Ethnic Voters and Non-Ethnic Parties: Evidence from Bosnia-Herzegovina

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Abstract

While much scholarly attention has been paid to whether institutions encourage or discourage ethnic mobilization, many of these theories leave little room for the choices of individual voters and thus risk being overly deterministic. This paper seeks to define a rough theory that allows for individual voters to have varying preferences over the provision of public goods along ethnic or non-ethnic lines. The theory is tested against data from voting records in the 2006 General Elections in Bosnia-Herzegovina. I argue that the wide variation in voting for ethnic parties and non-ethnic ideological parties is best explained by voters making strategic decisions not only with regards to preferences over targeted benefits towards their own ethnic groups, but also to avoid expropriation by rival ethnic groups.

There is wide scholarly consensus that institutions shape the nature of political conflict in ethnically divided societies. Starting with the seminal debate between advocates of consociational and majoritarian electoral systems, researchers have explored in-depth the types of institutions that can increase or decrease the likelihood of ethnic political mobilization, or, more fundamentally, encourage ethnic cleavages to take on political salience within a society over some other social division. These approaches have been immensely fruitful and valuable, but in their emphasis on institutional factors they have downplayed the role of individual preferences and strategic decision making when choosing whether or not to engage in political activity along ethnic lines. This has had two important consequences. The first is that ongoing debates in the literature are often the result of presumed and untested assumptions about the way individuals incorporate their ethnic identity into political action. The other is that general theories of ethnic
diversity under certain institutional environments run the risk of producing overly determinis-
tic predictions of ethnic mobilization. Scholars have shown how some institutions make ethnic
mobilization a more rewarding strategy than others, but have largely had to assume that these
increased rewards automatically lead to mass behavior. This paper questions the assumption
that voters will automatically consent to mobilize along ethnic cleavages simply because insti-
tutions facilitate doing so. Limiting the study to political action in the form of voting for ethnic
political parties, I will seek to develop a basic theory incorporating individual preferences and
strategic calculations in the decision to mobilize along ethnic or non-ethnic lines. Using this
theory, I will argue that the effects of institutions on either encouraging or impeding ethnic
voting are conditional on individual voter preferences. I will then test the predictions generated
by this theory using voting behavior in the ethnically divided country of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The paper will proceed as follows: Section 1 will review the relevant literature regarding
electoral institutions and federalism in ethnically divided societies. Section 2 will outline a basic
theory of identity, preferences and ethnic voting, and derive hypotheses that will be tested to
adjudicate between competing theories. Section 3 outlines how I will test these hypotheses in the
Bosnian case, and Section 4 presents the results. Section 5 will conclude and discuss potential
for future research.

1 Literature Review: Theories of Ethnicity and Electoral Institutions

The seminal debate in the literature on institutions and ethnicity in democratic governance is
between advocates of consociational democracy, typified by the work of Arend Lijphart (1977,
1984) and others (McGarry and O’Leary 2006; Nordlinger 1972), and those who advocate ma-
ajoritarian, aggregative democratic institutions (Horowitz 1985; Reilly 1999). Both sides argue
that institutions play a crucial role in structuring ethnic interactions, but have disagreed on
which institutions best facilitate democracy in divided societies. Consociationalists implicitly
argue that as divided societies are naturally prone to conflict, the most stable systems are those
where groups are segmented as much as possible and issues of state-level concern are handled
by elites who work together in an environment of consensus (Lijphart 1968). The key char-
acteristics of this system are thus federalism, guaranteeing autonomy to relevant social groups
over the issues of greatest concern to them (specifically the education system, language policy,
and local administration); mutual vetoes, providing each group the ability to block any policies
which could threaten communal interests and thus undermine stability; and a government by grand coalition, where consensus-based policies are implemented with widespread support rather than bare majorities. The system relies, however, on representation of all relevant social groups, and as such relies on highly proportional electoral systems. The principal critique from the majoritarian perspective is that proportional electoral systems encourage organization on ethnic lines and may empower ethnic elites to encourage the very type of ethnic mobilization that is most threatening to democratic governance and state stability. There is an extreme risk in this environment of the type of “ethnic outbidding” (Horowitz 1985; Rabushka and Shepsle 1972) that fosters extremist and destabilizing political mobilization. Those in the majoritarian camp hold that the institutions which best manage ethnic diversity are those which give ethnic elites incentives to create intra-ethnic political coalitions by exploiting cross-cutting non-ethnic cleavages. As majoritarian institutions tend to advantage larger parties, they also disproportionately reward those political actors which create larger, aggregative coalitions. This incentive structure serves to prevent the polarizing and antagonistic political dynamics resulting from ethnic outbidding, fostering stability and cohesion in divided states. For this reason, Reilly (2001) explicitly advocates the use of electoral engineering in ethnically diverse polities, specifically through the use of institutions like alternative voting and ranked ballot systems. These electoral institutions encourage pre-electoral cross-ethnic coalitions that create incentives to downplay the divisive nature of ethnic diversity.

A key difference between the two theories is in the assumptions that lead to the expected reactions of members of minority groups will have when presented with obstacles to ethnic representation. Advocates of the majoritarian approach implicitly assume that minorities will be willing to join politically with another group provided there is some commonality along another social cleavage. From this starting point, institutions which deny or at least limit citizens’ opportunities to align on ethnic lines could even have positive consequences as they may reinforce other social cleavages in a way that is less likely to undermine state stability than ethnicity. Consociationalists, on the other hand, hold that erecting obstacles to group representation to minority groups will likely cause them to question the legitimacy of the state (thereby fueling communal grievances) or engage in political activity outside the state, including violence. These two schools of thought produce radically different theoretical and normative propositions, which result largely from certain assumptions about human behavior and the way ethnic identity is used in political organization. Both also rest on analyses that take ethnic
conflict as exogenous—societies are assumed to be divided along ethnic lines or not, and the fundamental question is what effect institutions have at either mitigating or exacerbating that conflict.

