaterally,[16] powers which would have been risky to wield over Bosnia at large given potential entity backlash and the fragile nature of the peace in the region. Fear of entity encroachment in Brčko further pushed the international community to

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[12] Bildt, Carl. "Bosnia to War, to Dayton, and to Its Slow Peace." *ECFR*, 2021.
[13] Moore, *Peacebuilding in Practice*, 50.
[14] Bieber, Florian. "Local institutional engineering: A tale of two cities, Mostar and Brčko." *International Peacekeeping* 12 (2005): 426.
[15] Moore, *Peacebuilding in Practice*, 69.
[16] Jeffrey, Alex. "Building State Capacity," 215.

institute a strong authority in the district. The role of Supervisor was one which numerous individuals would come to hold in the years to follow. Certain officeholders like Henry Clarke today stand out as especially successful, as will be seen, but nonetheless the early Supervisors were largely consistent in their aims and methods.

Brčko's Election Moratorium

In seeking to establish a functional multiethnic democracy, those who held the role of Supervisor in the years immediately following the Final Brčko Award opted not to immediately hold elections, but instead delayed District elections until October 2004, wary of vesting authority in a political system rife with hardline nationalism, extreme polarization, and widespread corruption. Rather, they wished to wait for the emergence of non-ethnocentric political parties compatible with such a democratic system.[17] Should the Brčko administration have followed the example of their national-level counterparts and have implemented elections early on, it is likely that Bosnia's nationalist parties would have prevented the District's collaborative, multiethnic institutions from coming into being as early as they did, if at all. This aversion toward empowering local governing structures in Brčko was expressed in a 2001 OHR publication that cited the District as a place where local authorities sought to act "as absolute monarch of the residents, their will, and property."[18] It was not simply the case that nationalism and distrust ran deep in Bosnian society—politicians further sought to leverage these tensions and anxieties for party and individual gain,[19] often through the obstruction of unifying reforms.

Such an instance of partisan obstructionism at the federal level was covered in a special report by the United States Institute of Peace which discussed a 2006 attempt to codify a package of constitutional amendments. The package in question would have granted much-needed power to the Bosnian federal government. It was blocked by a nationalist Bosniak party, the Party for Bosnia and Herzegovina, which sought to improve its share of the vote in the upcoming election.[20] Party members

[17] Jeffrey, Alex. "Building State Capacity," 216.
[18] Office of the High Representative, "Remarks to Secondary School Teachers by Henry L. Clarke, Supervisor of Brčko." August 22, 2001.
[19] Zupcevic, *Case Study,* 11.
[20] Hays, Don, and Jason Crosby. *From Dayton to Brussels: Constitutional Preparations for Bosnia's EU Accession*. US Institute of Peace, 2006, 10.

cynically framed the reforms as an internationally backed conspiracy to consolidate RS powers. However, in an early post-war Brčko, unelected politicians had little to gain from pandering to nationalist sentiments within their community. In fact, their positions were almost entirely contingent on the goodwill of the Supervisor, who had the power to terminate members of the Assembly at will. Therefore, even nationalists in the Assembly were incentivized to cooperate across ethnic lines and rarely raised an issue over smaller political decisions.[21] OHR throughout all of Bosnia likewise reserved the right to fire any elected official, which it did rather often in early post-war years.[22] However, the lack of elections in Brčko necessitated that the region's politicians had to actively maintain the Supervisor's favor to stay in power rather than merely avoid deeds that would have been perceived as overtly and sufficiently harmful to the peacebuilding process.

This delay thus played a significant role in allowing measures like a singular District administration undivided along ethnic lines to be implemented in Brčko, a complex task which entailed the unification of the District's police, judicial, and education systems.[23] These processes would have at the very least encountered far greater opposition should radical, elected Bosnian officials have been empowered to shape post-war restructuring processes. Throughout the rest of Bosnia, similar federal-level attempted reforms, many of which were relatively moderate and attempted later after the war than those in Brčko, were met with vehement nationalist opposition at every step. Elections would have also served to grant nationalist politicians electoral legitimacy and reaffirm the polarized power structure shaped by wartime political parties heavily at odds with one another.[24] The successful establishment of these unified institutions in Brčko in turn helped to create the framework for the District to enjoy a functional multiethnic democracy when elections were eventually held. Amidst a lack of territorial decentralization, ethnic groups were barred from the possibility of acting unilaterally within their own jurisdictions to pass necessary measures, further incentivizing interethnic collaboration.

All the while, in the absence of elections, international officials in

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[21] Jeffrey, Alex. "Building State Capacity," 217.

