

# Ethnic and Non-Ethnic in Competition: Party Branding and Voter Support in Bosnia-Herzegovina

Benjamin McClelland  
Central European University  
McClellandB@ceu.edu

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## Abstract

This paper measures the extent to which individuals instrumentally use ethnicity to inform voting decisions by exploiting the unique case of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Bosnia's internationally-engineered system of ethno-federalism presents a valuable research opportunity in that: a.) territorial concentration of ethnic groups is such that members of the same ethnic group can find themselves as part of a minority or a majority depending on the federal sub-unit, b.) voters simultaneously elect representatives to state and sub-national legislatures, and c.) a highly fragmented political party system provides voters with a wide array of electorally viable political parties including both explicit ethnic exclusionary parties and multiethnic civic nationalist parties in the context of the same election. Despite strong prior expectations for ethnic voting, this paper shows that a surprisingly large number of Bosnian voters support parties that ostensibly define themselves as multiethnic. Through an analysis of split-ticket voting, in which voters simultaneously support ethnic and multiethnic parties, this paper concludes that variation in support for ethnic and non-ethnic parties is best explained by the rational calculations of voters using ethnic identity to gain information about likely electoral outcomes rather than intrinsic group attachment. Citizens who are members of a local ethnic majority group are more likely to vote for explicitly ethnic parties under increased risk of expropriation by other ethnic groups, whereas citizens of groups which make up the minority in their local areas are less likely to support explicitly ethnic parties due to concerns of vote wasting.

Why do voters support ethnic parties? After decades of important work from scholars of identity and politics, few contemporary social scientists embrace the primordialist idea that ethnic identities are the “natural” social cleavage in divided societies. Yet while it has been well documented how identities can change over time, shifting in both form and level of political salience, many theories of identity in politics still hold that identity repertoires have a causal impact on political behavior in the short term. What is less well understood is the degree of agency that individuals have in choosing which identity in their bank of multiple and overlapping identities will take on political primacy in different contexts. When individuals are given the option of voting in accordance with a narrow ethnic identity or a broader, civic identity, how do they choose?

This paper will argue that for many voters, strategic concerns about likely electoral outcomes are more important determinants of voting behavior than ethnic attachment or the nature of the identities themselves. These voters do not make *a priori* decisions about which identity is most important to them and then vote accordingly; rather, they consider the implications of voting along one cleavage or another, and act strategically in order to avoid least desired outcomes. I will argue that this is the case using the example of Bosnia-Herzegovina.<sup>1</sup> Bosnia is a young democracy, born of extreme ethnic violence creating a lasting legacy of ethnic political tension. It is also a formerly communist democracy, which for much of the last century was ruled by a one-party socialist regime that suppressed ethnic political association. Bosnia represents an important opportunity to study the role of identity in electoral politics. Its extremely fragmented party system offers voters a legitimate choice between parties explicitly advocating for the communal interests of a single ethnic group, and parties claiming to be class champions for ethnicity-blind policies. Bosnia’s federal structure also requires voters to elect officials to multiple legislative bodies during a single election, meaning that citizens will simultaneously vote for politicians governing ethnically heterogeneous and ethnically homogeneous polities. Using a novel coding of Bosnian political parties and a data set of over 6,000 precinct-

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<sup>1</sup>Hereafter, I will use the terms “Bosnia-Herzegovina” and “Bosnia” interchangeably, to refer to the state as a whole. Note that this should not be confused with the sub-state political entity known as “The Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina,” which I will refer to as “The Federation.”

level voting returns, this paper will exploit that feature of the Bosnian political system to analyze variation in patterns of support between ethnic and non-ethnic parties within the same election.

Taking advantage of the geographic concentration of ethnic communities within the territory of the Bosnian state, I compare the propensity for split-ticket voting for ethnic and non-ethnic parties between voters of the same ethnic group, varying whether these voters are the majority or the minority group within their electoral unit. I find not only that ticket splitting is extremely common in Bosnia, but that strategic calculations of voters informed by ethnic demography explain a statistically and substantively significant amount of this variation. The findings have implications not only for the specific case of Bosnia—a country whose development and stability is threatened by political gridlock resulting from intercommunal tension—but also for the broader institutions and ethnic politics. Specifically, I suggest that the literature’s focus on determining whether electoral institutions increase or decrease the propensity for ethnic voting has set up a false dichotomy. As Bosnian institutions create divergent incentives for minority and majority groups, they have encouraged ethnic voting in some citizens, but discouraged ethnic voting in others. Acknowledging the possibility of heterogeneous effects of institutions mitigated by individual strategic incentives and local demographic context may provide a more nuanced understanding of how Bosnia’s consociational constitution has structured ethnic conflict within the country.