More recent work in this scholarly tradition has advanced this debate by questioning the assumption of the salience of ethnic identity. This approach has drawn largely on two principal constructivist insights: that identity is formed as a result of historical, political, and economic processes (Anderson 1991; Gellner 1983), and that individuals have multiple overlapping identities which can acquire political salience given certain institutional arrangements (Laitin 1986; Pandey 1993). Most recently scholars of ethnicity and politics have incorporated not just institutions, but also demographics to determine whether or not ethnicity will emerge as a dominant social cleavage within a society. Fearon (1999) has argued that the inherently ascriptive nature of ethnic identity facilitates the politics of patronage and “pork”, as the defining characteristic of ethnicity is that, due to its basis in heredity and descent, it is not easily changed. Since patronage politics are ultimately concerned with establishing the smallest possible winning coalition, ethnicity provides a basis on which coalitions can be mobilized while still allowing for the exclusion of outsiders. Chandra (2004) has developed this further by arguing that elites in ethnically divided democracies where providing patronage is a large function of the state consciously engage in calculations of “ethnic head counts”—where population allow for an ethnic group to gain access to political resources without the support of other groups, political mobilization along ethnic lines is a viable and successful strategy for elites to win office. Posner’s (2004, 2005) work in Sub-Saharan Africa suggests that institutions and demographics together work to determine the incentives for ethnic mobilization. In areas where mobilization along ethnic identity alone is likely to result in access to the resources of the state, ethnic cleavages emerge as salient as dominant; where groups are more dispersed, linguistic, regional or other identities are likely to assume predominance. Political institutions, therefore, may not be managing existing ethnic conflict as much as they are determining whether or not ethnicity emerges as the main cleavage along which political conflict is structured.

Aside from electoral institutions, federalism has emerged as a key explanatory variable in the degree of ethnic political activity seen in different countries. Again, scholarly opinion is divided as to whether federal institutions decrease or increase incentives for harmful political mobilization. In one camp, scholars have argued that federalism is responsible for lowering the conflict inherent in divided societies. This could be through the mechanism of lessening
the severity of inter-ethnic security dilemmas (Kaufmann 1996), reducing overall incentives for short-term ethnic mobilization (Lustick, Miodownik, and Eidelson 2004), or through managing competing interests by devolving sovereignty to local elites (Stepan 1999). On the other side are scholars who hold that federalism is dangerous in divided societies, and likely to lead to secession and conflict. This is because federalism at its core does nothing to address the fundamental incompatibility of competing group claims (Kymlicka 1998), or worse, creates incentives for elites to work actively against the state (Bunce 1999). Empirical studies of the impact of federalism on the likelihood of ethnic mobilization have produced mixed results (Bakke and Wibbels 2006; Brancati 2006).

These various strands of the literature on institutions and ethnic politics all share a common outlook that runs the risk of being overly deterministic. Much scholarly work has been guided by the implicit assumption that political outcomes of interest can be explained by the way that institutions structure the relationships between the various ethnic groups within a country. This research agenda has focused on isolating the effects that various institutions have in either increasing or decreasing the likelihood of ethnic mobilization. It has left little room for individual agency and variation of preferences among the individuals who make up ethnic communities. Ethnic groups are made up of individuals, and while institutions or demographics may increase or decrease the potential rewards of ethnic mobilization, such mobilization still requires individuals to go along with it. The next section of this paper will attempt to develop a theory that avoids the potential pitfalls of this approach, specifically focusing on democratic elections in ethnically divided societies.

2 Theory and Hypotheses

This paper represents an attempt to develop a basic theory of the way in which institutions can affect the likelihood of ethnic mobilization depending on individual preferences. I argue that thinking of electoral institutions as either always facilitating or always impeding ethnic mobilization is a false dichotomy. Instead, these institutions should be understood as the ways in which individual preferences are aggregated into political outcomes. The net impact of these institutions will not always be in the same direction, since their effects will be conditional on the preferences and strategic choices of the individuals living under them.

To that end, I propose a theory of identity politics where all voters have, and are aware
of their own ethnic identity. However, not all voters view their ethnic identity as of primal importance. Due to variation in socialization, social position, material interests, etc., some voters may identify on other, non-ethnic grounds. In this paper, I will distinguish between these two types of voters as “ethnic” voters, and “non-ethnic” voters. The primary distinction between the two categories is the way in which they would prefer the political system to be structured. Ethnic voters prefer that the state cater specifically to them—they advocate for disproportionate benefits to their own group, and believe that their interests are best served by political officials who promise to distribute benefits to coethnics exclusively. Non-ethnics prefer benefits and policies be apportioned on some other cleavage, for example class or ideology. In a world of sincere voting, this identity is sufficient to determine voting behavior: ethnic voters will vote for parties that promise benefits to a single group, and non-ethnic voters will vote for aggregative, ideological parties. Under this extremely simple conception, the two groups are characterized and differentiated by their divergent policy preferences. For the purposes of this paper, these preferences are assumed to be exogenously assigned.

