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Gender equality deficiency

Underrepresentation of women on decision-making levels in
Bosnia & Herzegovina

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Abstract

Why are there only 21% female politicians in the highest decision-making body, the Parliamentary Assembly, in Bosnia & Herzegovina, when there has been established a law that requires a 40% quota of gender representation in these positions?

Because of all the laws and regulating documents that have been determined by the state to improve the gender inequality issue, it can fairly be claimed that the top-down approach is deficient in this area. That is why I am going to analyse the importance of NGOs in gender equality development and therefore focus on a bottom-up approach as a theory. I am going to have an anthropological feminism perspective during my thesis, which will help me clarify the importance of gender symmetry and that the development has to be approached through social norms instead of laws and policies. In this explanatory single case study I am going to do a process tracing to find out the causal mechanisms between my dependent variable Y, which is the underrepresentation of women on decision-making positions, and the bottom-up approach X. I have chosen implications from my empirical material, which I will be testing by putting them against my evidence in my analysis to confirm why the bottom-up approach explains my Y. My primary material consists of reports and documents from EU and UN, government documents such as laws and regulations and lastly e-mail conversations I have had with some of the NGOs that are the foundation to my evidence material. The conclusion to my research question to why women are underrepresented in decision-making positions is because of an ineffective approach to the gender issue so far. Gender stereotypes and cultural norms permeate the high political positions and are preventing women for making changes for themselves.

Key words: Gender equality, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Female underrepresentation, gender quota, peace building, capacity building, post-conflict country,

Words: 9885

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1 Introduction

In Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) women are still, years after the implementation of the Gender Equality Law (GEL) and other regulating documents as action plans and recommendations, facing major political limitations compared to men. It is clear that it exists gender inequalities on a daily basis, which creates political and democratic underdevelopment (Epiphany. 2014. p.55-56). The issue that I am presenting is about why women are underrepresented in the highest decision-making levels compared to men.

BiH is a democratic state and it is by law demanded to recognize human rights and fundamental freedoms inside the state. One of the paragraphs in BiH's constitutional law is that no one, no matter what sex, race, color, language, religion or political opinion, should be discriminated. The state needs, by law, to implement all human rights including the convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina. 1995). BiH has failed to provide these rights to the citizens since it is obvious that women are being discriminated only because of their gender and not their lack of skills or ability.

It is also proven that gender equality with equal gender representation and democracy leads to a better economic development, which is why this issue is of importance for the state BiH on all spheres of the state and society (Bosnia and Herzegovina 2013. p 12).

1.1 Problem and Purpose

The constitution of the state BiH (with its' both entities) is the main legal document of the state, also known as the Dayton Agreement. It is built on human dignity, safety and equality. It is committed to the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of the state BiH in accordance to international law.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities as well as other human rights instruments inspired the agreement and made the ground for its development. The state BiH with its both entities, Federation of Bosnia & Herzegovina (FBiH) and Republika Srpska (RS) has to make sure that the human rights and fundamental freedoms are recognized since they are set by the European Conventions to protect (Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina. art.2).

Women still face challenges because of how their gender is related to their cultural norms and biological responsibilities as caretakers. It is clear that women are discriminated because of their gender and not their lack of skills or abilities. The main issue is the lack of an equal gender representation, which is a topic that is under investigation (Epiphany. 2014). The main purpose of my thesis is trying to find out the reasons to this underrepresentation and what has caused it to emerge. The issue in BiH has almost become like a vicious circle that I will try to demonstrate below.

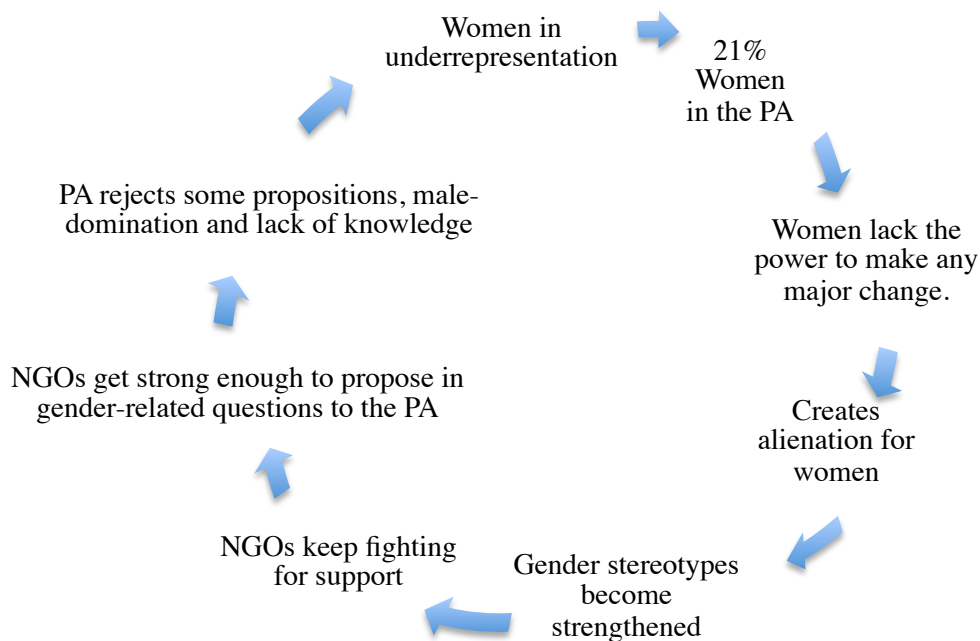


Figure 1: The Parliamentary Assembly (PA) consists of 21% women because of women's incapability to make any difference for themselves. This creates alienation and diversity between the genders, which strengthens and confirms the already strong gender stereotypes in the society. NGOs keep fighting for gender

equality and finally when they get strong enough to leave propositions to the PA, which in many cases gets rejected because of ignorance and lack of knowledge from the politicians who are in male majority. This confirms that women keep being underrepresented and that the development is slow.