## **1 Institutions and the Role of Ethnic Identities**

Over the past several decades political science has made great strides in documenting how ethnic identities are extremely malleable. Seminal studies have shown how structural changes associated with modernization can create new identity repertoires and claims to political legitimacy (Anderson 1983, Gellner 1983), or how political and economic institutions can privilege certain types of racial, regional, linguistic, or religious traits over others in creating politically salient identities (Brass 1974, Laitin 1986, Pandey 1993).

This important body of work has explained why some ascriptive characteristics take on salience over others, but has less to say about why narrow ascriptive characteristics take precedence over socio-economic position as dominant political cleavages. In other words, while we have numerous studies explaining why religion, for example, should become more important than language, race, or other descriptive traits inherited at birth, it's harder to answer why narrow, inherited individual identifiers take on salience over broader civic characteristics.

This theoretical ambiguity has been partially responsible for the long-standing debate among scholars of institutional engineering in divided societies, as one of the primary causes of disagreement between two competing schools of thought is a set of different assumptions on the likelihood of ethnic voting. For consociationalists (Lijphart 1977, McGarry & O'Leary 2006, Nordlinger 1972), instability and conflict are most likely when institutions impede the representation of certain ethnic groups, and as such those institutions should be purposefully designed to avoid closing any ethnic group's potential avenues of democratic representation. This could go so far as to take the form of guaranteed quotas and constitutional powers allotted on a collective basis to ensure the integration of all groups. Centripetalists, on the other hand (Horowitz 1985, Reilly 2001), stress that ethnic representation is likely to create instability and violence by encouraging extremism in the form of ethnic outbidding (Rabushka & Shepsle 1972). The solution for institutional engineers is therefore to use majoritarian institutions that encourage political entrepreneurs to build coalitions along cross-cutting social cleavages that downplay ethnicity. Competing perspectives in this well developed debate rest largely on different assumptions about citizens' attachment to ethnic or non-ethnic identities. For majoritarian electoral systems or alternative voting institutions to end the cycle of ethnic outbidding, voters must be willing to support broadly defined, aggregative parties which mobilize citizens along non-ethnic cleavages. If voters are ultimately unwilling to do this, then those very same institutions will serve to exacerbate problems caused by lack of representation. This paper seeks in part to move beyond that impasse and advance the literature on ethnicity and electoral mobilization by identifying the degree to which voters demonstrate that

willingness, and describe the conditions under which they do so.

One way to establish why voters might choose ethnic cleavages over others is by examining what exactly it is that makes ethnicity unique among other identities, and by what mechanism it comes to dominate political activity. Chandra's (2006) widely-used definition emphasizes that ethnic identities are linked to descent-based attributes, and as such are highly visible and difficult to change. Ethnicity therefore differs from other social identities in its inflexibility and its obviousness. Since ethnic markers are readily apparent, several scholars have argued that ethnicity could serve an informational and coordinational purpose which facilitates ethnic political mobilization in information-poor environments. These identity repertoires can be used by political entrepreneurs and voters to draw boundaries between in-groups and out-groups and thus determine political coalitions of likely common interest (Kitschelt 2001). Evidence supporting this theory has come from both observational studies documenting that ethnic diversity can reduce electoral volatility in new democracies (Birnie 2006, Ferree 2010, Mozaffar, Scarritt & Galaich 2003), and experimental evidence suggesting that individuals evaluate information by relying on ethnic markers of the person who provides it (Kuklinski & Hurley 1994). Informational theories of ethnicity would imply that the likelihood of ethnic voting would be conditioned on the informational environment (Conroy-Krutz 2013). They predict that the likelihood of voters supporting ethnic parties would be low in high information environments, unless new information reveals that ethnicity really does reflect political interest, as could be the case in many countries where ethnic cleavages overlap with regional, class, or social value cleavages. Moreover, it suggests that informational context may explain the difference in popular support for explicitly ethnic parties.

A parallel strand of the literature suggests that the instrumental value of ethnic identity is its capacity to create common interest by facilitating patronage and clientelistic policies. Pork-barrel politics and patronage systems rest on a logic of minimum-winning coalition (Riker 1962), where the support base is large enough to gain access to the spoils of the state in democratic elections, but also as small as possible to maximize benefits to members. The fact that attributes based on descent and hereditary factors are extremely

difficult to change allows voters to know who to vote for and officials to know who to reward once in office (Fearon 1999). This logic forms the basis of Chandra's (2004) contention that ethnic parties succeed as a result of "ethnic head counts," and Posner's (2005) work suggesting that which ethnic identity cleavage is most salient in a given election is dependent on whether tribal mobilization or broader linguistic mobilization will allow a minimum winning coalition to gain access to the resources of the state. Under this approach, ethnic voting could still be likely even in a high-information environment, since ethnic divisions facilitate a kind of clientelistic exchange that voters and politicians may actively support.