In an extremely simple hypothetical election, with a winner-take-all result, there are three possible outcomes an individual could observe. An ethnic party from her own ethnic group could win, an ethnic party from another group could win, or a non-ethnic party could be win. By definition, non-ethnic voters’ most preferred outcome is for benefits to be blind to ethnicity and take the form of public goods to all ethnic groups. However, ideological voters are still aware of their own ethnic identity, and thus acknowledge that they stand to receive some benefits if an ethnic party representing their own group were to come to power. This determines the second preference for ideological voters: if they cannot have non-ethnic, ideological parties in power, the second-best option is for an ethnic party from their own group to win. While such a state of the world does not meet their first preference of benefits going to all groups equally, individuals still reap some benefits from putting coethnics in charge. The worst state of the world for these voters is for ethnic parties to be in control, but for their own ethnic group to be under-represented. Here, not only are they deprived the broadly-based public-goods benefits they think are most important, but they are also taxed and exploited to benefit the other groups.

An ethnic voter, on the other hand, prefers members of her own ethnic group to be in power. These voters are defined by their preferences for state benefits to be apportioned along ethnic lines, and for their leaders to represent their own group exclusively. However, if she cannot have a coethnic in power, the second-best option for an ethnic voter is to have aggregative,
Table 1: Voter Type Preferences

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<th>Preference</th>
<th>Non-ethnic Voter</th>
<th>Ethnic Voter</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>Ideological parties are in office</td>
<td>Ethnic party representing voter’s group is in office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>Ethnic party representing voter’s group is in office</td>
<td>Ideological parties are in office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>Ethnic party representing outside group is in office</td>
<td>Ethnic party representing outside group is in office</td>
</tr>
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non-ethnic parties in charge who will apportion benefits to all ethnic groups equally. While she will not enjoy the disproportionate benefits that go to her own group with a coethnicspolitician, she will at least avoid paying taxes to fund benefits to go to disproportionately to other groups. This happens in what is the worst state of the world for ethnic voters, where ethnic parties are in charge, but their own group is underrepresented. A summary of the divergent preferences between the two ideal types of voters is displayed in Table 1.

In this theoretical perspective, first preferences for each type of voter are determined exogenously, while second preferences represent the next-best outcome over expropriation by outside ethnic groups, either through supporting one’s own ethnic group for non-ethnic voters, or by supporting non-ethnic parties to hurt the ability of other ethnic groups to distribute benefits to other groups. In a world of sincere voting, all ideological groups would vote for ideological parties, and all ethnic groups would vote for ethnic parties. However, depending on institutional arrangements, voters are likely to vote strategically out of desire to avoid wasting votes and implicitly helping to elect ethnic outsiders into office. The most important insight here is that both types of voters are free to vote sincerely only when they are part of the ethnic majority. Take, for example, a non-ethnic voter who finds herself in a perfectly homogenous electoral district composed entirely of her own ethnic group. While she does not know the distribution of ethnic and non-ethnic voters, she does know that no one in this community will vote for an ethnic party of the other group, meaning she can vote sincerely for her preferred ideological party. In this scenario, there is no risk of accidentally supporting the worst possible outcome of an outside ethnic party victory. However, this same voter in a voting district with two equally-sized groups faces a very different problem: voting for an ideological party here is only justifiable if the voter believes that voters in the other ethnic group will be doing the same. If, however, the other group is voting a straight ethnic ticket, then by voting for an ideological party, her sincere
preference, she runs the risk of splitting the ethnic solidarity of her own group, thus making the third, least-preferred state of the world more likely. In short, since the two voter types have a hierarchy of preferences, and will have incentives to vote strategically in some circumstances and sincerely in others, the degree to which individuals will support ethnic parties will vary based on institutional context. This produces a simple and testable hypothesis:

\[ H_1: \text{Citizens will vary in their level of support for ethnic parties within the same voting district depending on demographics of the political entity for which they are voting.} \]

Two key factors should affect whether citizens cast sincere or strategic votes. The first is the risk of expropriation from other groups. Whether voters identify as ethnic or non-ethnic, both groups agree that they do not want to be taxed by other ethnic groups who will use those resources to benefit their own members. In an extremely homogenous political unit, where all members are of the same ethnic group, the risk of expropriation by other groups is virtually non-existent. It is for this reason that consociationalists advocate for federalism in divided societies, as encouraging political decisions to be made at the local level in ethnically homogenous communities is likely to reduce the risk of ethnic expropriation. However, as political units get larger and more heterogeneous, the risk of expropriation by outside ethnic groups increases. This risk is greatest when a group is divided amongst itself in the face of a unified opponent. Take, for example, a society with two equally sized groups, with unknown and unequal distributions of ethnic and ideological voters within each community, electing a single political official. In this instance, two situations are possible: if the groups have equal distributions of ideological and ethnic voters within the communities, then a democracy will produce a society where each group sends an equal delegation of ethnic MPs and ideological MPs. In this instance, no single group has an advantage over the other, and thus everyone in the situation avoids the worst possible case of exploitation at the hands of an ethnic outsider. The other possibility is that the two groups could have unequal distributions of ethnic and ideological voters. In this case, a group with a high density of ethnic voters could more easily win a plurality if the other group is equally divided between ethnic and ideological voters. This problem disproportionately affects non-ethnic voters. For non-ethnic voters, voting sincerely increases the likelihood of a non-ethnic victory only given a certain distribution of preferences within the other community. If the other group is extremely unified behind an ethnic party, then the potential of a non-ethnic
government may already be limited, and voting sincerely can serve only to prevent coethnics
from winning office. For ethnic voters, though, no matter what the distribution of ideological and
ethnic voters in the other community, voting sincerely will never serve to increase the likelihood
of expropriation by the other group. Since the outcome at this point will be limited to either the
dominance of coethnics, or ideological parties. This means that moving from a local homogenous
election to a national more heterogeneous election will give ideological voters incentives to vote
strategically for an ethnic party, but will not encourage ethnic voters to vote strategically for a
non-ethnic party.

