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## Living with Heterogeneity Bridging the Ethnic Divide in Bosnia

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### Abstract

Short of partition, many scholars hold that consociational arrangements are the most effective democratic institutional mechanisms to manage ethnic differences and maintain peace in nations and groups recently engaged in violent ethnic conflict. Many countries have implemented consociational arrangements to redress identity-based conflicts over recognition and resources, but the empirical record is mixed at best. Restoring moderate politics and democratic order in ethnically divided societies after war is difficult. Consociationalism, however, is usually not the best or the only option. Consociationalism fails as a viable post-conflict political system, we argue, because it tends to reinforce centrifugal politics and to reify identity-based cleavages. The implementation of centripetal social and institutional reforms, which foster political and economic incentives for communities to reintegrate refugees, diversify existing populations, and engage in coalition politics, is more likely to restore moderation and minimize the risk of renewed ethnic violence. We explore these arguments using the critical case of Bosnia, drawing on examples from other parts of the world that have faced similar challenges. We argue that efforts to balance majority rule and the rights of the constituent peoples in Bosnia have created an unwieldy power-sharing architecture that satisfies none of the parties and is unable to govern. Post-war and deeply divided democracies, such as Bosnia, require reforms that move towards a centripetal, incentives-based approach to institutional design.

### Keywords

consociationalism, heterogenisation, institutional design in divided societies, post-conflict democracy, conciliatory strategies, centripetal politics.

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The principal complication of introducing or reestablishing democracy in war-torn nations, especially ones deeply divided across ethnic or class lines, is the restoration of moderate society. Without forbearance, the same tensions that initially sparked the conflicts are likely to renew: almost half of all post-conflict societies revert to conflict within one decade (Collier, Hoeffler and Söderbom 2008). The article asks whether consociational institutions create effective arrangements to pacify post-conflict societies and build functioning democracies. We argue that the empirical success of these arrangements is at best mixed. Roughly 40% of countries in which consociational arrangements were made in the wake of conflict erupted in renewed violence within five years, and about one-third of all post-conflict countries with consociational arrangements failed to implement them (Högbladh 2006). Even when they are implemented, we argue, consociational principles tend to reify pre-war ethnic cleavages and thus to preclude post-war multi-ethnic parties and cross-ethnic coalitions. This is what has happened in Bosnia.

The article discusses an alternative framework of centripetal, incentive-based institutions that has greater potential to create truly multi-ethnic democracies, even in the wake of war. The main reason this framework is more likely to work is because it focuses on creating more, rather than less, heterogeneity. The centripetal approach focuses on creating strong electoral incentives for office seeking politicians to appeal in a moderate manner to other ethnic groups. It is designed to engender a set of social and institutional reforms that diversify existing populations foster political incentives for communities to reintegrate refugees and engage in coalition politics across ethnic lines. Such a system is not a panacea, and will face resistance, especially from ethnic extremists who will lose under it, but it is much more likely than a consociational system to restore moderation, invigorate democratic institutions and minimize the risk of renewed ethnic violence in Bosnia, and elsewhere.

Fifteen years after the war, Bosnia is still a divided nation, comprising many of the same elements that initiated the war. Even though ethnic violence is rare, ethnic hatred persists amongst the three ethnic groups. Indices of “ethnic exclusionism” based on survey data indicate an increase in ethnic intolerance from 1989 to 2003 (Drystad 2010). The system of consociational federal governance, established by the Dayton Peace Accords, provides for the territories controlled by each of the ethnic groups

to function as de facto sovereign states, particularly the Republika Srpska, which has served to crystallize identity-based divisions. These institutions, we argue, have worked to diminish incentives for politicians to seek inter-ethnic cooperation and adopt conciliatory strategies. Instead, we suggest, these principles of institutional design have encouraged nationalist politicians to deepen ethnic and territorial divisions, creating a dysfunctional democracy.

This article analyzes Bosnia's consociational woes and proposes an alternative approach. We first explore general theories that focus on institutional design in post-war divided societies. Subsequently, we show why and how consociational institutions failed to mend ethnic hatred and produced a functioning government in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Finally, we examine the "bright side of heterogeneity" and put forth solutions to repair Bosnia's destitute institutions, building on centripetal political theories and drawing on examples from other parts of the world.