The choice to mobilize along ethnic characteristics is here an equilibrium outcome which is beneficial to both voters and politicians. The choice between ethnic and non-ethnic bases of support, though, is not considered. Once the minimum winning ethnic coalition is selected, those outside of the coalition are removed from the possibility of winning in a democratic setting—the consociationalist's nightmare of instability, exclusion, and communal grievance. Yet those voters who are most likely to be barred from power in an ethnic patronage democracy would be also be those who are the most likely to reject ethnicity as the appropriate basis of political mobilization in favor of some other social cleavage. Political entrepreneurs from these groups would be best served not by relying on ethnicity to mobilize voters, but using some other social characteristic which will not exclude their constituents from political power under a democratic system.

In summation, the literature asks important questions of how institutions might heighten or diffuse ethnic tensions. It also provides mechanisms by which ethnicity may influence political behavior, either by providing heuristic cues to overcome informational deficits, or by coordinating political action to facilitate the narrow distribution of state spoils. This paper contributes to this literature through an examination of how institutions might encourage voters to choose the politics of ethnic exclusion over its alternatives or *vice versa*. I do this in the next section by developing a theory of strategic ethnic voting.

## 2 A Theory of Strategic Ethnic Voting

### 2.1 Background and Definitions

This paper starts from the premise that all individuals have some form of ethnic identity, but that it is by no means automatic that such an identity will take on political salience. In an ethnically diverse society, citizens have and are aware of their own ethnic identity. Since ethnic markers are highly visible and resistant to change, voters are also aware that others around them have ethnic identities that may or may not be different from their own. In this sense, some form of ethnic identity is assumed to be universal among the population. Nevertheless, there is no inherent reason for ethnicity to be linked to political preferences. Two voters from different ethnic groups could very easily have the exact same preference for redistributive social spending, free markets, aggressive foreign policy, or any number of policies on which political parties frequently campaign. There is, however, one policy platform on which two voters of different ethnic groups can never agree: the dominance of one group at the expense of the others. A voter from Group A who prefers that all benefits of the state go to her own group will not support the same candidate as a voter from Group B, who under such a regime would be forced to pay taxes and submit to a hostile political authority without ever receiving any benefits. No one will ever support a leader that advocates exclusively for the interests of a group which she is not a member; e.g. an African-American voter in the United States is not likely to vote for a white supremacist candidate, since she knows that she is effectively helping to elect a politician who will work against her own interests.

Political parties and candidates can also vary as to whether they are explicitly ethnic or not. Candidates can campaign on issues that are completely blind to any form of ethnic differences within the polity, or they can explicitly run as advocates of a specific ethnic group. Familiar political promises to eliminate poverty, strengthen the working classes, or establish universal healthcare are non-ethnic promises that would apply to voters of all ethnicities. Promises to give more jobs to members of a certain ethnic group or to defend the culture or interests of a single national group from ethnic outsiders

are clear examples of ethnic political campaign promises. The definition of an ethnic party used here is relatively stringent, going beyond Horowitz (1985), who defines ethnic parties by their basis of support. Instead, I follow Chandra's (2004) conceptualization of ethnic parties as those that meet three characteristics of ascription, exclusion, and centrality. First, they ascribe ethnic identity to their own party, clearly identifying their organization with a specific descent-based social group. Second, they exclude other ethnic groups from their party, making it obvious who the "outsiders" are who will not benefit from the policies enacted by the party once in power. Finally, they make their ethnic identity central to their party identity, and make defending the ethnic group and its interests the central mission of the party's political agenda.<sup>2</sup>

This definition of an ethnic party is useful because it differentiates between parties which are specifically and strategically relying on ethnicity to communicate with voters from those that are ethnic due to circumstance or coincidence. Using the ethnicity of a party's support base to classify it as ethnic means that every party in an ethnically homogenous country, or every party that campaigns only in an ethnically homogeneous region, would be considered an ethnic party. A definition which treats Norway's socialist Labour Party and Sri Lanka's ethno-nationalist Tamil National Alliance as equally ethnic because they are both supported exclusively by a single ethnic community is confusing and inappropriate for understanding why voters support ethnic parties over others. One party is supported by a single ethnic group because it contests elections in an almost perfectly homogeneous country. The other is supported by a single ethnic group because it unabashedly advocates for the communally-defined interests of that group and the increase in power of one group over others. This distinction matters because the motivations of the voters who support these parties are likely very different, and therefore must be acknowledged in a theory of strategic voting behavior.