The second important factor is district magnitude. As in all democratic systems, electoral
institutions in ethnically divided societies have an impact on how likely a single vote is to
contribute to a representative getting elected, and the way in which electoral system-induced
disproportionality structures the incentives of voters has been well explored in the literature
(Benoit 2001; Duverger 1959; Ordeshook and Shvetsova 1994; Rae 1971). Both ethnic and non-
ethnic voters in an ethnically divided society need to achieve a critical level of support in order
to see leaders elected who share their policy preferences. However, ideological lines by definition
cut across ethnic cleavages whereas ethnicity does not, meaning that only ideological voters
know that fellow citizens in other ethnic groups are likely to share their preferences. Ethnic
voters are guaranteed that voters outside their own ethnic group will either prefer to distribute
benefits along ideological lines, or prefer benefits to be distributed disproportionately to their
own group. In this way, ethnic demography constrains the maximum vote share of ethnic parties
in a way that does not happen to non-ethnic voters. Thus if we assume that the distribution of
ethnic and ideological voters is equal across all ethnic groups, ethnic voters are more likely to risk
wasting their votes under highly disproportionate electoral systems than ideological voters. Thus
in situations where ethnic voters find themselves as minorities, they are more likely to support
ideological parties as a way to hedge their bets against wasting their votes. District magnitude in
legislative elections impacts this calculation by changing the minimum fraction required in order
to gain representation in parliament. Thus in situations where district magnitude is very high,
all voters, regardless of type, are more likely to vote sincerely: since votes more directly translate
into political power, there is little incentive to vote strategically. However, in situations of low
district magnitude, only members of an ethnic group with a clear majority have an incentive to
vote sincerely. Since the total possible share of the vote which could go to minority ethnic party
is capped by their numbers, majority group voters know that the most intense competition in
the election is likely to be between ethnic parties of the majority group and ideological parties elected with the support of majority group members, and thus both types of voters are free to vote their true preference. Ethnic voters of a small minority group, on the other hand, know that even if every member of their own group votes along ethnic lines, they are not likely to win if their group size is so small that that it will not exceed the natural threshold for representation set by the district magnitude. This creates a clear, testable hypothesis:

\[ H_2: \text{All else equal, decreasing district magnitude will lower the frequency of ethnic voting in proportion to the votes going to parties representing minority ethnic groups.} \]

\[ H_3: \text{All else equal, decreasing district magnitude will increase the frequency of ethnic voting in proportion to the votes going to non-ethnic parties.} \]

In the next section, I propose to show that elections in Bosnia-Herzegovina represent an ideal place to test these hypotheses. Given its history and institutions, Bosnian elections provide an avenue to examine the ways that voters try to avoid wasting their votes when deciding whether to cast their ballots for an ethnic or a non-ethnic party.

3 Bosnian Institutions

While Bosnia’s legacy in popular consciousness is synonymous with unspeakable ethnic violence, the reality is much more complex. Indeed, one of the tragedies of the Bosnian civil war is that for decades Bosnia had been celebrated as a place of peaceful coexistence between the country’s three main ethnic groups—Serbs, Croats, and Bosniaks. Between World War II and the Yugoslav civil war, an average of roughly twelve percent of Bosnian marriages were mixed-ethnicity, and close to ten percent of Bosnians census respondents listed their ethnicity as “Yugoslav”—an ideological term linked to Pan-Slavic identity rather than a single ethnic group (Botev 1994). The Yugoslav communist leadership made ethnic integration a cornerstone of its legitimizing rhetoric as, in Tito’s words, socialism must, “ensure that all the negative phenomena of nationalism disappear and that people are educated in the spirit of internationalism” (Tito 1963). Today, despite the violence and ethnic polarization of the civil war, Bosnia has several major parties that describe themselves as multi-ethnic, and campaign on the basis of programmatic and ideological

\[ ^1 \text{In the past, Bosniaks were primarily referred to as “Muslims”, and still are in some journalistic and scholarly accounts. While many Bosniaks are practicing Muslims, many are also non-practicing or atheist. To avoid confusion between ethnic and religious labels, this paper will keep with the convention of referring to them as “Bosniaks”.} \]
platforms promising public goods to all on the basis of universal civic citizenship and not ethnic particularism.