[22] Hajdari, Una, and Michael Colborne. "Why Ethnic Nationalism Still Rules Bosnia, and Why It
Could Get Worse." *The Nation*, October 12, 2018.

[23] Moore, *Peacebuilding in Practice*, 71.

[24] Bieber, "Local institutional engineering," 424.

Brčko sought to empower and create working relationships with moderates in the region who found themselves more willing to transcend ethnic divides and implement meaningful reforms. Figures who were willing to break from extremist agendas and the dominant nationalist parties in the region enjoyed protection from the supervisory administration when they charted independent, moderate courses, as was seen in the cases of Mio Anić and Ivan Krndelj, former members of the nationalist Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ).[25] These local Croatian elites were supporters of a multiethnic administration and helped to prevent the HDZ from establishing influence within the primary local black market. In retaliation, the party sought to remove them from their posts, but OHR prevented this from taking place.

In creating the conditions whereby figures like Anić and Krndelj were able to achieve and maintain positions in power, politicians in Brčko who represented an alternative to the entrenched nationalist parties had a chance to prove themselves to the people before the eventual reassumption of elections.[26] Supervisor Henry Clarke in fact stated that he was finally persuaded to call for the reinstatement of elections in 2004 after witnessing the results of a 2002 public opinion survey which showed that the District's multiethnic institutions had achieved broad support among the general populace.[27] His analysis proved correct, as the first District election resulted in a multiethnic coalition led by the moderate, multiethnic Social Democratic Party (SDP) at a time when moderates struggled to break into the political scene throughout the rest of Bosnia in the face of weak public support and opposition from the dominant nationalist parties. As a sign of further success, the mayorship of Brčko has since been held by Serbs, Bosniaks, and Croats alike, with transitions of power having been peaceful and overall uneventful.

The institution of elections early on in Brčko would not have afforded residents an opportunity to witness the viability of a multiethnic model before choosing their leaders and may have led to a situation similar to that seen in the Bosnian city of Mostar—where early elections bolstered the authority of Croat nationalist figures and weakened the standing of Bosnian moderates.[28] To this day, feuds between nationalist parties continue to dominate the politics of Mostar. At the same time, it is

[25] Moore, *Peacebuilding in Practice*, 87.
[26] Moore, *Peacebuilding in Practice*, 115.
[27] Clarke, "Brčko District."
[28] Moore, *Peacebuilding in Practice*, 115.

important to note that nationalist parties throughout Bosnia frequently had to deal with scandals which served to earn them the disdain of local residents, yet this alone was not sufficient to bring about political moderation and multiethnic collaboration. In the case of Mostar, a scandal attributed to the nationalist Party of Democratic Action (SDA) merely served to further empower the HDZ in the region.[29]

The favorable situation to emerge in Brčko was thus by no means inevitable nor attributable to factors inherent to the region, but rather a result of intentional measures on the part of OHR to stymie nationalist influence. There is little evidence to suggest that Brčko differed from the rest of Bosnia in a way which would have directly accounted for its profound eventual integration. Brčko did had high levels of pre-war Yugoslavism, that is, a sense of feeling of belonging to a greater Yugoslav nation rather than a sense of identification with a more specific ethnic group, but other regions with even higher levels of pre-war Yugoslavism were unable to overcome nationalist-driven divides in the way Brčko was.[30] For instance, the region of Tuzla, which in the 1991 Yugoslav census had a three times greater share of citizens who identified primarily as Yugoslavs than was seen in Brčko, continues to have ethnically segregated schools into the present day. Furthermore, the aforementioned, relatively moderate SDP had a far stronger hold in Tuzla than it did in Brčko before the outbreak of war, a vote share of 30.72% versus 15.41%. Brčko was hardly predisposed to fare any better with ethnic reconciliation by virtue of the pre-war sentiments of its residents. Nor was it the case that OHR allocated a disproportionate sum of funds to the strategic district, with Brčko having received only $70 million in international aid by 2006 out of $16 billion given to Bosnia at large, less per capita than many cities, Mostar included.[31]

Likewise, the events that transpired in wartime Brčko were sure to have created deep ethnic divides, just as was the case in Bosnia at large. Brčko was one of the first regions in Bosnia to experience violence and ethnic cleansing. In May 1992, under the pretext of ensuring a contiguous Bosnian Serb territory, Serb authorities violently drove non-Serbs out of the downtown area, and a subsequent joint effort on the part of Croats and

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[29] Moore, *Peacebuilding in Practice,* 94.

[30] Šarančić, Jusuf. "On Multiethnic Schools in Consociational Democracies: A Comparative Analysis of Brčko District and Bosnia-Herzegovina." *Lawrence University Honors Projects* 94, 2016, 38.