According to UN's Concluding Observations of Bosnia and Herzegovina from 2013 some problem areas that BiH needed to address and improve were clearly presented. They specifically pointed out that BiH needed to eliminate all kinds of stereotypes with the explanation that they are the reason to this deep-rooted patriarchal unequal system, which is the ground to why women are unequal to men even today. They illuminated the fact that these stereotypes are the cause to why women are in a disadvantaged position in political spheres, especially in the decision-making areas. The gender gap that women experience on a daily basis is rooted in what they learn in early ages of school and public life (UN. 2013. §19abc). BiH was recommended by the UN to develop a strategy with the aim to overcome all forms of stereotypical behavior about female-roles and responsibilities, especially women in political or employment positions (UN. 2013. §20c). They explain their concern about the indolent representation of women in the Parliamentary Assembly and other government positions and they noted that women are being excluded from the decision-making processes in different levels, from state level and entity level to municipal level. Solutions to these issues were presented with a top-down approach with the aim to make the state promote processes to make sure that the implementation of the GEL is being done. Also making sure that women need to be accepted in participation in political and leading position with encouragement of all kinds (UN. 2013. §27, §28bc).

My thesis will be a case of women's underrepresentation in decision-making levels in the state BiH with the aim to find evidence that can confirm possible explanations from a bottom-up approach to the issue of women's unequal political participation.

1.2 Research question

- Why are women in Bosnia and Herzegovina not equally represented as men in the highest decision-making body?

1.2.1 Academic and Non-Academic Relevance

The non-academic relevance criterion is that the issue needs to have some kind of relevance to the outside world and that it needs to be of importance from a political, economic or social perspective, affecting people's lives and lifestyles (Teorell & Svensson. 2012. p.18). I believe I have achieved to choose a topic that is of a non-academic relevance for the people it concerns. The issue that I am presenting and trying to demonstrate is about why it exists gender inequality in decision-making levels in bodies like the Parliamentary Assembly (PA). BiH is a democratic state and it is by law demanded to recognize human rights and fundamental freedoms inside the state. The academic relevance criterion can serve as an additional requirement to the non-academic criterion because the more thorough research question the greater chance it has to become of relevance to social relevant issues and problems. The academic relevance criterion means that the research seeks cumulativity, which means that it is providing grants to existing research, literature and subject in whole, which I believe I have achieved (Teorell & Svensson. 2012. p.19).

1.2.2 Contribution

I am hoping to contribute to existing research with a presentation to why gender equality has failed in a certain area of great importance for the state. I believe this research is going to be of relevance for anyone who is eager to understand the issue to point out and develop strategies to the unequal political situation in BiH. This research can also be a part of a bigger perspective for

relevant gender equality projects or help understanding different approaches to use when dealing with gender inequality issues in political life.

1.3 Delimitation and Operationalization

In my thesis I will focus on the underrepresentation on governmental decision-making levels only because that is an area of importance that remains unequal after a lot of attempts of creating gender symmetry. I will do a process-tracing since I believe that is the most relevant method to use in these kinds of explanatory researches. I will continue with an analysis of theories in my empirical material to the underrepresentation and possible causes to that from a bottom-up approach to lastly confirm the presented explanations, which is why I have chosen to use both primary and secondary material as EU-documents, NGOs, e-mail conversations, state documents and laws, books and articles on the issue.

I am going to use article 20 from the Gender Equality Law as an explanation to how I am going to use the words ‘gender equality’ in this paper. In that case, gender equality means that the genders are at least 40% represented in the state bodies at all levels, including legislative, executive and political representation (Bosnia and Herzegovina 2013. p 12). I am only focusing my paper on examining the highest level of decision-making, which is the Parliamentary Assembly of BiH because I believe that the gender equality would improve on all lower levels if the highest level were to be equal first.

1.3.1 Abbreviation

AISBL – International Non-Profit Making Association

BiH – Bosnia and Herzegovina

CEDAW – Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

FBIH – Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (One of the two entities in BiH)

GAP BiH – Gender Action Plan BiH

GEL – Gender Equality Law

INGO – International Non-Governmental Institutions

LEADER – European LEADER Association for Rural Development

NAP BiH – National Action Plan BiH

NGO – Non-Governmental Institutions

OHCHR – Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

OSCE – Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

RS – Republika Srpska (One of the two entities in BiH)

SOC – Sarajevo Open Center

UN – United Nations

UNDP – United Nations Development Program

2 Background

It is interesting to present what has been done on the gender equality issue in the country so far from both a top-down and bottom-up approach. By doing that I am going to give a brief historical background to what caused the situation to emerge to later introduce what institutions and documents regulate the issue in the country today, to lastly show that women are underrepresented even though these documents exist. The documents that will serve as a background are the Gender Action Plan, the latest country reports from the European Commission from June 2014, UN Observations and NGO program reports.

I believe this will give a clear view on the current gender situation in general and a foundation to what I am examining in my thesis.

2.1 Historical overview

The economic and social crisis in BiH began after president Josip Broz Tito's death in 1980 when the Yugoslav Federation precipitated and the ethnic, political and economical aspects became of interest for the possible leaders left in charge. After a nationalistic party won the first democratic multi-party elections, some of the countries belonging to Yugoslavia proclaimed their independence, BiH in 1990 as well. This led to internal conflicts because of ethnic differences where women became one of the main victims. The Dayton Agreement had put an end to the conflicts dividing the country BiH into two entities, the Republika Srpska (RS) and the Federation of Bosnia & Herzegovina (FBiH) which are governed by the same administration (Simic 2015. p 87). BiH has experienced a post-conflict transition in economic, political and social reconstruction. Gender equality is known as one of the economic and social reconstructions and is under development thanks to gender equality laws, international conventions and NGOs. The gender inequality still exists even though measures have been taken from a

top-down approach and some of the main reasons to that is because of the countries cultural gender stereotypes and patriarchal history. Because of that, women are experiencing difficulties in fully participating in political life and they remain underrepresented in the decision-making processes (Simic 2015. p 88).

2.2 Regulating documents

It exists a lot of regulating documents in the issue on gender equality and they all have in common to eliminate or at least improve the unequal situation. I am not going to present all the regulating documents in the issue, only the ones relevant to my thesis and the ones that regulate women in decision-making specifically. These are the Gender Equality Law, UNSCR 1325, National Actions Plans, Gender Action Plans and CEDAW UN-Recommendations that are presented in a time order below.