The fact that such parties exist at all is surprising, especially given the way in which Bosnian institutions would seem to favor organization along ethnic cleavages. Bosnia’s current constitution was established at the Dayton peace summit that drafted the treaty to end the Bosnian civil war—the constitution is technically an appendix to the treaty itself (Chandler 1999, 91), and establishes certain rights to each of the country’s three main ethnic groups which are defined as “constituent peoples”. The head of state is a three-man rotating presidency with one president from each group, despite grossly unequal proportions of each group within the population. The constitution is asymmetrically federal, dividing the state into two units referred to as “entities”: the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina\(^2\), populated mostly with Croats and Bosniaks, and the Serb Republic, usually referred to by its Serbian name, the Republika Srpska. The Republika Srpska is a unitary entity with its own parliament, while the Federation is itself federal, based on the Swiss cantonal system. The Federation has its own Federal Parliament, but is also further devolved to comprise ten cantons, each with a dominant ethnic group representing the majority of the population. Within the Federation, each canton elects its own Cantonal Assembly according to its own electoral laws. Within the cantons of the Federation, municipalities constitute the smallest administrative unit of the Bosnian state, and each elects its own municipal council (“Constitution of Bosnia-Herzegovina”). This institutional arrangement is a direct result of the political alliances and compromises made during the civil war. As Croats and the Bosniak communities had made a loose military alliance against the Serbs at the time of the negotiations, the Federation is understood to “belong” jointly to the Croat and Bosniak communities. As a result of population shifts and ethnic cleansing during the war, the cantons themselves are much more homogenous, and operate on a principle of self-rule of ethnic communities (Burg and Shoup 1999). While all ten cantons have a clear majority of a single group, they do vary in the size of minority communities within them. The state legislature is filled by elections held in the entities: two-thirds of the seats must come from the Federation, and one-third from the Republika Srpska. The seats from the Federation are filled by sending three representatives from each canton, elected by a closed-list PR ballot.

This paper will use the federal arrangement within the Federation to exploit variation in the

\(^2\)Note that “The Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina” is one of two regional sub-units within the larger state of “Bosnia-Herzegovina”. “The Federation” in this paper refers to this unit, while “Bosnia” or “Bosnia-Herzegovina” refers to the state as a whole.
level of aggregation that voters are faced with when voting to fill public office. I will concentrate
on the cantons within the Federation to gain explanatory leverage over the calculations made by
voters when deciding whether to vote for ethnic or ideological parties, using data from the 2006
Bosnian General Elections. In this election, Bosnian voters in the Federation elected delegates
to the state parliament and delegates to the Cantonal Assemblies. I can therefore isolate a
situation in which voters simultaneously cast their votes for the leaders of largely homogenous
local community with a high district magnitude (the Cantonal Assemblies), and a larger, more
heterogeneous community with a low district magnitude (the State Parliament). Focusing on
a single election requiring voters to simultaneously vote for multiple levels of administration
presents a valuable analytical opportunity, as it holds constant several factors understood to be
important determinants of vote choice. Voters’ assessment of the economy or the acceptability
of certain parties is unlikely to change in the seconds between when they cast local votes and
when they cast state-level votes, meaning changing retrospective or prospective assessments of
party performance cannot be driving any variation between voting at the two levels. Nor can
party campaign strategy be exerting an influence, since all campaigning would happen before
an individual steps into the voting booth. Since the Bosnian ballot is closed-list PR, variation
in voter choice between local and entity-level voting is not likely to be driven by individual
candidates, but instead by the party platform as a whole. What does vary is level of aggregation,
and district magnitude. The Cantonal Assemblies contained between 21 and 35 seats (with a
mode of 25), and the delegations sent from the Cantons to the State parliament consisted of
three elected officials. Any difference in the level of ethnic voting between the local and entity
level is likely to be driven by the ways voters make strategic choices when voting at lower and
higher-levels of aggregation, and differing potential for wasted votes.

4 Data Gathering and Coding Procedures

The unit of analysis for this study is the municipality, which is composed of various polling
places, the smallest unit for which votes are reported in Bosnia. Municipalities are administrative
districts usually comprising a major town and all the villages around it, though the very large
cities of Sarajevo and Mostar are broken into multiple municipalities. Municipalities vary in
size: the smallest in the sample is the municipality centered on the village of Dobretići, with
roughly 250 votes recorded. The largest is Novi Grad Sarajevo, representing the downtown area
of the capital city and containing more than 40,000 votes. Election results for the Cantonal Assemblies and data at the municipal level was obtained from the Bosnia-Herzegovina Central Election Commission (2006), and consolidated into a single data set.

Electoral registers results show a total of thirty-nine parties, coalitions, or individuals which had been certified by the election commission to run for the Cantonal Assemblies, the State Parliament, or both. Each of these parties was coded into one of four possible categories: Non-Ethnic, Bosniak Ethnic, Croat Ethnic, or Serb Ethnic. The standard used to code parties is one based on campaign rhetoric and political promises. In this, I follow Chandra’s (2004, chap. 1) definition, in that the defining factors of an ethnic party are ascription, exclusion, and centrality. To be classified as an ethnic party, a party must declare itself as representing the interests of a single ethnic group. This definition differs from those used by scholars like Horowitz (1985) and Huber (2012) in that it ignores the ethnicity of supporters. An extreme case highlights the distinction: a party which campaigns exclusively in a homogenous community and receives votes entirely from a single ethnic group, but still only advocates specific policies for class interests, or any type of public goods to voters independent of ethnic origin would be classified as a non-ethnic party. This distinction is based on the assertion that unless the party is specifically campaigning on the promises of policies that will clearly alienate other ethnic groups, it is not an ethnic party.

This definition is valuable for two reasons. The first is for its applicability in testing the theory of ethnic and non-ethnic voter preferences outlined above. The distinction between the two types of voters is premised on the notion that voters have preferences over how benefits are distributed, and that they choose how to vote on the likelihood that their vote will help achieve the best possible outcome under those preferences. This outcome of interest is thus voter choice, and defining a party as ethnic or not based on the type of people that vote for it would employ voter choice as a measurement in both dependent and independent variables, and thus risk tautology. The second reason is data availability. Ethnicity and demography are highly contentious issues within Bosnia, and obtaining demographic data is extremely difficult. Political concerns over changing demographics mean that a census has not been conducted in Bosnia since before the civil war, and survey data on ethnicity is often not made public out of concern that updated demographic figures could undermine the legitimacy of the Bosnian ethnic constitution (“Bosnia Delays First Postwar Census as Regions Fail to Cooperate” 2013)³.