### **Prerequisites for Post-Conflict Democratization**

Bosnia's brutal ethnic violence and dysfunctional democratic institutions have been well documented. In its recent report, the International Crisis Group (ICG) wrote that "[the government] has in effect broken down, and [...] has ground to a standstill... and has been unable to take basic decisions.... It has resources and revenues, but they are ineffectively exploited and distributed.... Revitalising the Federation is essential for Bosnia's survival." (ICG 2010, ES-1). Following the secession of Croatia and Slovenia, Bosnia and Macedonia realized that a smaller Yugoslavia would be dominated Serbs, prompting Bosniak and Croat leaders in Bosnia to put forth a referendum on independence that passed by a wide margin in March, 1992. The decision to secede from Yugoslavia dissatisfied a significant portion of the population – the one-third who identified as Serbs – who subsequently boycotted the vote. Ethnic majorities in each of the respective regions targeted minorities in a campaign of ethnic cleansing which ended December 14, 1995 with the signing of the Dayton Accords (Paris 2007: 98).

Although well intentioned, the Accords did little to restore trust, encourage accountability or reconcile the warring factions to living together again

in a multi-ethnic democratic state. The Bosnian War led to the deaths of over 100,000 people and displaced well over 2.1 million more. The nature and scale of the atrocities committed throughout the war necessitate comprehensive institutional design to reconcile the warring factions and prevent further conflict. The process of reconciliation hinges upon the reestablishment of trust, which in turn depends upon accountability. Reconciliation is a long-term goal, and one that cannot be achieved, we suggest, by separating populations into homogenous enclaves or by imposing consociational power-sharing arrangements, for these only reify the very ethnic divisions that must be overcome to create a functioning, multi-ethnic democracy.

Instead, we argue, what is needed to foster reconciliation is demobilization and desegregation. If Bosnia, and other post-conflict societies like it, are to become functioning multi-ethnic democracies, the warring factions must be integrated rather than isolated. In particular, members of wartime militias must be integrated back into society with incentives to disarm, for the elimination of unemployed armed civilians itself significantly diminishes the ability for conflict to reignite (Stedman 1997; Pearlman 2008). Militant activities, such as looting, are of course profitable in many post-war situations (King 2001). The state must therefore offer pecuniary and institutional incentives that make continued fighting more costly than reintegration. The duration of a conflict is likely to be inversely related to militants' ability to gain employment after the war, since time on the battlefield is time off from school or work, which tends to lower qualifications and skills for (non-violent) employment. The longer the conflict, therefore, the more the state must actively ensure that former militants receive the training necessary to re-enter the job market. The government must simultaneously encourage the dispersion (and thus reduce the strength) of wartime networks and ethnic enclaves. This calls for not only the creation of heterogeneity in cities, but also the diversification of neighborhoods within those cities. The underlying logic is simple: locales comprised of many different groups, dispersed through the neighborhoods, create potentially cross-cutting cleavages that make coalition politics across ethnic lines and moderate cross-ethnic appeals considerably more likely.

Returning minorities to their homes does little to stifle ethnic tensions if the neighborhoods within those cities are not desegregated. Desegregating cities and neighborhoods serve the dual purpose of creating ethnic interaction

and diminishing the effectiveness of nationalist politics. Diverse neighborhoods force politicians to appeal to ethnic groups other than their own in order to win electoral support.

In addition, segregated neighborhoods help enable paramilitary groups to control neighborhoods more easily due to simplifying target selection while mitigating fear of internal dissent. The vast majority of serious secessionist or militant movements engage in selective, not indiscriminate, killing (Kalyvas 2006: 8). Inherent in selective killing is the notion that the perpetrators hold information that allows them to single out the correct target. Segregated neighborhoods enable militants to more easily discern targets. Diverse neighborhoods make this process significantly more arduous, especially in cases when members of ethnic groups are not readily distinguishable. For these reasons, desegregated neighborhoods reduce the viability of ethnic politics by raising the costs of secession, extremism and ethnic cleansing, thereby increasing the probability of “making democracy work” in divided societies.

The scholarly literature has converged on two main approaches to achieving democratic outcomes in divided societies that have recently experienced ethnic conflicts. The first is consociationalism. In his classic work, *Politics of Accommodation* (1968), Arend Lijphart advances a theory of power-sharing between groups aimed at sustaining democracy in multi-ethnic states. He argues that political accommodation, provided for through guaranteed representation of groups, works to foster state unity and stability where ethnic divisions are prevalent. The consociational model requires little socio-economic disparity between groups, the absence of mutual peril, and overlapping loyalties. To stem interethnic discord, it guarantees political representation. The implicit ingredient that enables this system to work in some states is a sense of trust that enables politicians to work across ethnic lines. Lijphart highlights the Netherlands as a critical case for his theory.