2.2.1 GEL

The Gender Equality Law (GEL) was adopted in 2003 with the aim to create gender equality in public and private spheres for all citizens in BiH. The law had the purpose of creating institutional structures that shapes gender equality policies. This law has a major importance for creating equality in different administration levels (Law on Gender Equality. 2010). The establishment of this law was made after the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women that was accessed in 1993 which assures that the GEL prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. This law explains what can be interpreted as discrimination and also in what spheres it can occur to be claimed as gender inequality (ARS BiH. 2016).

2.2.2 UNSCR 1325

UNSCR 1325 "Women, peace and security" was adopted in 2000 and was the first UN Security Council Resolution that made clear the weight of equal gender

participation when building peace in a post-conflict country. It specifically pointed out the importance of women's participation in decision-making at all state levels. A directive by the UN Secretary General in 2008 made it mandatory that all member countries made action plans to implement UNSCR 1325 (Bosnia & Herzegovina 2013. p 3-4).

2.2.3 NAP 2010-2013 & 2014-2017

The first National Action Plan (NAP1) from 2010-2013 was the first attempt to implement UNSCR 1325 and this also contained plans on women's participation in the decision-making positions. It presents information about the fact that women lack support to create electoral and that the traditional views on women create barriers for them to reach certain positions, which lead to ineffective development in relevant gender legislation and underrepresentation of women in political and public life (Bosnia & Herzegovina 2010. p 9). The Annex in NAP1 shows that the state should have succeeded to reach the share of 40% of women participating in decision-making processes by the end of 2013 (Bosnia & Herzegovina 2013. p 46). After results and recommendations from the first NAP a new NAP for the period 2014-2017 was established trying to reach the goal of 40% again.

The new NAP contained the same goals in the same fields but with a better structure with priority areas in the different fields. It also had a different approach to make the implementation more successful containing more direct result-oriented activities. The NAP2 was unlike the old one divided into three bigger sections: equal participation, prevention and protection where every category had clearer strategic goals and definitions than the last one (Bosnia & Herzegovina 2013. p 22-23).

2.2.4 GAP 2013-2017

The Gender Action Plan 2013-2017 (GAP) contains strategic goals with systematic and multi sectorial approaches to improve the planning and implementation in the area by the monitoring body Gender Equality Agency. The

first strategic goal was aimed to develop, implement and monitor the programs of measures for advancement of gender equality in the governmental institutions. Goal 1 includes measures in different priority areas where public life and decision making is one of them. The plan was to implement monitoring and reporting bodies to achieve gender equality so that men and women have equal opportunities, which includes their representation in public life (Bosnia and Herzegovina 2013. p 6-7).

The UN Security Council Resolution 1325 together with the European Parliament Resolution stated that “a society without the full participation of women and men in decision making is a nondemocratic society.” (Bosnia and Herzegovina 2013. p 12-13).

The most concerning conclusion of the report is that the women’s political participation and their political influence in the public sphere are extremely limited. The measures that needed to be taken to reach the goal of providing equal gender representation in creating policies and decision making at all levels were to integrate international standards for gender equality. The deadline for this is 2017 (ibid).

2.2.5 CEDAW and CEDAW Recommendations

CEDAW was implemented in BiH in 1993 whereby the optional protocol was signed in 2002.

Stereotypes

The UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women made concluding observations and recommendations on the combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of BiH¹ adopted in July 2013. The report points out the problems of the patriarchal attitudes and firm stereotypes in the society. These stereotypes are becoming obstacles for the implementation of CEDAW since they

¹ The GAP BiH was included as the fifth periodic report that was being observed by the UN.

are the reason to why women are in disadvantaged positions in political life, especially the decision-making positions. The rapport also presents development areas where the state can improve, where it is said that the state needs to develop a strategy across all sectors that work on overcoming patriarchal and stereotypical norms and behaviors, especially in positions where women are in a disadvantaged position (CEDAW/C/BIH/CO/4-5. §19a-20c).

Participation in political life

The Committee Rapport also notes that the GEL required to make sure there was a 40% participation of women in political life, on candidate lists to political parties and on representation of women in judiciary and civil service. But, these numbers are concerning for the Committee because women in decision-making levels are still, not even underrepresented, but even absent. BiH has because of this been recommended to establish procedures to guarantee that the 40% participation limit is being endeavored (CEDAW/C/BIH/CO/4-5. §27-28bc).

2.3 Women in politics

Even though there are several regulating documents regarding this issue from a top-down approach, that have been established with pushes from the bottom, there is still a major gender inequality that is seen on a daily basis. It is therefore known that top-down approaches themselves do not seem to make any difference for women in BiH.

The Infohouse Association made a research in 2015 to examine women's participation in politics in some southeastern European countries, including BiH. The first voting quota was established in BiH in 1997 by the Organization for Security and Co-operation (OSCE), which made every political party obligated to have at least three women at the top ten candidates. This quota made it easier for women to become more politically active and 26% of the seats belonged to

women by the next election in 1998. The model of open lists² was introduced in year 2000 which again made it harder for women to get support for becoming candidates. The situation at the time was survivable with the only 4,76% female seats in the House of Representatives³ of the Parliament of BiH. In 2010, before the establishments of NAP's and GAP, the women fought their way up to a percentage of 13,3% in the House of Representatives (Infohouse 2015. p 23).

In 2013 the GEL made a big step in BiH because of the establishment of the Law on Amendments and Law on Elections, which required 40% of the candidates to be women. Because of this obligation, female candidates increased to 40% on the candidate lists. The election in 2014 was the first election after these new strategy implementations and it resulted in a 19,90% elected women at all levels of government. Even after all the regulating documents that had been made before the election, women still did not reach the record number of 20,15% from the 2002 election, and the 40% quota seemed to be very far away (Infohouse 2015. p 23).

2.3.1 Women in decision-making

The European Commission did a report on gender in BiH 2014 to evaluate the situation to be able to create future cooperation with BiH in the issue.

