

The subject of resistance and the problem of excess: Dayton Peace Accords and legitimisation of violence

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This paper will examine the validity of claims which focus on resuscitating the 'just war' tradition as a way of authorising certain forms of violence over others by reference to ethics. The contemporary debates on resistance have highlighted a number of problems in this context. Professor Anne Orford questions the limits of invoking the discourse of human rights which offers a limited mode of resistance for its subjects while keeping them firmly in place of global politics and economy. With this particular intervention in mind, I will examine the impact of the Dayton Peace Accords for Bosnia on the way in which resistance is theorised in relation to violence and peace. The paper will in this context highlight the persistence of borders through and against which the claims to violence are negotiated and normalised.

Introduction

To say that the ideas of resistance have historically focused on the conduct of war and different accounts of violence involves not simply an investigation into different historical conditions of such accounts of politics, but also articulations of specific claims about war and peace that enable definitions of resistance in the first place. Often, efforts to analyse specific articulations of such attempts to define resistance have been understood as ways of analysing power and its practices. Contemporary peace processes, authorised at the level of the 'international' represent an interesting site in efforts to define resistance away from the dominant practices of power.

Moreover, attempts to highlight the possibilities of resistance in a particular context have emphasised the prospects for different kinds of politics other than those framed by dominant accounts of what and where politics is. Unsurprisingly, the interest in these debates has increased following the claims about the imperial nature of the US invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq and the restrictions of civil liberties following the attacks of September 2001. Discursive limitations of the subject seeking alternative forms of politics have been highlighted by reference to 'states of emergency' according to Giorgio Agamben, accounts quite different from what Michael Ignatieff once readily referred to as 'empire lite'. Human rights discourse has been a space where the debates about the emergency and exceptionality of contemporary violent practices became a space of significant contention. To question the politics of resistance in this context becomes a matter of a complex shift between historical and structural claims to violence. However, constructions of peace as a means of conflict prevention remain highly under-theorised in defining resistance in contemporary political life. Violence, terrorism, security, threat, intervention have become some of the ways of making sense of what goes on not just in the everyday political life of states, but also in debates about the status of peace as an expression of claims about the necessity of violence in the first place.

Contemporary peace processes have gained increased interest in analysing the ethical dimensions of particular peace practices and their status within contemporary liberal discourse. Despite this interest, the link between intervention and peacekeeping as a site that authorises a particular kind of politics and subsequently disciplines the possibilities of thinking about politics differently in the first place lacks serious scrutiny. I intend to explore the relationship between the contemporary practices of peace and their intimate relationship with the current debates about the status of legitimate violence within the liberal political discourse. Engaging in a close reading of the Dayton Peace Accords for Bosnia as a specific site, I will demonstrate the disciplining character of peacekeeping that ultimately frames the way in which resistance has been theorised in this specific context.

The Dayton Peace Accords for Bosnia, signed in 1995 at the Wright-Patterson base in Ohio represent an interesting moment. The conditions under which military intervention were employed in this case to stop, or at best to minimise conflict offer a prolific ground for enquiry into the practices of legitimating intervention in specific circumstances. The peace process in this particular case is not simply a continuation of military intervention legitimised at the level of the 'international', but also represents a site of negotiation between different accounts of sovereignty.

In the paper on 'Biopolitics and the Tragic Subject of Human Rights' Anne Orford questions "whether human rights offer a mode of resistance for the subject...or whether instead the invocation of human rights constrains our capacity to think about and counter the ways in which power circulates in this global politics and economy?" (Orford, 2006: 1). She argues, rightly, that human rights discourse does both; while offering a limited mode of resistance for its subjects it works to keep them firmly in their place of global politics and economy.

The processes at play are not simply seeking to situate a specific discourse on rights but also to normalise it within the discourse on sovereignty. While further examining the human rights of those in detention centres, Orford argues that the discourse about the people in detention has preserved an institutional space from which to speak and write about the people who refuse to sort themselves smoothly into their allotted places in the international division of labour, or who are hostile to the United States military.

