WE ARE HUNGRY IN THREE LANGUAGES

Potentials for change in the 2014 uprisings in Bosnia-Herzegovina

Author: Sigrun Palmisano
Supervisor: Milan Brglez
Abstract

Bosnia-Herzegovina has seen major uprisings and protests early this year. Parallel to a violent challenge to the power, a network of citizen assemblies, plena, has developed across the country, giving cause to the assumption that a new social movement is emerging, finally giving rise to a long absent civil society.

The thesis discusses the complex political circumstances that background the collective action and questions up to which extent they limit or determine the movement’s potential. A review of social movement literature provides the theoretical basis for an assessment and location of the movement.

Against this background, an assessment of the political impact is intended. The research question, whether this new movement can have an impact on the overall stalemate in BiH politics and on the human rights situation, particularly at the interface of economic, social and cultural and civil and political rights, will be approached theoretically and empirically.

Ethnographic observation and qualitative interviews allow an insight into organization and characteristics of the movement and its prospects. Emphasising the personal experiences of a chosen sample of movement participators that served as key informants, a number of factors for success and possible future actions are assessed.
Contents

INTRODUCTION ........................................................................................................................................... 1

1 DEFINING THE SETTING - BIH AFTER DAYTON .................................................................................. 5

1.1 Repercussions Of History Today ...................................................................................................... 6

1.2 Consequences of the Dayton Peace Agreement .......................................................................... 10

1.3 At a Long-Term Stalemate – The Consequences of Veto-Playing In BiH Politics ......................... 13

1.4 Human Rights In Bosnia-Herzegovina ............................................................................................ 16

1.4.1 The Sejdic-Finci Case and the Prospects of Constitutional Change .... 19

1.4.2 Economic and Social Rights ........................................................................................................ 22

1.5 Civil Society And Political Participation ......................................................................................... 28

2 SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AS AGENTS OF CHANGE ............................................................................. 33

2.1 Importance Of Social Movements .................................................................................................... 33

2.2 Defining Social Movements ............................................................................................................. 34

2.3 Early And Traditional Social Movements ....................................................................................... 37

2.4 New Social Movements and Alter-Globalisation Movements ...................................................... 38

2.5 Social Movements Theory ............................................................................................................... 39

2.5.1 Movement Narratives, Framing and Collective Identities ......................................................... 43

2.5.2 Strategic Choices and Dilemmata for Social Movements .......................................................... 44

2.5.3 Potentials, Outcome and Success of Social Movements ........................................................... 46

3 WITNESSING AN EMERGING CIVIL SOCIETY ............................................................................. 49

3.1 Development of the protests ............................................................................................................ 50

3.2 Plena and their Function .................................................................................................................. 53

3.3 Locating the Bosnian Uprisings ....................................................................................................... 56

3.4 Framing – Perceived Reasons for the Uprisings ............................................................................ 59
3.5 Political Opportunity ............................................................................................................. 60
3.6 Strategic Choices and Movement Dilemmata ..................................................................... 63
3.7 The Experience of a Political Laboratory ........................................................................... 67
3.8 Challenges .......................................................................................................................... 68
  3.8.1 Repression and Re-interpretation .................................................................................... 69
  3.8.2 Criminalization and human rights violations ................................................................. 70
  3.8.3 Impact of the Floods ...................................................................................................... 71
  3.8.4 Movement identity and the overcoming of ethnic divisions ........................................ 73
3.9 The Question Of Constitutional Change Revisited ............................................................ 75
3.10 Defining Movement Outcomes ......................................................................................... 77
CONCLUSION ............................................................................................................................ 81
Bibliography ............................................................................................................................. 84
  Primary Sources ...................................................................................................................... 84
  Secondary sources ................................................................................................................... 84
  Videos and Film ...................................................................................................................... 92
  Interviews and personal testimonies ...................................................................................... 92
ANNEXES .................................................................................................................................. I
  Annex I: Public Opinion Research ......................................................................................... I
  Annex II: Demands of the plena ......................................................................................... V
  Annex III: Gladni smo na tri jezika ...................................................................................... X
We are hungry in three languages: potentials for change in the 2014 uprisings in Bosnia-Herzegovina

Palmisano, Sigrun

https://doi.org/20.500.11825/406

Downloaded from Open Knowledge Repository, Global Campus’ institutional repository