Women in BiH are, as stated before, somewhat excluded from decision-making levels. All nine ministries in the country 2013 were men. Thus, women are equally represented as men on the deputy-positions, which is a sign of something that could lead to success. The prime minister in RS is in fact a woman, Zeljka Cvijanovic, and the first woman ever at such a position (European Commission 2013/333302/01. p 41).

The highest legislative body in BiH is the Parliamentary Assembly (PA) that was established by the Constitutional law of BiH. The PA consists of the House of Representatives and the House of Peoples and all legislative decisions enter both Houses before adoption. Their role is to control and regulate the entire internal

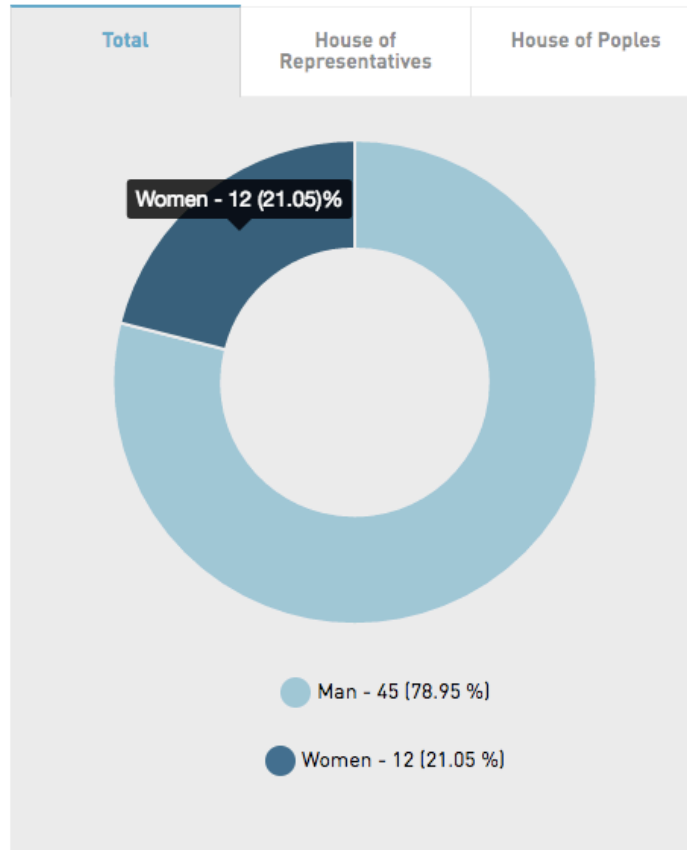
² Voters can influence the order in how a party's candidates are elected.

³ One of the two Houses in the Parliamentary Assembly

structure with legislation and oversight activities since they are the only authority that can regulate legislation.

This is the gender structure in the PA today:

Gender structure in BiH PA 2014. - 2018.



(Parliamentary Assembly of BiH. 2016)

2.3.2 NGO's roles

Women have been gathering since 1996 to share postwar experiences to make political affection for themselves. Their participation and communication with NGOs and INGOs have been strong but still their fights to translate their goals to political actions has failed. The NGO campaign Nas je Vise (There Are More Of Us) was what pushed for gender quotas in the elections. The campaign together with thirteen other NGOs, encouraged women to participate in election which resulted in an increase from 2% to 25% of female representation in the House of Representatives in the Parliamentary Assembly in BiH. In fact, female politicians

often turned to NGOs for support in gender-related questions and this cooperation actually resulted in GEL becoming an official law (Peace & Change 2012. p 306-307).

3 Previous Research on feminist approaches

Applying a feminist perspective on the gender equality in BiH will clarify that women are in a disadvantaged position with limited chances for making any major difference for themselves. The feminist perspective characterizes the issue and helps understanding women's roles and prospects based on their position in the patriarchy that obviously is remaining partly because of the norms and partly because of the lack of succeeding law and policy implementation.

3.1.1 Anthropological and liberal feminism

This issue has mostly been discussed through anthropological feminism perspectives and liberal feminism perspectives. The liberal feminism perspective believes that the society somewhat leaves women behind when it comes to interacting with political-related questions. Liberal feminism focuses on the fact that equality between the genders needs to be approached through laws and policies. This makes the liberal feminism a top-down approach. The anthropological feminism perspective instead focuses on the social construct of the gender and its existence, purpose and meaning. Anthropologists believe in bottom-up approaches and that gender inequality is an issue that has to be addressed from the bottom (Epiphany 2014. p 56).

The anthropologist Indira Hasanovic exemplifies these two perspectives in her article using J. Butlers and S. Begleys statements. Butler claims that gender is a "construct that is produced and maintained through the workings of power in societies" (Jelke. 2010. p.3) while Begley argues that "stereotypes present a trap into which many people can fall." (Begley 2000. p 66-67) (Epiphany 2014. p 56).

Thus, the gender issue in BiH has most often been approached with an anthropological feminism perspective that questions what gender is and how

societies create different roles to different genders to maximize profit and labor, blaming the cultural norms for the creation of gender behaviors. And it is because of this that women still are underrepresented, underpaid and discriminated (Epiphany 2014. p 57).

Hasanovic's main argument to the fact that women are employed less than men and are facing discrimination is because of the lack of law enforcement that regulates the norms in the society. Her research confirmed her hypothesis about women facing discrimination more often than men only because of their gender and not their capability to perform or accomplish the given tasks (CEDAW and Women's Rights in Bosnia. 2013). Maximizing women's and female's chances to become politically active as voters or representatives is one of the pathways to create a society with a political culture that is more liberal and nonviolent to decrease the nationalistic and religious ways that has a tendency to divide societies instead of reconciling them.

3.2 Feminism in gender equality

The feminist approaches can, like I stated above, be categorized into two: the anthropological and liberal perspective, where the first one focuses on bottom-up strategies and the last one on top-down strategies.