In the spirit of this question I engage with the problem of the supposedly legitimate forms of violence practiced by governments, and question the impact of claims that a shift is taking place in the way in which violence is authorised in modern political life. The close link between military intervention and peace processes represents an institutional space which I examine in order to question the legitimacy of decisions to intervene in specific cases.

Violent action as a condition of peace?

Claims about the exceptional nature of contemporary violent practices have silenced a number of other debates about legitimacy of violence. Specific expressions of the limitations involved in thinking about politics differently have focused on various practices of exception and highlighted deeper difficulties in thinking about the status of the human rights discourse in the context of the problematic relationship between law and politics. These difficulties have been highlighted in the latest attempts to resuscitate the logic of 'just war' in the most recent UN report on 'Responsibility to Protect' (ICISS, 2001). Following the 'War on Terror', references to 'just war' have had an almost nostalgic resonance. In an article recently published in *The Independent*, Geraldine Van Bueren, barrister and professor of International and Human Rights Law at Queen Mary University of London, discusses a shift in thinking about the use of torture. She explains that the university students, once the vocal opponents of governments using torture, are now changing their minds. Van Bueren explains: "It is only a minority, but each year for the past decade I have asked my human rights students whether they are in favour of torture. Ten years ago, none were. Now, each year, more and more students raise their hands." (Van Bueren, 22 November 2007). Van Bueren's concern is with society losing its sense of collective dignity since those who study human rights, a subject founded on compassion and human dignity, argue that torture in specific or 'exceptional' circumstances ought to be permissible.

Van Bueren also asked the students if they would allow for the judicial monitoring of torture, to which their answer was no and that the conduct of torture should be kept extra-legal. Despite this, there are occasions when governments have argued that certain forms of punishment do not amount to torture. Quoting a number of attempts to employ torture despite the universal prohibition on torture anytime, anywhere, she argues that there are no acceptable justifications for torture no matter how extreme or exceptional the argument. "There is no legal equivalent to the 'just war'" (ibid.).

Geraldine Van Bueren's argument is interesting as it highlights the shifts not just in the way in which violence against 'others' has become more permissible in the opinion of students and all those who are quick to argue in favour of torture even as an extra-legal tool of governments, but more specifically on the status of debates about legitimate forms of violence. More specifically to what extent is it possible to

account for this particular shift by reading politics in such a way? The question which remains unaddressed is that of legitimate authority, or more specifically the authority which authorises certain forms of violence over others. Van Bueren's argument that there is no equivalent to the 'just war' in allowing for certain forms of violence against individuals to be permitted, is revealing in thinking about the claim that the patterns of violence are changing.

Resuscitating the concept of 'just war' in contemporary debates about human rights and acceptable forms of violence is instructive because it re-engages contemporary debates about the location and 'management' of violence in the context of liberal claims to ethics of political decisions. In claiming that we have now moved away from the international norms and standards articulated by reference to the conduct of humanitarian intervention and processes of peacekeeping towards more unilateral terms of debate, William Rasch argues that "we no longer play with formulas like 'police actions' and 'peace keeping', but talk quite simply and directly of war, economic booty, and the installation of compliant regimes" (Rasch, 2004: 4). Rasch's sensitivity to the contemporary practices that seek to normalise and stabilise the processes that question the legitimacy and authority of political decision is important in revealing the practices of authorising certain forms of violence over others. In this specific context, these practices are particularly revealing as a way of understanding the need to resuscitate the concept of 'just war' in order to highlight a supposed success of the politico-legal accounts of contingency.

The Dayton Peace Accords represent an interesting case in two ways. Firstly, the Dayton Peace Accords reveal the processes that seek to normalise and situate the problem of legitimate violence by reference to the practices of peace. Secondly, claims about peace continue to be defended by reference to the necessity of violence, and in the case of the Dayton Peace Accords, to the logic of borders. The persistence of these problems, I argue, reveals a profound lack of political imagination and specific difficulty when defining the possibilities of resistance in the context of peace.