³Highlighting both the political sensitivity of the census and the value of a theory of ethnic and non-ethnic
Obtaining reliable data on which group voted for who would thus be extremely difficult.

Data used to code parties was obtained whenever possible directly from the parties themselves in the form of party platforms downloaded from official party webpages. This data was supplemented with journalistic accounts from sources such as BBC Monitoring International Reports and from secondary academic sources. I was unable to find primary or secondary sources on the four independent candidates who had won ballot certification and two extremely small parties. Rather than risk miscoding these entities, I have dropped them from the sample, effectively treating their supporters as if they had abstained from voting. These parties generally receive extremely small vote shares, usually limited to a single canton, and dropping them is not expected to systematically bias the results one way or another.

For those parties where information was available, coding was generally straightforward, as Bosnian parties often highlight their ethnic or non-ethnic status as a central component of their political agenda. Four of the five largest political parties in Bosnia, for example, include nationalist symbols in their logos, so that all campaign material has an explicit and easily identifiable ethnic component4. Beyond symbolic indicators, most parties are not shy about including ethnic rhetoric in official campaign documents. The Bosniak SDA, for example, explicitly lists “the political emancipation of Bosnian Muslims” as the reason for its founding (Stranka Demokratske Akcije 2012), just as the Croat HDZ’s Statement of Vision aims to “represent the overall interests of the Croatian people in and from Bosnia on all the levels of government, as well as other spheres of life and social activity (Hrvatska Demokratska Zajednica BiH 2010).” Many parties, such as the National Bosniak Party or the Croat Block of Bosnia, explicitly identify the group they claim to represent in their very names.

Likewise, non-ethnic parties tend to advertise their multiethnic status as a way of not only attracting the broadest possible coalition, but also differentiate themselves from ethnic parties. The SDP, the multi-ethnic successor party to the Yugoslav Communist Party in Bosnia not only adopted an explicitly non-ethnic symbol as its logo (the rose, intending to show solidarity with western European socialist parties), but clearly identifies its platform as a multi-ethnic voters in Bosnia is the fact that some sources conducting preliminary census investigations suggested that as many as 35% of Bosnians would declare themselves to be in the “miscellaneous” ethnic category if such an option were included on the census forms (McKelvey 2013). Even if this figure is a gross exaggeration, a number of any size at all in this category could severely delegitimize the ethnic provisions enshrined in the Bosnian constitution. 4 Symbols are frequently used in Bosnian politics to indicate ethnic affiliation. The HDZ, for example, uses a single red square in all its campaign material, to represent the red checkerboard of the Croatian flag. The Serb SDS uses the Serbian tricolor in its logo, and the Bosniak SDA uses the fleur-de-lys which served as insignia by Bosniak military troops during the civil war.
alternative to ethno-nationalist division. The SDP economic platform promises that a vote for the party is a vote against “the predatory transitory capitalism embodied in neo-conservative ethnic parties (Socijaldemokratska Partija BiH 2010a),” just as they claim that ruling ethnic parties have created “inadequate and discriminatory” social policies towards the disabled and those still suffering from injuries resulting from the civil war by “addressing the problems of the disabled not according to their needs and their objective situation, but by the group they belong to and the origin of their injury (Socijaldemokratska Partija BiH 2010b).” The multiethnic Liberal Democratic Party argues that “The establishment of the rule of law guaranteeing equal rights to all regardless of communal affiliation will serve to lessen tension between ethnic groups (Liberalno Demokratska Stranka BiH 2012).” Parties tend to make their ethnic/multi-ethnic affiliation relatively clear. For researchers of ethnic politics, this not only makes coding decisions easier, but also interestingly suggests that party leaders view their ethnic or non-ethnic status as an asset in mobilizing voters.

After parties were coded, I used the total number of votes in each municipality to calculate the following values for both Canton-level and State-level voting: the share of the vote within the municipality going to ethnic parties (regardless of which group), the share of the vote going to non-ethnic parties, the share of the vote going to ethnic parties representing the majority group within the canton, and the share of the vote going to minority groups within the canton. I then calculated the difference in ethnic voting between the State Level and the Cantonal Level to determine the magnitude and direction of the change in the degree of ethnic voting. A positive value on this variable indicates that voters within the municipality voted for ethnic parties at a higher rate at the state level than they did at the local level. This value will be used as the dependent variable in a series of regressions designed to test the hypotheses outlined in Section 2.

5 Analysis

Figure 1 shows the degree of variation in ethnic voting by plotting the level of ethnic voting at the State level on the y-axis, and the level of ethnic voting at the canton level on the x-axis. Points on the diagonal reference line indicate the same level of ethnic voting at both levels of government. Strikingly few data points are on the reference line, indicating that a large section of voters are changing their propensity to vote on ethnic lines between cantonal and state levels.
Some points are extremely far from the reference line, suggesting that ethnic voting patterns can change dramatically between levels of aggregation. Overall, there are more data points above the line than below, suggesting that on the whole, the trend is towards an increase in ethnic voting moving from local to national levels. This supports $H_1$, in that voters are clearly varying their level of support depending on the size of the political unit whose leaders they are electing. The more general aspects of the theory is supported quantitatively by the average value of the change in ethnic voting, $0.136$ ($t = 4.78, p < .001$). This positive value comports to the theory of ethnic and ideological voting preferences outlined above. Cantons on average comprise much more homogenous districts than the state as a whole, and the district magnitude is higher for Cantonal Assemblies than it is for the state Parliament. Since the theory predicts that either of these individually will increase the likelihood of ethnic voting, the positive and significant value of this average supports the theory.