A research done by Annika Björkdahl, who is an anthropologist with a bottom-up approach, presents the fact that when the Dayton Agreement, which was meant to create and empower gender equality, was implemented it created a "peace gap" because of the lack of women in the implementation process. This resulted in an even more divided system than what it already was with women at the bottom of the hierarchy. She points out the concerns about the low public awareness about equal representation of women and men in the political life and the women that managed their way up to respectable positions are often excluded from participation (Peace & Change 2012. p 302). This research agrees with Vanessa Pupavac's thoughts in her article about the fact that the leading national institutions and politicians have not been able to make the theoretical policies match in practice. This has unfortunately led to a gap between the citizens and

politicians that are based on the government's incapability to create a safety-providing welfare system. Björkdahl's main argument is that a gender-just peace accommodates equality in political, social and economic powers and points out that the injustice depends on ethnicity, religion, gender and class. Because of this it is of great significance that women become equally represented as men in the political spheres.

Björkdahl presents three crucial approaches for creating a gender-just peace. The first is to encourage women to contribute in thoughts of what kind of society and peace they would like to achieve. The second and third is to learn coping with setbacks from post-war experiences and consequences such as conservative social orders. Engagement and participation in gender-related questions and peace-process politics is primary to the development to a more democratic, equal and calm political environment (Peace & Change. 2012).

Amy G Mazur and other feminist policy-analysts have researched about the phases that a policy goes through after its adoption. She points out that early literature on gender seem to look at only the adoption-phase or policy formation, which focuses on policy-content, definition and issue framing which in fact has no direct impact on the actual policy outcome (Journal of Women, Politics & Policy. 2016. p.67) One of her arguments is that the main obstacle to why feminist policy in practice does not succeed is because of the lack of valid and reliable measurements of policy success. It can be difficult to identify if a policy has been successful since it is not always clear if a policy is the reason to a certain change in situation or relation. This is known as the 'difficulty of determining causality' because of the fact that other factors could have been related or unrelated to the policy and its impact on gender inequalities (Journal of Women, Politics & Policy. 2016. p.69).

3.2.1 Top-Down & Bottom-Up Approach

Mazur analyzed feminist policy in practice and she explains that there is a major difference in top-down and bottom-up approaches. The top-down approach focuses on the fact that centrally located actors set the goals of the policy on a specific targeted group. The bottom-up approach locates the implementation of a certain policy or law at a local level where actors like NGOs can express the

policies success in practice (Journal of Women, Politics & Policy. 2016. p.70). The bottom-up approach also focuses on that the local actors need to be a part of the decision-making about how to reach certain goals in local areas. The European LEADER Association for Rural Development is an International Non-profit Making Association (AISBL) that explains the bottom-up approach as capacity-building components with involvement from local actors and interest groups from representative and private institutions. They have come up with three crucial components that a bottom-up approach means (ELARD. 2017).

- 1) Awareness rising, training, participation of the local population to identify strengths and weakness of a certain area.
- 2) Participation of different interest groups with the goal to create development strategies.
- 3) Establishment of criterions for selection of suitable projects deliverable of the strategy (ELARD. 2017).

De Leon and De Leon agrees with both Mazur and Björkdahl in this question and argues that implementation needs to focus more on bottom-up approaches since that is a way to emphasize democratic processes and a way to understand that policies are made for the people by the people (Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory. 2002. p.467-92) (Journal of Women, Politics & Policy. 2016. p.70). The three crucial approaches that Björkdahl presents to create gender equality above are therefore going to be my main implications when I later test my theory about what has been presented about the bottom-up approaches.

Vanessa Pupavac presents that top-down approaches has been pursued a multiple times since the Dayton Agreement along with international support from NGOs, INGOs, OHCHR and other international Human Rights activists. With their help the CEDAW was implemented and integrated in the national legislation and policies (International Peacekeeping. 2005. p.394). Pupavac's main focus is policy-making that encourages women to be a part of the political process. Since Hasanovic claimed that the main issue was in law-implementation and the lack of monitoring bodies and institutions, Pupavac instead argues that NGOs are able to make the law-implementation increase and become more practically integrated in a society.

Pupavac has come to the conclusion that international policy development with the top-down approach alone is not very action filled in BiH (International Peacekeeping. 2005. p.405). It is obvious that the top-down approach is ineffective because of the proven fact that the gender equality has been making minimal improvements even though a multiple documents have been established to eliminate the issue. Therefore I will focus my thesis on the bottom-up approach only, using Björkdahl's and Hasanovic's approaches to prove if and how a bottom-up approach is better for creating a gender equal political representation in decision-making levels in BiH.

The double strategy

Jagoda Rosul-Gajic discusses the importance of NGOs and how they can contribute to implementation policies and that the cooperation between the top-down and bottom-up approach are the key to success. She tries to point out their methods and tools to implement gender equality into state policy norms. She presents an interesting double strategy that she believes women's NGOs have been using to make an impact to reach policy-changes and that they play the most important role in the gender implementation. She points out that the cooperation between national and international actors are the key to develop norms in post-conflict countries. One of her main arguments is the importance of UNSCR 1325 that she claims is one of the most important policy-implementations in post-conflict countries and that there need to be monitoring bodies that controls the implementation of these principals. She agrees with Pupavac on the importance of NGOs and how they can work to become this monitoring body that is needed in purpose to develop women's human rights norms and implement the UNSCR 1325 (Journal of international Women Studies. 2016. p.145). The NGOs strive to implement norms and policies and affect the decision makers into taking women's human rights into account since neither the national or international actors have managed to do so (Journal of international Women Studies. 2016. p.146).

She presents two main tools NGOs can use to reach implementation into state policy with the double-strategy. It firstly contains pressuring both the authorities and the international organs. The strategy has three different phases:

1. The Orientation phase

2. The Agenda-setting phase
3. The Policy-creating and Norm-implementation phase.

These serve the purpose of getting national governments to get more entailed with the human rights so that the NGOs don't have to be the monitoring bodies when human rights are being violated. The agenda-setting phase include searching for cooperation and support from other national or international organizations to put the topic on the political agenda. In transnational states like BiH the feminist NGOs don't often have economic support from national authorities, which explains why they are financed by INGOs instead. After the orientation and agenda setting phases, the national government along with international actors hopefully have a base to implement the norms and policies on (Journal of International Women's Studies. 2016. p.150-151). The bottom-up approach makes local actors participate in decision-making

The European LEADER Association have experienced that the bottom-up approach have the best outcome when it is combiner together with a top-down approach, which would confirm Mazur's theories about the double strategy (ELARD. 2017).