The Dayton Peace Accords

The Bosnian war has often been narrated as a profoundly complex contestation of borders and identities. Frequently referred to as small Yugoslavia due to its mix of religions and nationalities, the fight for territory in Bosnia was extremely violent and bloody (Holbrooke: 1999; Burg & Shoup: 2000; Harris: 1998; Rief: 1996). The war in Bosnia followed the secession of former Yugoslav republics of Slovenia and Croatia. From April 1992 until January 1996, the violence between the Bosnian Croats, Muslims and Serbs dominated global headlines and academic debates. The war between the three groups in Bosnia has become central to the ways in which international opinion and judgement about the conflict was and continues to be formed.

However, it is not just the nationalist character of the conflict that has captured international attention. The character of the Bosnian war has captured international attention for a variety of reasons, some of them directly invested in determining the nature of the conflict and who its perpetrators are, some engaged on the level of the international responses to those in need. Less popular, however, was the violence that also occurred against a number of others classed as minorities. Their stories did not fit into the dominant narratives of ethnic conflict not just in Bosnia, but also in the eyes of a broader international community. The neglect and violence against those who did not belong to the three groups around which official narratives of the conflict were organised has received significantly less attention in many debates and commentaries. The violent struggles over territory and borders in Bosnia have, as many have argued, expressed significant difficulty in thinking about the possibility of statehood when two or more distinct national groups claim independence. This was the main line of argument that has inspired a series of map-drawing exercises in order to try to 'resolve' the problem of nationalist conflict. Solutions were limited. The Bosnian conflict has also highlighted a number of economic and political causes alongside the dominant 'nationalist' representations of violence. For example, quite a different story of the conflict could therefore be told by reference to political economy of the region, but even this particular narrative becomes a subject of nationalist imagination around which it is organised. It is also the nationalist narrative of the conflict that continues to dominate in contemporary representations of history, territory and people involved in the conflict. This particular nationalist logic has reproduced typical narratives of conflicts in Former Yugoslavia that have not simply neglected other factors that influenced

the violence, but also the implications of such nationalist logic on the conduct and resolution of the conflict itself.

The struggle to combine territory with identity consequently represents a problem which exceeds the modern political imagination. The war in Bosnia has challenged the conventional thinking about the possibilities of multiculturalism on one side and the right to self-determination of people on the other. More importantly, the war in Bosnia poses a challenge to the modern ways of thinking about the possibility of difference within a nation-state and the conditions under which it is possible to accommodate difference as a possibility of politics within a multicultural state. This difficulty was also highlighted in the attempts to find a solution for violence in Bosnia. The status of Bosnia as a multicultural state has been challenged not simply by the claims to independence of individual nationalist groups, but also through the Dayton Peace Accords which represent a peculiar attempt to satisfy both: preservation of multicultural status of the Bosnian state and specific nationalist claims to territorial integrity.

A number of solutions were offered to resolve the war that had claimed many lives. Most of the attempts to resolve the violence have therefore followed the logic of the conflict by attempting to draw a map which would re-organise and divide the territory of Bosnia in order to accommodate different groups according to their ethnic belonging. These attempts often involved 'mass movement' of people in order to be able to fit the claims of a particular group within a specified territory. The Dayton Peace Accords, signed on November 21, 1995 under the strong US and international pressure on leadership of Bosnia, Croatia and Yugoslavia, represented a final attempt to resolve violence by re-defining ethnic boundaries while maintaining a unitary Bosnia. While the Dayton Peace Accords have often been described as a success of international diplomacy by many local and international politicians, lawyers and officials, others have been critical of its drawing of boundaries along ethnic lines claiming that this represents only a temporary solution to the conflict (Campbell, 1998). In the spirit of this effort, Sumantra Bose argues for example that since the beginning of 1996 "Dayton Bosnia has been the site of internationally sponsored political engineering on a remarkable scale." (Bose, 2002: 2). The Dayton Peace Accords are an expression of this particular form of international engineering.