Next I run a series of OLS regressions using the change in ethnic voting as the dependent variable. Models 1-3 are intended to test $H_2$. While we have seen that on the whole Bosnian voters are more likely to support ethnic parties at the state level than at the canton level, the
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>Model 3 (\text{Canton Fixed Effects})</th>
<th>Model 4</th>
<th>Model 5 (\text{Canton Fixed Effects})</th>
<th>Model 6</th>
<th>Model 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Majority Vote Share</td>
<td>.024 (\text{.048})</td>
<td>.011 (\text{.027})</td>
<td>.054 (\text{.042})</td>
<td>.018 (\text{.037})</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority Vote Share</td>
<td>-.632*** (\text{.076})</td>
<td>-.629*** (\text{.077})</td>
<td>-.462*** (\text{.053})</td>
<td>-.357*** (\text{.051})</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Ethnic Vote Share</td>
<td>.789*** (\text{.076})</td>
<td>.790*** (\text{.076})</td>
<td>.360*** (\text{.118})</td>
<td>.534*** (\text{.046})</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>.265*** (\text{.026})</td>
<td>.267*** (\text{.026})</td>
<td>-.191*** (\text{.036})</td>
<td>-.187*** (\text{.037})</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted (R^2)</td>
<td>0.466</td>
<td>0.461</td>
<td>0.845</td>
<td>0.582</td>
<td>0.582</td>
<td>0.707</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N)</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Standard Errors in Parentheses. *: \(p<.05\); **: \(p<.01\); ***: \(p<.001\)

theory I have outlined predicts that this tendency will decrease in relation to the proportion of minority group ethnic voters there are. I therefore regress the change in ethnic voting between canton and state levels on the share of votes going to minority ethnic parties at the cantonal level. Model 1 is a simple univariate regression, while Model 2 controls for the potential for voter abstentions. Including a measure of abstentions controls for the fact that some ethnic voters, when faced with the increased difficulty of winning seats in the state parliament, may decide simply to leave their ballot blank. This may especially be a problem if a voter’s preferred party does not stand for election at both levels\(^5\). Model 3 employs canton-level fixed effects as a control for variation within cantons that may be correlated with voters’ decisions, such as previous

\(^5\)Abstentions are a potential issue in Serb enclaves, notably the municipalities of Drvar, Glamoc, and Bosansko Grahovo. Since Serbs are an extreme minority community and a Serb ethnic party winning even a single seat was virtually impossible, Serb parties did not run for parliamentary seats in these districts. In separate regressions (not shown), excluding these Serb enclaves does not undermine the results. Abstention share is defined as the total number of votes at the canton level subtracted from the total number of votes at the state level, then divided by the total number of votes at the canton level.
policies implemented by the cantonal governments, variation in economic conditions, and the slight differences in the size of the Canotal Assemblies themselves. In all three models, the value of the coefficient is negative and highly significant. In models 1 and 2, the constant produced by the regression is positive and highly significant, as well. This comports with the predictions of the theory. Essentially, these values taken together support the notion that moving from the cantonal level to the state level has a positive increase on the propensity towards ethnic voting in a municipality, but that this tendency is offset by a decrease in ethnic voting in proportion to the number of minority voters. The fixed effects model does decrease the magnitude of the coefficient on minority vote share (most likely due to the fact that one of the main ways in which cantons differ from each other is ratio of the size of the majority group to the minority group), but the value remains negative and highly significant. All three of these models comport with the theoretical prediction, and help to confirm $H_2$.

Models 4, 5, and 6 are intended to test $H_3$. I use the same dependent variable, but instead regress change in ethnic voting between state and cantonal levels on the share of voters who had voted for non-ethnic parties at the cantonal level. In all three models, the coefficient is positive and significant, suggesting that ethnic voting at the state level increases in proportion to the level of non-ethnic voting at the cantonal level. The fixed effects model lowers the coefficient dramatically, but it remains significant and in the positive direction. All of these results conform to the predictions of $H_3$.

Model 7 is shown to test the robustness of the previous regressions against the potential for spurious correlation. Since all votes are coded as either minority ethnic, majority ethnic, or non-ethnic, then by definition the sum of these vote shares must equal one. The three values are therefore likely to be highly correlated, and it is possible that regressing the change in ethnic voting between cantonal and state levels is capturing some work done by the majority vote share. Including all three terms (dropping the constant term, to avoid colinearity) together shows that the coefficient on majority vote share at the cantonal level remains small and statistically insignificant, while the minority and non-ethnic vote share terms remain significant and in the expected direction. This further helps to confirm all three hypotheses, but also conforms to the more general predictions of the theory. Since those ethnic voters in the majority group are less likely to be voting against their own interests by voting their sincere preferences, the size of this group should not impact the change between ethnic voting and non-ethnic voting. Those who are ethnic voters in the minority group and non-ethnic voters face the biggest potential threat.
of wasting their vote, and thus their strategic calculations should be driving the change between ethnic and non-ethnic voting.