In states that have recently undergone civil conflict, however, one of more of these prerequisites is absent. In Bosnia, for example, none of these conditions were fulfilled (Dziewulska 2010, 20). The poverty rate in the Serbian dominated Republika Srpska, for example, is over twice as high as the Federation (Bisogno and Chong 2002). Each side views the other as a threat, and loyalties that cross ethnic lines are limited. By guaranteeing

ethnic political representation, consociationalism takes ethnic segregation as a permanent given, removes political incentives to work across ethnic lines and effectively constitutionalizes ethnic cleavages. This has the effect of polarizing, as opposed to moderating, society.

A second school of thought focuses on creating political incentives for moderation and cross-ethnic coalition politics in deeply divided societies. In a number of seminal works, including *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* and *A Democratic South Africa*, Donald Horowitz advanced an alternative approach that we will refer to as “centripetal conciliation.” The approach offers no representational guarantees, in contrast to consociationalism, but instead aims to establish powerful political incentives that work to diminish the salience of ethnic politics in favor of other cross-cutting cleavages.

In a society composed primarily of extremist parties, voting is equivalent to an ethnic census. Consider the first post-Soviet election in Estonia. Although the Russian minority overwhelmingly voted for the liberal Russian party, their second preference was for the retroactive Russian party rather than for the liberal Estonian party (Reilly 2002, 161). Without the creation of political incentives for multiethnic parties, overlapping interests may not be perceived as sufficiently beneficial to counterbalance the preeminence of ethnic politics. Desegregation is one of the key strategies to help foster such incentives. It disfavors gerrymandering and favors politicians who appeal to ethnic groups other than their own. Perhaps most significant, it diminishes the majority margin. In a desegregated system, minorities can significantly alter electoral outcomes, especially if ethnic groups have more than one politically significant party, since politicians must make compromises to minorities, and this tends to proliferate truly multiethnic parties.

In theory, centripetal politics assumes that different parties cooperate out of necessity, since no single party has a majority. In practice, governments may become mired in deadlock when no one is willing to compromise and parties do not have sufficiently strong incentives to engage in coalition politics. This is most likely to occur when the electorate to which politicians need to appeal in order to become elected is ethnically homogenous. In such settings, which are especially common under consociational arrangements like those embodied in the Dayton Accords, constituents may perceive would-be moderate politicians as sell-outs and traitors.

### **The Dayton Accords and Consociationalism in Bosnia and Herzegovina**

The Dayton Accords not only failed to remedy the deep ethnic divides, but effectively intensified them by taking an ethnically divided government as axiomatic. The Dayton Accords were strongly influenced by consociational theories to ensure that no one ethnic group dominated the others. As a result, it established equal ethnic representation at all levels of national government, provided for a three-person presidency and instituted equal ethnic quotas in the Parliament (Delamer and Rabkin 2006, 18). This institutional design in effect conceded that the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina would always be defined along ethnic lines and would vote accordingly. Politicians were happy to oblige.

The consequence of this institutional design split the country into two de facto autonomous entities, the Serb-dominated Republika Srpska and the Bosniak and Croat Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Bosniak and Croat Federation is further subdivided into cantons, which are dominated by either Croats or Bosniaks (Bass 1998, 96). The logic of ethnic autonomy through splitting the nation and incorporating intricate, but ineffective, institutions was driven in large measure by consociational ideas about ethnic quotas and ethnically homogenous regions (Delamer and Rabkin 2006, 18; Horowitz 2008, 1218). This served to further isolate the three ethnicities from one another, in effect eliminating the demand for and the supply of moderate, multi-ethnic, political parties and politicians.

The nine months prior to the 1996 elections did not afford the international community sufficient time to implement programs aimed at reintegrating the deeply divided groups. By the first post-war elections in 1996, scarcely any reconciliation at all had transpired. The first major war criminals were not arrested until July 1997 (Akhavan 1998, 739). Political leaders from the war-period – including Serbian President Slobodan Milošević, then Croatian President Franjo Tuđman, then Bosniak president Alija Izetbegović, and then leader of the Serbian Democratic Party of Bosnia and Herzegovina Radovan Karadžić – were all still either in power or at large (Meernik 2005, 283). Military leaders, such as the commander of Serbian troops in Bosnia and Herzegovina Ratko Mladić, leader of the Croatian Council of Defense Milivoj Petković, and Chief of Staff of the

Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Rasim Delić, also remained at large during the 1996 elections (Ibid., 2005, 283).