3.2.2 Gender inequality and economical loss

A study made by Ognjen Radonjic and Isidora Jaric analyzes how gender inequality can have negative effects on the quality of life and society since countries with these kinds of inequalities show macroeconomic losses, which deteriorates the economic growth and economic development. Their study claims that political policies and structures that aim on equal-gender employment also have an increased number of economic growths. They argue that governmental and non-governmental institutions need to take important measures to be able to create equality for women in the labor markets. They specifically point out that these institutions need to work simultaneously to reduce the gap between the genders and aim for equal qualification, equal access to new jobs, equal safety and so forth (Etnoantropoloski Problemi. 2016).

3.3 Summary

To summarize what is presented above I can draw the conclusion that the gender equality issue has been addressed from both top-down and bottom-up approaches. Björkdahl, Hasanovic, Pupavac, Mazur and De Leon and De Leon all have in common that these issues have to be attacked in from a bottom-up approach, and some of them have presented evidence to that the top-down approach itself is not working in BiH. Mazur specifically focuses on the outcomes of a policy or law and she points out the major difference in having a top-down approach and bottom-up approach when addressing gender equality issues.

To maximize a successful post-implementation phase where the implementation actually makes a difference for women, it could be effective to combine a top-down and a bottom-up approach. I believe that the top-down approach must focus on creating monitoring bodies to eliminate gender stereotypes (besides the NGOs) and more effective measurement strategies so that the government can map out where and later why a certain policy or law implementation is failing, to be able to see some kind of improvements. The bottom-up approach needs to focus on getting women politically involved and encourage them to speak up about what kind of society they want to live in so that the gender stereotypes and norms vanish so that they at least do not prevent women to reach the decision-making levels.

4 Theory

Equal representation on decision-making levels means that men and women should have at least 40% representation and in chances of reaching these political positions. The reasons to why the situation is as unequal as it is today, like I said before, can be categorized into two. The top-down approach is proven to be unsuccessful in BiH because of the fact that all the existing legal documents do not seem to make the difference it takes, therefore the liberal feminist theories that focus on change and development using laws and policy implementation become insubstantial. Therefore my theory will be the bottom-up approach with an anthropological feminism perspective, wherein I will have implications with a bottom-up approach that will be put against my found evidence to confirm that this approach explains why women are underrepresented on decision-making levels.

4.1 Bottom-Up Approach

BiH have established all the documents presented above as a way to deal with this issue from a top-down approach. Analysts and scientists have come to the conclusion that the top-down approach is unsuccessful since the issue needs to be addressed by the people for the people.

I have three testable implications in my theory that are going to be used as an explanatory pathway between my X, which is this approach, and my dependent variable Y, which is women's underrepresentation on decision-making levels. My implications are found in my previous research where they are presented as possible causes from a bottom-up approach to why women are underrepresented. To find out my Y I have to find possible explanations that are going to serve as testable implications. I have chosen my implications having the LEADER's three bottom-up approach principles in mind to make sure that my implications are

reaching up to the criteria required for a successful analysis. The implications that I will be testing are going to be:

- 1) Women should keep being encouraged by the NGOs to become more politically active and to participate in political development.
- 2) NGOs need to focus on working on eliminating gender stereotypes that are preventing women to participate in political life and they would need to create strategies to deal with conservative backlashes in the development of a gender-equal democracy.
- 3) NGOs need to educate politicians in decision-making in understanding the weight of gender equality in these positions.

1) My first implication to the fact that there is a lack of women on decision-making levels is because of the lack of encouragement from NGOs to women to contribute to what kind of society they want and how to strive for it. The political arena in BiH has been set according to male standards by male politicians for a very long time and this has resulted in women feeling like the political arena is a male-dominated environment where they can not make any difference for themselves, which eventually leads to them distancing themselves from it (Peace & Change 2012. p 297-298) (Action Plan BiH 2013. p 41). A crucial approach about women's encouragement has been stated as one of the biggest parts of creating a more gender equal democracy that consists of gender equality. Women should be encouraged to be politically active and being a part of forming the society into what they think it should be like.

How will I test my first implication? I would have to see if there is evidence to women's encouragement in the society from NGOs for them to be encouraged to be politically involved. By finding evidence that proves the encouragement from NGOs would confirm that this implication is functional. My evidence on this implication would primarily come from the NGO project-reports on finished and ongoing projects, but also the e-mail conversations I have had with some of the NGOs personally.

2) My second implication is rooted in the deep cultural norms and gender stereotypes that have haunted the political society in BiH for decades. The reason to why BiH is failing in creating a gender equal representation on decision-making levels is because of the fact that NGOs are not focusing their work on creating a society free from cultural norms and gender stereotypes. NGOs need to

focus on eliminating gender stereotypes using policies and education to be able to work on making women become more politically active. Policy-making that encourages women to be a part of the political process is a phenomenon that can only be achieved when the gender stereotypes are eliminated (International Peacekeeping 2005. p 405).

I will test this implication by primarily looking at the e-mail conversations I have had with some of the NGOs personally, but also by finding project-reports on finished and ongoing projects.

3) The third implication comes from the fact that there is an alarmingly low public- and political awareness about the weight of gender equality in decision-making positions. The politicians in the PA work in a male-dominated environment with an absolute free will to follow gender equality policies in their decision-making or not. In public life people and women in particular are settling for the gender stereotypes as a way of life and only some of them work actively to eliminate these.

I will test the evidence for the third implication by analyzing it together with the NGO project-reports on finished and ongoing projects, but also the e-mail conversations I have had with some of the NGOs personally.

5 Method

The method I am going to use trying to answer my research question is an explanatory single case study. The reason why I chose this method to my qualitative research is because explanatory single case studies are used when studying a case in order to describe an explanatory analysis in detail. This method is often used when decision-making is at issue or when identifying some kind of causal mechanism between factors in a specific question. In my case a single case study with a process tracing could determine whether a bottom-up approach can explain the underrepresentation of women on decision-making positions.