6 Conclusions and Implications for Further Research

While the results here have shown support for a theory of ethnic voting based on strategic calculations to avoid wasting votes between two different types of voters, the limits of the conclusions which can be drawn should be explicitly stated. Firstly, as I have focused on the results from a single election in a single country, I have been able to treat individual preferences for ethnic parties or ideological parties as exogenous. In order to show that the theory has value for generalizable conclusions, it will be necessary to more explicitly acknowledge the potential for endogenous change of voter preferences. Exploring this endogenous change will help explain whether consociational institutions designed to mitigate ethnic conflict ultimately increase or decrease ethnic mobilization among citizens in divided societies. In examining a single election in a single country, I have also exploited the existence of both ethnic and non-ethnic parties, providing voters with a choice between ethnic and ideological alternatives. The fact that both types of parties exist in Bosnia is likely to be related to this endogenous process of identity formation among voters, and will need to be explored further in order to grasp the ways in which ethnicity and political institutions interact.

Nevertheless, some potentially valuable conclusions can be tentatively drawn from the results of this study. The first is that in Bosnia, the fear of expropriation by other groups seems to have caused citizens to alter their voting behavior. In some cases it has driven minority ethnic groups into alliances with non-ethnic, ideological parties, and has driven ideological voters to rally with their own ethnic group. If we believe ethnic voting to be damaging to a state either through its likelihood to increase conflict or its ability to hinder economic development, then we should better understand the way that electoral institutions may play a role in making individuals more or less likely to vote ethnically. It also suggests a potential policy implication in that minority groups may be best integrated into the polity as a whole by the development of large, aggregative non-ethnic parties, rather than by minority-community parties, as is suggested by consociational theories. The second implication is for research design in exploring ethnicity and political behavior. Many researchers have tried to explain political outcomes in ethnically divided countries by examining whether institutions make ethnicity the dominant political cleavage or
not. This research agenda would typically ask whether the Bosnian system of consociational government has made ethnicity more or less relevant to political outcomes. Such a question misses the point though, as Bosnian institutions have had different effects on people depending on their preferences: it has made some voters more likely to vote on ethnic lines and some voters less likely. The approach here holds that institutions may have divergent affects in either increasing or decreasing the salience of ethnicity in politics depending on the level of aggregation and underlying preferences and demographics inherent in the society in question.
Appendix: List of Party Codings

**Bosniak Ethnic Parties**
- Bosanskohercegovačka Patriotska Stranka - Sefer Halilović
- Narodna Bošnjačka Stranka
- SDA-Stranka Demokratske Akcije
- Stranka za Bosnu i Hercegovinu

**Croat Ethnic Parties**
- Hrvatska Demokratska Zajednica BIH
- Hrvatska Koalitija-HNZ,HSP
- Hrvatski Blok BiH
- Hrvatsko Zajedništvo (HDZ 1990 HZ-HSS-HKDU-HDU-Demokršcani)
- HSP Đapic Jurišić i NHI-Koalicija za Jednakopravnost
- Koalicija HNZ - HSP

**Serb Ethnic Parties**
- Demokratski Narodni Savez-DNS
- Demokraski Pokret Srpske
- PDP RS Partija Demokratskog Progres Republike Srpske

Bosnian-Hercegovinian Patriotic Party - Sefer Halilovic
National Bosniak Party
Party of Democratic Action
Party for Bosnia-Herzegovina
Croatian Democratic Union
Croatian Coalition
The Croatia Block of Bosnia
Croatian Unity Coalition
Coalition for Equality
HZN-HSP Coalition
Democratic National Union
Demokratic Movement of Srpska
Party of Democratic Progress of The Republic Srpska
Savez Nezavisnih Socijaldemokrata - SNSD- Milorad Dodik
UNION OF INDEPENDENT SOCIAL DEMOCRATS - MILORAD DODIK

SDS- Srpska Demokratska Stranka
SERBIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY

Non-Ethnic Parties

BH-Slobodni Demokrati
FREE DEMOCRATS

Bosanko Podrinjska Narodna Stranka
BOSNIAN PODRINIAN NATIONAL PARTY

Demokrati Bosne i Hercegovine
DEMOCRATS OF BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

Demokratska Narodna Zajednica BiH
DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL UNION

Demokratska Stranka Invalida BiH
THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF THE HANDICAPPED

Evropska Ekološka Stranka E-5
THE EUROPEAN ECOLOGICAL PARTY E-5

Građanska Demokratska Stranka Bosne i Hercegovine
CIVIC DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

Liberalno Demokratska Stranka Bosne i Hercegovine
LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

Narodna Stranka Radom za Boljitak
THE NATIONAL PARTY OF WORK TOWARDS PROGRESS

Patriotski Blok BOSS SDU BiH
THE PATRIOTIC BLOCK OF BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

Pokret za Promjene Bosne i Hercegovine
MOVEMENT TO CHANGE BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

Politički Pokret Mladih BiH
POLITICAL MOVEMENT OF THE YOUTH OF BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA
SDP - Social Demokratska Partija Bosne i Hercegovine - Socialdemokrati BiH
Social Democratic Party of Bosnia-Herzegovina

SP - Socijalistička Partija
Social Democratic Party

Stranka Penzionera-Umirovljenika BiH
Pensioner’s and Retiree’s Party

Zavičajni Socijaldemokrati- Mile Marčeta
Regional Social Democrats - Mile Marčeta

Zeleni Bosne i Hercegovine
The Greens of Bosnia-Herzegovina
References