The role of the Dayton Peace Accords was twofold: to provide the necessary means to stop the increasing violence in Bosnia in the mid-1990's; and to subsequently help reconstruct a viable sovereign state with some kind of intention of further incorporating it into the European structures. The Dayton Accords also represented a difficulty of thinking along the logic of borders as a possibility of resolving conflict by partitioning the territory of Bosnia into two entities: the Muslim Croat Federation and the Serb Republic. What is important to keep in mind is that the Dayton Peace Accords would have been rejected just like most of the other plans and maps for Bosnia were it not for the use of military intervention in order to ensure not just the final signing of the agreement, but also its longer-term implementation. The dedication to secure and implement peace in Bosnia was supported by a high number of military troops as well as by numerous international agencies and organisations on the ground, all committed to preventing another Holocaust in Europe. The concerns of Bosnia being another Holocaust were effective in mobilising international opinion. This particular mobilisation has not only been effective in representations of the conflict, but also as a specific re-affirmation of the values of the state system. This kind of defence of the values of the system has echoed strongly with the old imperial civilising missions where the pre-modern forms of violence were rendered unacceptable by the more progressive, powerful and civilised states. Some of the ways in which references to the Bosnian war were made demonstrate this strongly. Descriptions of the conflict as that of 'ancient ethnic hatreds' in need of a wider 'humanity' to defend its values were captured in the article entitled 'Where is Bosnia's Schindler' in the *Toronto Star* in 1994:

Who will help them? Will some new Schindler not come to the rescue of the people of Bosnia? Are they not considered human enough to be cared about? Do we not act on their pleas for help because we have double standards or because their cries have been stifled in their throats before the world could hear them? (*Toronto Star*: 1994).

Similar emotive arguments have also been made in policy-making and academic circles. Discussing the long-term implications of the September 11th attacks at the Foreign Policy Centre, Jack Straw has warned about the necessity not just to prevent conflict, but also to prevent future threats:

We have to have the vision to act before threats arise. The history of the Balkans in the 1990s illustrates this point well. In the early 90s, we failed to halt the horrors of ethnic cleansing in Bosnia, despite European nations committing thousands of troops to a UN mission. The Dayton Agreement only became possible when NATO as a whole was ready to put troops on the ground, with a tough mandate (Straw, 25 March 2002).

Similarly Jurgen Habermas supports this seemingly humanitarian impulse of Jack Straw and emphasises the need to act in order to prevent future humanitarian disasters:

Here you see the difference from the situation in Kosovo, when the West had to decide in light of the experiences of the Bosnian War – think of the disaster of Srebrenica! – whether it wanted to stand by while Milosevic conducted yet more ethnic cleansing, or whether it wanted to intervene even in the absence of clear national interests (Habermas, 2004: 86).

This humanitarian impulse of Jack Straw and Jurgen Habermas can be questioned with reference to the policies adopted in Bosnia and Kosovo and particularly the way in which the conflict in Bosnia has, on many occasions been used to legitimise intervention in Kosovo. It can also be questioned in the context of post-September 11th interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq. The humanitarian impulse reflected the sentiment that, after a long war, finally gave support to the international intervention employed at putting pressure on the three leaders of the nationalist parties in Bosnia to sign the Dayton Peace Accords in November 1995. However, the pressure of the 'international community' to sign the Accords was enforced by a strong military commitment and direct diplomatic pressure on the leaders of nationalist parties at that time.

The central aim of the Dayton Peace Accords was to construct a framework of cultural cohesion, forming the foundation on which the Bosnian nation could survive. This kind of perception cultivated an understanding of state borders which would, in the traditional sense, secure the basic survival of groups and nations. It also has, however, been subject to much criticism. Specifically, in the context of Bosnia, the peace agreement has received further criticism as an agreement that stopped the war, but cannot build the state.