These same leaders prevented the return of displaced minorities to their homes. In the Republika Srpska, nationalist “gangs” combated the return of Bosniaks, whom local politicians called “Muslim Terrorists” (Dahlman and Tuathail 2005, 649). In Bosnia, Croats returning to now Bosniak dominated villages (and vice versa) met with strong opposition from the local majority (Ibid. 2005, 656). Neither the international community nor the Office of the High Representative was able to neutralize these centrifugal dynamics or the powerful appeal of nationalist politicians (Ibid. 2005, 650). Popular nationalist news channels reinforced negative stereotypes, fear and resentment of other nationalities (Roland 2007, 103; Petersen 2002).

Under these conditions, it is hardly surprising that nationalist parties garnered an overwhelming share of the vote in the 1996 and 1998 Bosnian Elections. Parties with platforms trumpeting racism, forestalling reconciliation, and opposing the implementation of the Dayton Accords – such as the Serbian Democratic Party, the Muslim Party of Democratic Action, and the Croatian Democratic Union – took 67%, 80%, and 89% of their ethnicity’s vote, respectively (Riley 1997, 14–20). Although certain elected officials were removed, the damage had already been done – the extremists had been democratically legitimized – and efforts to remove elected officials only served to alienate those who had voted for them and to increase inter-ethnic mistrust (Roland 2007, 104).

Once elected, these officials continued to maltreat minorities, to reinforce nationalist sentiments and to fuel ethnic resentment. Harassment, along with discriminatory job hiring practices, access to healthcare, and property restitution became common practice. In collaboration with state police, officials inhibited refugees from returning to their home cities and condoned the targeting of minorities with physical and verbal harassment (Riley 1997, 19). The result of these policies has been increasing spatial homogenization and decreasing political moderation.

Once elected, the extremists had hardly any incentive to implement the tenets of the Dayton Accords. As a rule, they maintained their nationalist politics by providing asylum to war criminals within their districts, where they were often treated as national heroes. This meant that many fugitives were not captured for years and, once apprehended, were given light



sentences. This naturally delayed justice and diminished trust in the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. In 2004, a survey showed that trust in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina was only 51% and a scant 4% in the Republika Srpska (Meernik 2005, 274, 287). The supremacy of ethnic politics, at the local and national levels, coupled with the extreme degree of federalism, have served only to hamper progress towards the creation of a unified Bosnia. The system of consociationalism established by the Dayton Accords to mitigate ethnic tensions, has led in fact to the election of those least likely to uphold it.

Despite these setbacks, the return of minority refugees within Bosnia and Herzegovina to their prewar cities picked up dramatically between 1998 and 2003, when over 40,000 internally displaced people returned home each year, peaking in 2002 with over 100,000 returnees (UNRC, Table 6). The most intense resistance occurred in the Republika Srpska.<sup>1</sup> Efforts to reintegrate minorities in the Brčko District, an administrative unit formerly claimed by both the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska, resulted in the return of 21,000 displaced minority refugees. This shifted the post-war ethnic ratios more closely in line with pre-war levels, thereby diminishing the overwhelming Serb majority and producing a shared Serb-Bosniak governance unit. Nevertheless, roughly fifteen years after the signing of the Dayton Accords, more than 100,000 people (or 3% of the total population) remain internally displaced.<sup>2</sup>

The international community has also made some headway in the apprehension of several significant war criminals. In April 1996, Croat Tihomir Blaškić surrendered to the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, primarily for his role in the ethnic cleansing of Bosniaks in the Lašva Valley. On October 6th, 1997 Dario Kordi and Mario Cerkez surrendered for their roles in the same incidents. In 2000, former speaker of the National Assembly of the Republika Srpska, Momčilo Krajišnik, was captured by French commandos, and charged with crimes against humanity and genocide in 1992. Former president of the Republika Srpska,

<sup>1</sup> However, the proportion of total minority refugees that returned to the Republika Srpska increased from under 20% before 1999 to consistently above 30%.

<sup>2</sup> Although over 580,000 displaced people have returned to their homes, over 320,000 displaced people emigrated due to problems with property restitution, ethnic and economic discrimination (IDMC, 2009).

Biljana Plavšić, surrendered in 2001 for “creating impossible conditions of life, persecution and terror tactics in order to encourage non-Serbs to leave the area, deportation of those reluctant to leave, and the liquidation of others.” In 2003, the Stabilization Force also arrested the Bosnian military leader, Naaser Ori, for his treatment of Serbs during the war. Many other Bosniak, Croat, and Serb indicted war criminals have since been apprehended (Meernik 2005, 283).