In my case I have a dependent variable, Y, which is the underrepresentation of women on decision-making levels. I am trying to explain why, using an X with the bottom-up approach as a theory with an anthropological feminism perspective. (Teorell & Svensson 2012. p 82, 221) Therefore my explanatory single case study will include a process tracing where the aim is to expose the possible paths to why these implications in my theory have lead to the Y (Teorell & Svensson 2007. p 27).



Figure 2: Presenting my testable implications that, if confirmed and proved, are the explanation to how my X, which is the bottom-up approach, explains why women are underrepresented on decision-making levels.

5.1 Process tracing

I have chosen a theory that can explain the issue from a bottom-up approach because it is clarified above that a top-down approach itself is not enough. My theory implications are divided into three and they all have the same bottom-up approach with an anthropological feminism perspective that focuses on development using societal norms. By doing a process tracing I will be able to expose explanations and mechanisms between a cause and an effect. My dependent variable Y is women's underrepresentation compared to men's in decision-making positions and my X's implications will be the explanatory mechanisms that explains why this has occurred but also why it still exists. The goal is to find and prove factors that demonstrate a way between the X and the Y (Teorell & Svensson 2012. p 247-248). I have taken my testable implications from my theories to be able to create a systematic measurement of mechanisms that explains my issue (Teorell & Svensson 2012. 55-59).

My chain of events will consist of statistics of women's political representation, NGO-reports and conversations from 2 NGOs I have had myself where they have answered questions that will lastly serve as the observable evidence to my theories to why women are underrepresented on decision-making levels.

I have asked some questions to the NGOs with support and recommendations from Sasa Cudic who is the Vice President of the Assembly of city Banja Luka, to see if these implications agree with the NGOs. These answers I have gotten from the NGOs personally are going to be my main source of evidence, which I will confirm by checking their reports from finished and on-going projects as well.

5.2 Operationalization

I have presented the three implications that can lead to an explanation to why women are underrepresented on decision-making levels. I will operationalize my implications with the material that I have gathered as evidence. The theoretical implications have to have a complete absence of systematic measurement errors to have a good validity (Teorell & Svensson 2012. p 55-59).

My operational strategy is to present reliable evidence that confirms my implications to my issue and there are articles and researches that confirm that some of my implications have the best kind of approach to explain the issue.

Intersubjectivity is also a goal to reach when writing a thesis, which means that I want to present in the clearest way possible how I have analyzed my theories and how I have gathered the evidence so that my result and conclusion come out as clear as possible from my point of view for the reader. It is also of importance to make sure that my research is possible to evaluate by others, which gives the clarity even more importance (ibid).

I have already presented and explained my implications with the aim to later categorize them in the analysis hereafter where I will present the evidence as true and compatible to the implications. In my conclusion I am going to present how the evidence confirms the implications but also apply it on my research questions to create a clear explanation to exactly how my implications are proven to be true.

6 Analysis

I have been in contact with some of the biggest NGOs in BiH and I was able to ask them some questions about the situation I am investigating that are going to work as evidence that could confirm my theory. The NGOs are the Sarajevo Open Center and United Women Banja Luka. I have double-checked and confirmed their answers to their action-plans and finished project-reports to make sure exactly what progress have been made and where it is planned on being made.

My arguments that will be analyzed in this section are my three implications from my theory that are going to either confirm or not confirm an explanation to my research question.

6.1 Theoretical evidence

- **Can NGOs keep women encouraged to become more politically active and make them want to participate in political development?**

Sarajevo Open Center (SOC):

SOC has been active in the field of improving the political participation of women in BiH by advocating for changes to develop new laws and implementation strategies in forms of Action Plans with the goal to ensure and protect women's rights in political participation. SOC has during 2015 produced two studies that were related to gender equality and women's political participation with the goal to present the current status to see where improvements are needed to finally reach the main goal of the 40% representation of both genders in all government bodies. They established models together with the Agency of Gender Equality where they have had meetings to discuss the

representation of gender in the Parliamentary Assembly of BiH (Sarajevo Open Center. 2015)

My translation:

“Even if we knew from the beginning that our proposals were a somewhat unrealistic, we still believed that a change was possible.”⁴

–Maida Zagorac, representative of SOC.
(Sarajevo Open Center M.Z, personal communication, May 12 2017)

The Commission for Gender Equality finally accepted their proposals to introduce a 50% electoral quota in new amendments to the BiH Election Law which led to a period of street actions, lobbying, education to authorities from the civil sectors to raise public awareness and to point out the importance of these amendments. Unfortunately the proposals did not pass the Parliamentary Assembly. The second attempt was to add gender quotas of 40% with the already existing ethnic quotas, which actually made progress at the first reading since there are no female-ministers in the executive branch, but this also failed because of the lack of further support in the PA (Sarajevo Open Center M.Z, personal communication, May 12 2017).

United Women BL (Udružene Žene Banja Luka)

Their first program report from 2010-2014 shows that after the general election in 2010 women were still seriously underrepresented with a 17% of women in the legislative authorities. This is a violation of art. 4:19 in the Election Law of BiH that requires the 40% quota in these elections. It is also a violation on art. 20 in the GEL since state bodies at all levels of government need to make sure and promote equal gender representation in decision-making. Also here, gender equality is when one of the genders are at least 40% represented in the bodies from art. 20 §1.

⁴ “Iako smo od početka znali da su naši prijedlozi ambiciozni i pomalo nerealni, vjerovali smo da je promjena moguća.” –Maida Zagorac

They got recommendations from the European Council concerning the area of women's participation in political life to strengthen Resolution 1706, which increases women's representation in politics through the electoral system. Recommendation 1899 also needed strengthening which would increase women's representation using the 40% quota.

United Women BL have after these recommendations focused their work in the next four years to work on the Amendments to the Election Law to ensure its compliance with the GEL and the Recommendations of the European Council in a way that it is corresponding with the 40% quota.