More than ten years on, debates continue over the role of the Dayton Peace Accords in constructing a functional state. There is, again, a determination to capture the 'reality' of Bosnia in order to inscribe it in the amendments of the Agreement. This has been the preferred line of thinking in a number of discussions on the Dayton Peace Accords since the moment of their signing. Some 'realities' have also been imposed by way of focusing on the processes of conflict resolution and the logic of intervention. I refer to 'realities' as a means of emphasising the different narratives, interpretations of conflict, which have created different competing narratives about division and conflict, but which nevertheless seem to be organised along nationalist lines. In the context of the Dayton Peace Accords these accounts have and continue to follow the conventional knowledge on states, borders and nations. The difficulty of understanding what and where borders are in this particular case continues to dominate the contemporary political debates on Bosnia. David Campbell has, for example, extensively noted the logic of partition that continues to play an important role in the peace process in Bosnia and the ways in which the Dayton Peace Accords have cut short the finalisation of the violent practices of partition while the structures imposed by the Dayton Peace Accords still continue to work along these lines (Campbell, 1998). Radha Kumar argues in favour of a different kind of understanding and application of the Dayton Peace Accords:

While the Dayton Peace Agreement represents an effort to restore to partition its *sui generis* existence as a separation-of-forces agreement, which could then be a take-off point for a peace process, the lack of strong reintegration policies has meant a downward spiral of partition to even more intimate levels. How to turn a partition agreement into a separation-of-

forces agreement remains the great challenge for peace-makers, and it may be that we need to turn the question on its head; that is to look at ways in which a separation-of-forces agreement can be prevented from turning into a partition agreement (Kumar, 2002: 34).

The prevalence of the nationalist politics in the workings of the Dayton Peace Accords point not simply to the difficulty of establishing and maintaining this quasi-multinational quasi-partitioned state. It also points to the difficulty of arguing in favour of the kind of humanitarianism articulated by Straw and Habermas as basis for intervention in places like Kosovo and Afghanistan. The Kosovo intervention in particular has been a product of such discourse. The logic of intervention, often criticised by reference to the Dayton Peace Accords which reconstructs the logic of partition as David Campbell has argued, persists in debates about borders, but also as a specific form of disciplining the possibilities in thinking about different forms of politics.

The Dayton Peace Accords thus represent a particularly interesting act of silencing of resistance in thinking politics differently. While the conflict in Bosnia has received much attention not simply because it reasserted the nationalist imaginaries it has also re-legitimised the need for the universal, humanitarian, international as a means of resolving nationalist violence. In this context Anne Orford is right to argue that the human rights discourse offers a limited mode of resistance for its subject. Moreover, it is by re-asserting the nationalist logic of contemporary liberal practices that this limitation continues to persist in the context of Bosnia. In this context, the Dayton Peace Accords also represent an attempt to normalise the nationalist discourse on rights and responsibilities within the liberal international system of states. On the other hand, the Dayton Accords also reveal a weakness, a contradiction in the way in which claims about the relationship between nationalism and the modern international authorise violent action and a kind of liberal imperialism, which resonates in the representations of others as barbarians, uncivilised and premodern; a representations often made about the Balkans during the conflict.

The persistence of borders

The discourse on borders persists in the contemporary accounts of the processes of securitisation, political negotiations of bordered spaces and the normative debates on the role of human rights. As a part of the critique that focuses predominantly on the persistence of national imagines that inform our understanding of contemporary events and practices, the focus is on the nationalist understanding of borders and bordered spaces, which has to a great extent dominated the narratives of contemporary conflict. It is necessary to investigate the manner in which the moment of violence or the moment of the sovereign decision to employ violence has been and continues to be portrayed as something outside the logic of nationalism.

The traditional claims of the state over the monopoly of legitimate violence continue to be negotiated by reference to competing accounts of sovereign authority. This has particularly been the case with some of the recent practices of intervention and peacekeeping that emphasise the traditional understanding of state borders by negotiating bordered spaces. The processes of democratisation have, for example, been subject to a number of discursive moves that situate practices of bordering with a number of different specific contexts. Regionalism presents one such venue that works to affirm the security of a national community. The debates on regionalism have been influenced largely by the traditional understanding of borders and spaces they capture in geopolitical terms. The concept of regionalism has played a double role in explaining the relationship of security discourse with the discourse on borders and identities. The discourse on security and regionalism has, however, remained trapped within the debates between the normative security theorists such as Barry Buzan (1991, 1999), Mutthiah Alagappa (1995) and Mohammed Ayoob (1999) and some cosmopolitan moral theorists such as Linklater (1998).