The return of minorities and the apprehension of war criminals have bolstered moderate politics and have created a market for coalitions that cross ethnic lines. One of the main parties – the Social Democratic Party – stands on a moderate platform and offers multi-ethnic leadership (Belloni 2007, 76). In the 2006 elections, more moderate parties won all of the three presidential seats and also performed reasonably well in the parliamentary elections. The increased popularity of moderate political parties has not automatically resulted in a more unified Bosnia, however. Most of the moderate political parties still maintain a constituency that is primarily formed from *one* ethnic group or is based in only *one* of the country’s two governance units. The Social Democratic Party lacks a base in the Republika Srpska, while the moderate Alliance for Independent Social Democrats and the Party for Democratic Progress both failed to gain votes from outside the Serb community.

In large part, the reasons for these party patterns, and the difficulty that parties have in gaining votes outside their own ethnic group lie in the consociational structure of government set up by the Dayton Peace Accords. Although this system was intended to reduce ethnic tensions, it has virtually frozen the ethnic divide through formal separation of voters and politicians along ethnic lines, and all but prevented inter-ethnic coalition politics. This is because consociationalism provides for extensive intra-group competition while eliminating inter-group competition, and thereby removes the need for politicians to make compromises to other ethnic groups in order to win votes from other groups.

The combination of consociationalism and a high degree of federalism in Bosnia has fostered three de facto sovereign nations and created deadlock. The groups in the parliament and the three presidents incessantly veto one another on even marginally controversial issues, which has worked to perpetuate sentiments in favor of secession, especially in the Republika Srpska. The same ingredients that initiated the conflict – ethnic division

and secessionism – persist today in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Without reform, conflict will eventually erupt and the partition of Bosnia will appear to be the only remaining option. The successful secession of the Republika Srpska from Bosnia and Herzegovina would likely trigger the recursive secession of the Croatian Republic of Herzeg Bosnia, which would probably seek to join Croatia, since there would be no incentive for the ethnically concentrated Croats to remain a part of a Bosniak dominated Bosnia. It would also send the wrong signal to neighboring multi-ethnic democratic countries and the minority groups with them, such as the Albanians in western Macedonia or the Serbs in northern Kosovo, both of which could similarly make irredentist claims.

Some scholars have suggested partition as a possible solution to resolving the ethnic divide in Bosnia (Mearsheimer and Van Evera, 1996; Mearsheimer, 1997). The partitioning of Bosnia, even a mutually agreed upon departure, is not a solution that anyone *within* Bosnia promotes, however, except the nationalists of course. The creation of a separate state for the Bosniaks, Bosnian Croats, and Bosnian Serbs would not only validate nationalist politics, but more importantly would completely fail to remedy any of the problems that initiated the conflict. No matter how carefully the new borders were drawn, a clean cut that created three purely homogenous nations would not be possible (Agencije 2010). Indeed, one scholar notes that “the only thing secession and partition are *unlikely* to produce is an ethnically homogeneous or harmonious state” (Horowitz 1985, 589, emphasis added). Cantons have already imposed highly discriminatory laws in a “unified” Bosnia and Herzegovina; it is unlikely that the new, more homogenous nations would be any more benign to their minorities (Sambanis 2000, 440; Siroky 2009).

Kaufmann (1998, 247) has claimed that discriminatory laws in the successor states are “generally less intense than what the pre-partition minorities would likely have faced under majority rule.” Kaufmann, however, ignores the very real possibility of extra-legal discrimination in the new state, including discriminatory hiring practices. Furthermore, it is far from inferentially straightforward to measure non-discrimination in successor states with smaller minority populations, since the lack of protest may indicate *less ability* to challenge discrimination, not necessarily less discrimination. Kaufman also does not consider the selection problem due to *anticipatory* ethnic unmixing; minority populations are likely to flee in

anticipation of future hardships, which effectively removes the issue of minority treatment by removing most *minorities*.

Even if we ignore the pecuniary and human costs, the partition of Bosnia and Herzegovina would be exceptionally difficult to execute. The partition would have to be coupled with population transfers. Whether consensual or forced, population transfers involve trading off the uncertainty of future suffering in a unified state for the certainty of suffering in the process of creating two states. Population transfers are also expensive and arduous to execute, even when planned meticulously (Sambanis 2000, 440). Moreover, even if all groups could agree on partition in principle, it is unlikely that the three groups would be able to agree on clearly defined borders, thus providing a cause for the dissatisfied groups to redress the issue through the use of force. The groups cannot agree on the Brčko District; expecting them to agree easily to national boundaries is therefore unduly optimistic. Needless to say, such disagreements would further damage relations between the Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs, which would simply transform intrastate tensions into their interstate variant, which is frequently more deadly.