Their report from 2014-2016 presents an increase from 3% to 20% from 1996-2014, but still far away from a 40% representation. Their goal in this report is to: 1) Initiate changes to the Election Law in order to meet the representation of 40% of both genders in legislative bodies so that no mandate can be approved by the Council of Ministers if it does not have a 40% quota. 2) Improve the attitude of political parties towards gender equality, strengthen women assets within political parties and work with female voters (United Women BL. 2016)

- **What is being done to eliminate gender stereotypes and cultural norms in the society that are preventing women to participate in political life?**

Sarajevo Open Center (SOC):

BiH is still, unfortunately, a very conservative and patriarchal society and it is a fact that it continuously keeps showing in various ways in our society. These conservative values are somehow coalescing and defining the place of women in our society. But it is also a fact that things are, slowly but safely changing and that the awareness in these issues is increasing. If we compare it with a period from 20 years ago we see the political changes where women today are more involved. In addition to rising awareness of the general public, it is also necessary to work on raising the awareness for the existing politicians, especially those at the top of the hierarchy and the leaders for the political parties.

The political parties are organized by different principles and strategies but every party has in common that women are underrepresented, a far way below

40%, in the bodies of the parties (Sarajevo Open Center M.Z, personal communication, May 12 2017).

- **How are NGOs focusing on educating politicians about gender-equality to increase the awareness?**

Sarajevo Open Center (SOC)

In addition to the propositions to legislative solutions they have also actively worked in educational activities. Three years ago they did a cooperation with the Friedrich Ebert Foundation which led to the creation of the Academy of Equality that is designed to increase action of the government representatives and members of political parties. The aim was to strengthen the capacity of political leaders in gender equality in order to improve the rights of the citizens in BiH. Participants of the Academy are fighting for increased political participation of women on a daily basis (Sarajevo Open Center M.Z, personal communication, May 12 2017).

7 Discussion

I have now presented my evidence to my implications to confirm my theory about why underrepresentation in decision-making positions exists.

My first implication, if NGOs can work to encourage women to be more politically active have been answered by one of the biggest NGOs in the country where they explain in detail what kind of work they have done over the past years to specifically give women the opportunity to be politically active if they want to. The SOC representative I talked to, Maida Zagorac, explained to me in detail how they have been working, how it felt for them and what they plan on doing in the field to keep the fight up. Her answers indicate that their work has, and keeps being done and is one of the main reasons to why some of the countries main gender laws have been established. I also got an answer from the NGO United Women, where they thoroughly explained to me in what areas they are planning on focusing they upcoming projects and programs in the near future and also what their main goal is. They made it very clear that they have been, and are planning on keeping their focus on women in decision-making specifically since they are aware of the slow progress that has been done in that area.

When asking questions to prove my second implication I got a somewhat vague response from one NGO and no reply from the others at all. The NGO that answered me was the SOC and they agreed with me about the fact that it is a conservative and patriarchal society that they live in. Thus, she seemed positive over the development the country has experienced when comparing to a few years back. Zagorac explained that their method to eliminate gender stereotypes mainly consists of rising awareness about gender equality both in public and in political spheres. The fact that they have come up with a strategy that they believe is working against promoting the social gender stereotypes indicates that they are aware and actively working on making women as politically strong as men. My second implication was also the hardest one to find proof of to confirm or not, which I believe is because of the fact that the gender stereotypes are such a big part of all the levels in the society which makes it hard to observe and understand.

My last implication about awareness rising to educate in the issue is also founded in SOC's work in just specifically awareness programs. To search for cooperation with foundations to get resources of all kinds is a great sign of initiative and purposefulness.

To summarize my concluding thoughts on my given evidence I can with certainty suggest that all my implications are valid enough to claim that NGO(s) are working towards getting women to become more politically aware, knowledgeable and active with the goal of capacity-building, participation and awareness-rising, which according to LEADER's criteria makes this bottom-up approach complete. This also indicates that my implications, which are now positively proven, makes my pathway from X to Y complete –that the lack of a fully supported bottom-up approach would explain why women are underrepresented on decision-making levels. I believe that if the NGOs had more support and resources to fulfill their goals and plans that the underrepresentation of women would increase and develop quicker than it is today.

8 Conclusion

The main conclusion to my research is that women are underrepresented on decision-making levels because of the lack of a fully supported bottom-up approach that encourages women to become more politically active, that works against gender stereotypes and educates politicians in the weight of gender equality. By examining the issue from a bottom-up approach using an anthropological feminism perspective to reach implications that have proven that this kind of approach lead to progress. I have come to the conclusion that a bottom-up approach is most likely relevant when developing gender equality in BiH, because of the fact that a top-down approach itself is proven in earlier researches to be ineffective. Some of the regulating documents that do exist today have been pushed on from the NGOs, which prove that the driving force is coming from below. I have proven, using statistics from years back and compared them with today, talking to NGOs and analyzing action plan reports and upcoming projects, that there is a connection between using a bottom-up approach and making progress in gender equality.

Future research

I am hoping that I have given a clear picture of the meaning and importance of the right kind of approach in gender inequality development as a contribution to existing research and I also hope that I have increased the understanding and the weight of a gender equal decision-making body. I believe that my thesis have proven and confirmed some of the already existing researches in the field, which could possibly lead to more attention in the results we have presented.

Bosnia & Herzegovina has been developing their gender inequalities since their independence and a lot of research has been done in the field since then. I am hoping that my findings can be of importance in future development of gender

equality in BiH and all other post-conflict countries in the former republic of Yugoslavia. I believe that my thesis have created a bigger understanding about how the issue needs to be approached and how important it is for everyone to understand that they can contribute and make a difference in their society.

Recommendations for future research in this study would be to search for more effective methods that focus on eliminating gender stereotypes, social gender norms and the patriarchy that has stuck in all levels of the society. I believe that finding an effective way to handle and eliminate gender stereotypes would be the key to a fast and sustainable gender equality development in BiH and I truly believe it would be of great interest for everyone involved. In this thesis the gender stereotypes was just one out of three implications that were tested with the aim to explain my research question and I think that more research needs to be done with the focus on only that because of the fact that it was the hardest implication to find evidence to. Another interesting suggestion for future research would be to examine the combination of a top-down and bottom-up approach to develop functional and effective strategies that work on the issue at the same time.

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