[31] Moore, *Peacebuilding in Practice,* 5.

Bosniaks to retake the city led to years of trench warfare.[32] A *New York Times* article from 2003 sought to depict the ensuing devastation years after the DPA, noting that over 9,000 houses had been destroyed as a consequence of the war, the town's port and food-processing plants were in shambles, and land mines could be found throughout the surrounding fields.[33] Brčko's wartime past was contentious and dark, certainly not any less so than in Bosnia as a whole, but residents of the district were aided in one key respect to overcome their differences in a way that eluded the rest of their nation—a strong, fundamentally nondemocratic government willing to bypass divisive nationalist politicians in order to achieve integrative aims.

Educational Integration in Brčko

The positive impact of such conduct on the part of OHR is perhaps nowhere more evident than in the means by which the Supervisor brought an end to the segregated school system in Brčko. Continuing into the present day, Bosnian students often learn in separate settings on the basis of their ethnic group, impeding equitable distribution of educational resources and preventing valuable interethnic socialization which has the potential to foster positive attitudes toward multiethnic collaboration. Studies have in fact shown that ethnic attitudes are established early on in childhood with preestablished prejudices, whether positive or negative, tending only to strengthen over time.[34] Ethnic groups in Bosnia also have broad jurisdiction over designing their own curricula, preventing a valuable opportunity to foster tolerance toward other groups.[35] While children are invariably be influenced by their household environments and the views of family members, deliberately integrative curricula can work toward integrative ends by various means, including developing linguistic tolerance and fostering inclusive citizenship. Moreover, multiperspectivty in the classroom has been proven an effective means of cultivating tolerance and understanding alternative viewpoints. Yet children who attend segregated Bosnian schools are often subject to heavily biased teachings which pass existing tensions down to younger generations.

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[32] Moore, *Peacebuilding in Practice,* 46.
[33] Landler, Mark. "Rare Bosnia Success Story, Thanks to U.S. Viceroy." *New York Times*, June 17, 2003.
[34] Šarančić, "Multiethnic Schools," 21.
[35] Šarančić, "Multiethnic Schools," 22.

It is thus no wonder that Supervisor Henry Clarke pushed for school integration with the fervor that he did, opting to impose total integration by means of a Supervisory Order when the Brčko Assembly found itself unwilling to pass a law that would have done as such.[36] In a later speech, Clarke himself cited the value of the sweeping powers granted to him, as well as that of the firm and explicit mandate given by the Final Brčko Award to create a single, integrated school system.[37] He found that such a mandate enabled him to mobilize all resources and means possible to bring such an objective about while also empowering him to overrule the Assembly, whereas the broadly nonspecific nature of OHR's mandate over Bosnia as a whole often hindered progress toward solving contentious issues. For reasons previously established, a strong mandate in firm opposition to the existing political order would have been a far riskier task were it to have been implemented throughout all of Bosnia.

At the same time, this certainly does not mean that the realities of Brčko enabled the Supervisor to exercise unrestrained power in bringing about reforms. A previous attempt in 2000 imposed by Supervisor Gary Matthews failed when it sparked mass protests in October, forcing local school schools to close until the changes were reversed.[38] This prompted Clarke to engage in extensive dialogue with residents before his own later attempt, something which proved key to his eventual success. He met with citizens, educators, and officials alike, organizing over thirty public forums to achieve local support. Although the Assembly continued to stand defiant, by the time the new measure was imposed in 2001, integration was able to proceed with minimal public backlash.

Clarke's approach to integration thus served to highlight a gap between Brčko's politicians and everyday residents in the extent to which either group was willing to cooperate with international authorities. Invaluable public support was eventually achieved, yet at the heart of nationalist obstructionism were regional politicians who had much to gain from undermining OHR, individuals with whom Clarke could only collaborate up to a point. In an address to teachers in the region in the period following school integration, Clarke made note of the deliberate politicization of ethnic divides[39] and in a later speech discussed the

[36] Clarke, "Brčko District."
[37] Clarke, "Brčko District."
[38] Moore, *Peacebuilding in Practice,* 122.
[39] Office of the High Representative, "Remarks to Secondary School Teachers by Henry L. Clarke, Supervisor of Brčko." August 22, 2001.