That the consociational arrangements currently in place are not bridging the ethnic divide in Bosnia certainly should not be taken to mean that partition is the only answer, however. The Dayton Peace Accords were intended to assuage ethnic tensions, but instead intensified the salience of ethnicity, further segregating ethnic groups, and removing incentives for ethnic coalition politics (Delamer and Rabkin 2006, 18). Despite some progress in resettling internally displaced persons and in serving justice through the apprehension of war criminals, the three ethnic groups in Bosnia remain politically and socially divided. Without change, Bosnia cannot persist as a single nation, even in its dilapidated state. Consociationalism is not working, and partition is not the answer. Centripetal conciliation represents an alternative approach that aims to remove barriers to – and create incentives for – moderate and multiethnic democratic political competition.

### **The Bright Side of Heterogeneity**

The key to the preservation and unification of Bosnia and Herzegovina lies in undermining the appeal of nationalist politics and reducing the salience

of ethnic cleavages. Habariyama, Humphreys, Posner, and Weinstein (2008, 2) examine a phenomenon that they call “ethnic reciprocity.” An integral reason for the vitality and allure of nationalist politics, they argue, is the belief that their own ethnic group will discriminate in their favor just as other groups will favor their own. Some degree of ethnic reciprocity is to be expected in an ethnically divided society, where trust is fragile, but such reciprocity cannot substitute for the state’s institutions if the goal is to create more than an ethnocracy.

The first step towards reconciliation is resolving the basis of distrust: in Bosnia, the atrocities committed during the war. Many of the leaders apprehended by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia continue to deny any wrongdoing in their respective roles in the atrocities of the war (Schabas 2003, 1055). As a result, many of their followers doubt the sincerity and fairness of the tribunals, and believe that their group was the victimized one. Much of the conversation about the Bosnian War occurs only *within* ethnic groups, thereby providing opportunism for nationalist politicians to lay blame on other ethnicities without their ability to respond. This problem would be solved by establishing objective truth commissions to serve as the medium for a dialogue between the three ethnic groups.

Heterogeneity is not necessarily the problem, we argue, but can be part of the solution. In order to reverse the predominance of nationalist sentiment and reconcile the different ethnic groups, several reforms that integrate the population must be simultaneously implemented. These reforms affect both political and social aspects of society: desegregating neighborhoods, reforming education, and implementing constitutional reforms that promote coalition politics. The three reforms complement each other and all diminish the viability of different aspects of nationalist politics: gerrymandering, youth base, and the electoral margin respectively.

By desegregating neighborhoods, individuals from different ethnic groups will necessarily interact more with one another. This has the dual benefit of building a sense of common interest between the groups in their place of residence and undermining fabricated myths and stereotypes used by nationalists to degrade other ethnicities. Most important, diverse neighborhoods encourage coalition politics by preventing gerrymandering and pushing politicians to seek votes from outside of their own ethnic group as a result of smaller majority margins.

The diversification of neighborhoods has a parallel in diversification of the workplace. Like neighborhoods, the workplace is one of the most frequent modes of interaction. Desegregation is not a natural outcome in post-conflict countries, which is one of the reasons that many conflicts recur within the decade, so the government must put forth incentives for developers, employers, and municipalities to diversify. Incentives may come in the form of tax breaks for developers and employers along with increased funding for local governments and subsidies for homebuyers.

Bosnia would not be the first nation to pursue integration, rather than segregation, as a strategy to reduce ethnic tensions. A very prominent example in the modern era is probably the establishment of the ECSC in 1951 integrating former enemies Germany and France, along with Italy and Benelux, less than a decade after the war ended (Moravcsik, 1998; Maas 2007). In 1989, Singapore instituted ethnic housing quotas to encourage integration (Wong 2007, 2). The housing law forced apartment buildings and neighborhoods to possess a balance of inhabitants proportional to each ethnic group's national percentage. To avoid public outrage, the Housing Development Board (HDB) in Singapore did not evict members of ethnicities if they were above the margin. Instead, the HDB would prevent transactions that would exacerbate the violation; for example, the HDB would allow a non-Chinese apartment owner to sell it to a Chinese person if that apartment building already had a greater proportion of Chinese than the general population. Since – and very possibly because – such laws were established, Singapore has been free of serious ethnic violence (Wong 2007, 31). Like Bosnia, Singapore has three major ethnic groups – the Chinese 77%, Malays 14%, and Indians 8% – and a history of significant ethnic tension.