The first group suggests that global security should be considered in relation to particular regions and their parts rather than in terms of some kind of global logic. Furthermore, their understanding of boundaries continues to be based on the logic of seemingly old territorial divisions. According to Barry Buzan and Ole Weaver, boundary continues to be a point of contention, division and identification as it differentiates what they refer to as the Regional Security Complex from its neighbours (Buzan & Weaver,

2003: 53). Borders continue to be understood in terms of national security and define the jurisdiction, responsibility and accountability of various groups and governmental actions.

As a response to this kind of theorising, some cosmopolitan moral theorists (Linklater, 1998; Pogge, 2002) tend to eschew the salience of borders in their judgements. These ideas have for a while been at the fore in the new literature on political community and argue that human lives are no longer predominantly shaped by what is decided within the sets of national borders. International society can be achieved through, responsibility, interdependence between states as well as the respect for human rights. But, as Ian Clark has noted, there is a more deep-seated issue that needs to be addressed:

Surely there is something profoundly paradoxical about an image that invites us to discard borders as part of our mental map but which, at the same time, analyses the consequences of doing so primarily in terms of implication for borders? (Clark in Fry & O'Hagan, 2000: 81).

The difficulty of Clark's argument becomes more pronounced precisely in the context of border territories where the singular logic of borders is re-negotiated by reference to the Westphalian model of sovereignty rather than the global, borderless world debates about globalisation so often promote. It also reveals what is at stake in some contemporary discussions on violence and the way in which difference and identity have been often quoted as the primary reasons for the conflicts and their subsequent, but also debatable, solutions. David Campbell, for example, quotes *ontology* as a link between identity and territory and describes it as "a neologism that signifies the connection of the ontological value of present-being to its situation, to the stable and presentable determination of a locality, the *topos* of territory, native soil, city, body in general." (Campbell, 1998: 80). Campbell's emphasis is on ontology as a basis on which stories of conflict and its solution developed and were narrated in a particular kind of way.

If borders are not just geopolitical, material borders between states, but also a 'performative ontology' in their own right, how do we assign place to its own ontology, away from cartographies and histories which determine it as a singular kind of entity? Jevgenia Viktorova argues, rightly, for a perspective that regards boundaries:

not as something superfluous, unnecessary, troublesome, and potentially avoidable (the attitude implicated in the plausibility of the image of a 'borderless world'), but as a phenomenon necessitated, 'ontologically conditioned' by the surrounding human reality. Starting with a substantiation of the existence of boundaries – as owed to the specificities of human (self-) perception that tends to make sense of the world by drawing (on) distinctions and differences – the discussion proceeds to heed the ambivalent performance of boundaries as they both maintain and mediate 'irreducible differences' by, as it were, actively filling in the chasms of non-Euclidean space (Viktorova in Berg & Van Houtum, 2003: 141).

Boundaries and human (self-) perception form another kind of space where the 'irreducible differences', as raised by Viktorova, need to be mediated. Engin Isin makes a similar kind of distinction between symbolic space and material space and the general idea that human beings inhabit two spaces simultaneously, the first being "a discontinuous experience of expressive forms, signs, and symbols, which create a cognitive space", while the second is "a continuous material space of objects, which we inhabit and move through." (Isin, 2002: 42). Isin's account of the two spaces also necessitates the existence of what he refers to as the *third space* "where these two spaces are mediated, created, produced, symbolised, and materialised, but these two spaces remain the conditions that enable the formation of groups in the third space" (Isin, 2002: 42). What are then the implications of Viktorova's and Isin's theorising when we discuss the current debates on legitimate violence?