presence of Assembly politicians who sought to obstruct educational reform in order to discredit the international reform process to their own gain.[40] Given the nature of the post-war Bosnian political system, even the absence of elections was at times insufficient to secure collaboration with the nationalist elite, and thus bypassing local authorities was in certain situations the only means of recourse. The priorities of OHR were not irreconcilable with those of the Bosnian people but ultimately with those of nationalist political figures. Indeed, by 2004 it was found in a poll that almost ninety percent of District residents agreed with the notion of integrated education at a time when school integration remained a distant impossibility at the national level.[41]

Integration efforts with respect to Bosnia as a whole were rendered distinctly less forceful due to two factors: a greater ability for nationalist officials to push back against educational reforms at the federal level and a widespread belief by federal-level administrators that Bosnians would need to assume ownership over their own peacebuilding process. National-level educational reforms were not dominated by OHR initiatives but undertaken in conjunction with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the European Union, and other regional organizations. Two major internationally directed approaches to reform were ultimately taken, with the goal in mind to depoliticize education and strengthen social cohesion within the state.[42] While these methods were far more cautious and moderate in their ambitions than the total integration spearheaded in Brčko, both were still met with intense nationalist opposition. Furthermore, each effort was severely undermined by the sheer influence that the dominant nationalist politicians of Bosnia were allowed to exercise in the design and implementation of these reforms.

The first of these reforms was a system of school boards in part meant to promote interethnic cohesion at the local level and allow the community, as opposed to nationalist politicians, a greater say in educational policymaking.[43] Yet the very same politicians whose influence the measure was meant to erode went on to occupy most of the seats on the newly established boards. The reform served to create the semblance of power distribution while allowing nationalists to continue to obstruct

[40] Clarke, "Brčko District."
[41] Moore, *Peacebuilding in Practice*, 73.
[42] Komatsu, Taro. "Institutionalist perspectives on the dynamics of post-conflict education reforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina." *Comparative Education* 57, no. 4 (2021): 522.
[43] Komatsu, "Institutionalist perspectives," 523.

educational integration and retain control over matters such as curriculum development. The other means of promoting a more integrated and uniform system of education was a more recent, national-level Education Agency meant to serve as a venue for dialogue and cooperation between Bosnia's thirteen regional ministers of education. Yet in many cases, these ministers were the same individuals who oversaw heavily biased, ethnocentric curricula within their respective regions and actively maintained segregated systems of education. The views of these ministers differed to the extent that they even found themselves in disagreement over the very purpose education should serve in the country. It is expected that only the most modest of measures might come out of the Agency in the foreseeable future, such as cooperation over the teaching of noncontroversial subjects like math.[44]

In both of these national-level cases, established nationalist figures were integrated into the various apparatuses established to undermine their influence in policymaking. Bosnian officials were only willing to accede to requests for toothless reforms which kept them in power, and as such, more ambitious attempts to collaboratively unify curricula, textbooks, and learning environments have all ended in failure.[45] Although such opposition to integrated education was shown to not necessarily have been a fundamental part of the Bosnian consciousness, the only complete instance of educational integration was brought about in Brčko, where nationalists were cut out entirely from the decision-making process and excluded from the ensuing institutions. Any national-level educational reforms passed over the following twenty years have been modest in nature, and true federal-level integration of schools continues to seem a long way off. In the current situation, full integration at the national level would require the broad consent of Bosnia's nationalist politicians, figures who have little to gain from such a measure.

The issue of educational integration thus serves to highlight two quite distinct approaches taken by international administrators in Brčko and in Bosnia at large, with the heavy-handed measures taken by OHR to cast aside the objectives of nationalist politicians in Brčko ultimately seeming to have made all the difference. In seeking collaboration with figures who had every incentive to obstruct unification efforts, international administrators ultimately prolonged the peacebuilding

[44] Komatsu, "Institutionalist perspectives," 527.
[45] Šarančić, "Multiethnic Schools," 36.

process at the national level indefinitely. Meanwhile in Brčko, the Bosnian War has begun to fade into memory, especially to a younger generation that has known nothing but a fully integrated District. In 2003, a year before elections were reinstated in Brčko, a former OHR official accounted for the region's success story in remarking that "ninety percent of the success of Brčko District… has been because there is no democracy here.[46] For the District to flourish as it did, the polarized and self-serving political system that emerged in wartime years had to be restrained in order to allow for an integrated, democratic society to emerge. While it is indeed the case that the policies imposed within this single town could hardly have been enacted in an identical manner throughout Bosnia at large, the "miracle" at Brčko nonetheless helps to demonstrate the value of calculated unilateralism in peacebuilding and discredits the notion that a broken system can always fix itself.

[46]Jeffrey, Alex. "The Politics of 'Democratization': Lessons from Bosnia and Iraq." *Review of International Political Economy* 14, no. 3 (2007): 455.

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