An apparent distinction between Singapore and Bosnia is that the former has an authoritarian government, which may imply a higher capacity to implement such laws than a fledgling democracy like Bosnia. To compensate for its lower administrative capacity, the Bosnia government and the international community could draw on its extensive resources to craft monetary incentives, such as tax breaks and subsidies, to encourage the desegregation of the neighborhood and the workplace. This more market based mechanism is also likely to be more legitimate and enduring in its effects. Thus, even despite obvious differences, Singapore's housing law serves as a powerful example to Bosnia, where desegregation is greatly

needed to reduce the predominance of ethnic politics and encourage cross-ethnic coalition politics.

In addition to housing and the workplace, the third area of focus should be the highly politicized education system, which is one of the greatest obstacles to bridging the ethnic divide in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina created a decentralized education system in which administrative decisions are left to the various municipalities, and many cities have established schools that segregate the Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs. Certain Serb schools in the Republika Srpska teach their students that Belgrade is their capital (Kreso 2008, 356). Likewise, certain Croat schools in the Federation teach their students that Zagreb is their capital (Kreso 2008, 356). Many locally elected officials who are members of the nationalist parties resist removing such material from textbooks in order to maintain the ethnic divides that enable nationalist politics to thrive (UNHCR 2010).

In education, as in other areas, Bosnia needs to move away from consociational decentralization and homogenization, and toward centripetal integration and diversification. Rather than allowing each Canton to control its educational system, one curriculum, taking into account all three ethnicities' perspectives, should be set up, especially for social science and humanities subjects. Further, if schools were desegregated, then the education sector would also benefit in terms of quality because it would be characterized less by ascriptive characteristics, such as ethnicity and religion, and more by achieved features, like productivity and impact. The curriculum would necessarily need to consider a variety of perspectives on ethnically sensitive subjects, especially the recent war and the inter-war period, and this itself would have positive long-term benefits to the next generation. The financial requirements of such reforms – to cover tax breaks and other incentives to promote integration and heterogenization – would be rather small when compared to the investments already committed or to the costs of partition.<sup>3</sup>

Constitutional reforms are also critical to Bosnia's survival. Specifically, Bosnia would benefit in shifting away from a consociational model that

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<sup>3</sup> The EU has given over € 6.8 billion in aid to the western Balkans (EU Business 2010). The United States has given over \$1.3 billion to Bosnia alone since the signing of the Dayton Accords (USDOS 2005).

accentuates ethnic cleavages and toward an incentives-based, centripetal model that promotes interethnic coalition politics. As analysts at the International Crisis Group (ICG Report) put it, "... today Bosnia and Herzegovina has three de facto mono-ethnic entities, three separate armies, three separate police forces, and a national government that exists mostly on paper and operates at the mercy of the entities." Consociationalism may have been an unavoidable concession to terminate the Bosnian War at Dayton, but many of the leaders that blocked ethnic cooperation in 1995 are out of power or are serving prison terms in The Hague.

In practical terms, a shift away from consociational arrangements would greatly reduce the powers of the Cantons. Federalism is an effective tool for dispersing political power in a state that is too centralized. In such cases, it can lead to gains in efficiency and stability. When the distribution of power is based primarily on ethnic cleavages, however, federalism has a tendency to favor ethnic nationalist parties (Brancati, 2009). Reducing the majority margin of ethnic enclaves in a unitary state would considerably diminish the viability of nationalist politics. In this way, identity-based cleavages would be supplanted by interest-based cleavages, thus forcing political parties to make compromises with the other identity groups by forging political coalitions that cut across ethnic lines.

Essential to the shift away from consociationalism and toward a system of centripetal conciliation would be the elimination of guaranteed equal representation at all levels of the national government for the three major ethnic groups. In particular, this would involve removing the one-third guaranteed representation of Croats, Serbs, and Bosniaks in the Parliament along with the three-person presidency. By deleting such guarantees, politicians will be forced to seek political support *across* ethnic lines because no one ethnic group would hold an absolute majority.