Recognising that the violent political shifts are taking place in the current practices of peacekeeping and intervention as William Rasch argues, it is important to note that these shifts represent a part of a more persistent contradiction between different responsibilities of states and the system of states often articulated in the discourse on human rights and ethics. By displaying a break in historical narratives of conflict that demonstrate a shift in the way in which political decision is used to legitimise the violence

occurring outside of the territorial borders of sovereign nation states under the banner of universal norms and values, Rasch warns of another shift. This is the shift away from the emphasis on sovereignty as an organising principle of modern politics and its supposed absence in contemporary debates on legitimate violence and towards more depoliticised investigations into the complex nature of the political (Rasch, 2004).

The recourse to legitimate violence has highlighted a particularly interesting shift in attempts to rethink the processes of contemporary politics and specifically in articulating the possibilities of resistance. In particular, the recourse to legitimate violence, while highlighting the unequal nature of the processes that legitimise certain forms of violence over others, namely that of the US or other liberals over all others, has also put in question the political/legal processes of authorisation. This struggle has been particularly evident in current debates on intervention and peacekeeping. While the concept of legitimate violence remains directly associated with the military power of the United States, it also represents a space through which the promise of perpetual peace is re-established, namely by locating and disciplining the illegitimate violent practices. The work of Michael Foucault has been invaluable in examining the disciplinary effects of power which work to situate, authorise and normalise while at the same time limiting the capacity to resist. This limitation originates from the productive capacity awarded to subjects which silence the possibility of resistance (Foucault, 1979: 178). The call for investigations into the nature of violent shifts in historical and structural representations of violence also seeks an enquiry into the circumstances under which such debate might be possible in the current political climate. Debates about resistance highlight the difficulty of thinking not just about the most recent events, but re-assert the complexity of the paradoxes in thinking relations between states.

Current debates about the possibilities of resistance are in this context posed between the hegemonic and imperial nature of contemporary liberal political discourse, a relationship which remains largely underexplored. Subject continues to be articulated and framed as an alterity which indeed can only be articulated in the context of global economy and politics which ultimately seeks to become a dominant form of its identification and articulation. It is necessary to unpack and examine the processes which silence and normalise these instances. Engaging with the local provides a limited venue in determining the circumstances, specificities and relations in this context. To engage with a more complex and engaging analysis of the processes and events which exceed the disciplining practices of the contemporary debates about sovereignty means to engage with a number of questions regarding territory, history and authority which continue to persist in number of ways.

The Dayton Peace Accords continue to represent a specific site of authorisation of violence in defence of the principle of sovereignty. This principle has been defined by reference to humanitarian claims about values and responsibilities of the system of states, but also as a specific articulation of a number of more profound problems that are at the heart of modern politics. Debates about resistance that followed the attacks of September 11th 2001 have highlighted but also masked a number of already present problems of contemporary liberal discourse in attempts to address the imperial nature of the contemporary political processes.

The political climate in Bosnia continues to be policed by the strong presence of the international forces, organisations and investors, which regulate the financial, cultural and political life of the country. Despite the continuing peace, it is still unclear what kind of state Bosnia is. It can be said that despite its insistence on multiculturalism, the Dayton Peace Accords authorised the nationalist logic in order to achieve peace. The processes of authorisation occur at the level of the international and discipline the possibilities of thinking about specific cases of violence differently. Resolutions for Bosnia continue to be negotiated by reference to the logic of borders and identities. However, in this case, the specificities of violence are neglected in favour of the unifying logic of the peace agreement. This has resonated quite distinctly in debates about responsibility and guilt, which continue to be attributed along national lines rather than individual or institutional.

Current problems with implementing the Dayton Peace Accords reflect the ways in which a particular case exceeds the practices used to discipline the possibilities framed by contending authorities. It also highlights the way in which such processes continue to follow a distinctly nationalist logic at the local and

international level of engagement. The complexity of a specific event reveals not only the difficulty of thinking about resistance as a mode of politics, but the very moment of thinking resistance as an attempt to normalise a specific event that continues to exceed the practices of sovereign disciplining. It is for this reason that the contemporary peace agreements represent a powerful move in normalising debates about violence and its practices of legitimisation. Engaging with the peace agreements does not mean opposing the possibility and idea of peaceful coexistence, but the conditions under which this can be achieved.

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