### **Lessons from Malaysia**

Such strategies have proven effective elsewhere. Malaysia, for example, contains all the signs of a nation bound for ethnic violence (Horowitz 1991, 461). The Malaysians held a scant majority: the Chinese were well over one-third of the population and Indians represented one-tenth. Ethnic tensions among these groups also have a deep history. Chinese soldiers



fighting the Japanese during World War II treated the Malaysian villagers very poorly. Some nationalist newspapers during Malaysia's independence proclaimed "no diplomacy with the Chinese" (Melayu 1955; cited in Horowitz, 1991, fn. 12). Despite this history of hatred, ethnic violence has not occurred since the 1969 national and state elections. The reasons for this happy state of affairs reside in the predominance in Malaysian politics of interest-based inter-ethnic cooperation (Horowitz 1989).

Since independence, the dominant political parties in the Malaysian government have been the multiethnic Alliance and National Front. The prevalence of ethnic coalition politics is not a result of altruism, but rather a consequence of the payoffs built into the political incentive structure. Heterogeneous single-member constituencies preclude political parties from appealing only to their own ethnicity. By the early 1960s, 40% of parliamentary constituencies had Chinese pluralities and non-Malay majorities (Horowitz 1991, 464). The heterogeneous constituencies provided a smaller majority margin, thereby making Chinese and Indian votes integral to getting elected. This diminished the viability of ethnic politics by enabling the minority constituents to penalize extremists and benefit moderates. Even in localities with a sizable Malay majority, Chinese and Indian politicians could urge their constituents to vote for a moderate Malay and vice versa. As Horowitz writes (1991, 465), "Parties might still evolve along wholly ethnic lines, but—especially if there were more than one party per ethnic group—there would be countervailing incentives fostering an interethnic coalition."

Like Singapore and Bosnia, Malaysia hosts three politically significant ethnic groups. Unlike Bosnia, however, Malaysia has had only brief encounters with ethnic conflict since independence. There are at least two lessons that Bosnia and Herzegovina might draw from Malaysia. First, the solution to mitigating ethnic conflict is not segregation, but lies in various forms of integration. The diversification of constituencies increases the chance that moderate politics will prevail because a more diverse constituency will force politicians to make tradeoffs that encourage moderate politics. The marginalization of majorities requires politicians to reach out to other constituencies to get elected.

Second, consociationalism concedes too much upfront. Built-in representation assumes that groups will always vote along ethnic lines – a critical assumption in the theory with dubious empirical validity. Such a system

is more likely than a system of centripetal conciliation to lead to the election of nationalist parties because it encourages politicians competing for the group's vote to engage in ethnic outbidding. Ethnic heterogeneity is not antithetical to democracy: as we have argued, diverse constituencies create tradeoffs that can actually make moderate politics more likely and discrimination less likely.

### Conclusion

To reduce the salience of ethnic politics in Bosnia, and in many other countries, we have argued that it may be necessary to leave consociationalism behind. In Bosnia, the three-presidential system should be replaced by a single presidency. Guaranteed representation of the Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs in the parliament should be eliminated in favor of an incentive-based system of centripetal conciliation focused on “increasing heterogeneity” in the workplace, in neighborhoods and in the education system. Such a system has more potential to generate crosscutting cleavages, minimize the importance of ethnic divisions and make the revival of nationalist politics less likely. This would move Bosnia out of its current governmental gridlock and promote moderate political competition over issues rather than over ethnic identities.

Bosnia and Herzegovina will not survive as a single state without substantial political and social reforms aimed at bridging the current ethnic divide. The current *lack of heterogenisation*, grounded in a byzantine quota system, has created and reinforced a *de facto* division of Bosnia into three antagonistic, autonomous parts. “Serbs [are] too few to challenge any agreement Bosniaks and Croats make. And the two players are decidedly unequal: Bosniaks outnumber Croats by three or four to one and can claim a leading role that is elusive at the state level” (ICG 2010, 22).

Talks of secession echoes throughout the Republika Srpska on a frequent basis, and the federal government is continually in deadlock over necessary constitutional reforms.

The Dayton Accords were intended to establish a moderate government that would satisfy all ethnic groups and protect human rights. It is no doubt that the Dayton Agreement was not fully or appropriately implemented, but that is somewhat beside the point now. Bosnia must reform if

it is to persist. Reforms should be based on *increasing* heterogeneity, rather than on rewarding segregation. Few dispute that the current government cannot effectively mandate such changes without encouragement and incentives. Therefore, in order to precipitate change in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the already deeply engaged international community must proactively pursue reforms along an incentives-based system of centripetal conciliation, and in concert with key stakeholders. It will be difficult, but it is the best chance for Bosnia to restore moderate society and create a durable, multiethnic democracy.

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