The primary difference between an ethnic party and a non-ethnic party is thus in the scope of inclusion. By definition, ethnic parties make distinctions between insiders and outsiders on the basis of ethnicity, openly broadcasting their advocacy of the communal

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<sup>2</sup>For a comparison of this conceptualization of ethnic parties with other understandings and definitions used in the literature on ethnic voting, see Chandra (2011).

interests of a single group to the exclusion of others. Non-ethnic parties do not exclude citizenry on the basis of ascriptive identities, but instead promise to govern on the basis of some set of universal values that could, at least theoretically, include all citizens.<sup>3</sup>

In short, the theoretical assumptions of this paper are that ethnicity is always present, but not always relevant. Voters have an ethnic identity, but can choose to attach political salience to it or not. In the same vein, political parties can choose to campaign as ethnic champions, or as advocates of some other political position. The ethnic/non-ethnic distinction is here understood to be dichotomous. Since the standard for an ethnic political party is that it explicitly advocates for a single ethnic group, ignoring all others, it is impossible for a party to be “partly ethnic.”

## 2.2 Voters’ Strategic Calculations

Consider an extremely simple hypothetical election, with a winner-take-all result, where there are three possible outcomes for a voter to consider. A non-ethnic party could win, an ethnic party representing her own group could win, or an ethnic party representing an outside group could win. Regardless of what a voter’s true preference is, the least desired outcome is the same: an outsider-dominated ethnic party in power. This worst-case scenario is the same for everyone, regardless of how much political importance they attach to their own ethnic identity. Take, for example, an extremely progressive voter from Group A. Despite her true preference, this voter would likely prefer even a conservative government over a regime dominated by Group B which will distribute resources only to fellow members of Group B, denying Group A citizens the benefits of the state while still subjecting them to its coercive power. Despite her progressive values, this voter would even prefer an ethnic party from her own group to be in charge over this outcome, knowing that while the situation may not be ideal, she still stands to gain some benefit from having her own coethnics in power and distributing resources to her group at the expense of others. On the other hand, consider an ethnic nationalist voter from Group A whose true preference is for an ethnic party to be in power, benefiting only Group

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<sup>3</sup>The distinction between these two is essentially the same as the classical distinction between civic and ethnic nationalism. For a definition and critique of the civic/ethnic distinction, see Brubaker (1999).

A citizens to the deprivation of all others. Despite the fact that this person has very different priorities from her progressive fellow Group A member, they share the same disdain of a Group B-dominated government. Thus while their first preferences differ greatly, their least-desired outcome is the same.

This commonality of interests is a result of the highly visible and unchanging nature of ethnic identities. Even voters who are reluctant to attach any form of political significance to ethnicity know that their own ethnic identity holds the potential to make them both a target of outsider scorn and the beneficiary of coethnic largesse. Ethnicity also provides information on the likely behavior of other voters. An individual voter might not know what her fellow citizens' true preferences are, but she does know that no one in her own group will prefer to be dominated by ethnic outsiders. She can never know for sure how exactly her coethnics would vote, but she can make the reasonable assumption that none of them will support any party that is explicitly declared to be a champion of an outside group.

Since no one will vote for an ethnic party of an outside ethnic group, the degree of ethnic homogeneity is a proxy for the risk of ethnic expropriation and domination by other groups. In a perfectly homogenous country with only one ethnic group, there is absolutely no risk of ethnic expropriation by an outside group, since there are no voters to support such a party. As the degree of homogeneity decreases, though, the risk of domination increases. In a country where 90% of the population is of ethnic Group A, and 10% is of ethnic Group B, those in Group A can be reasonably assured that a Group B electoral victory is unlikely. This could only come about through a series of extremely unlikely scenarios, such as Group A evenly splitting their votes between 10 different parties (each getting 9% of the vote), and Group B unanimously supporting an ethnic party which could win with 10%. However, in a country more evenly split between the two groups, for example with Group A having 60% of the population and Group B having 40%, this situation is completely plausible. If Group A splits its support between two parties each earning 30% of the total vote and Group B is united in its support of a single ethnic party, Group B's ethnic party can win the election with a 40% plurality.

This example shows the way in which calculations for ethnic voting vary between majority and minority groups. While fragmentation and coordination failure are the biggest risks for majority groups, minority groups' biggest risk is wasting votes on parties which have no shot at winning. By definition, ethnic minority groups are numerically smaller than the majority group, and thus face an upper limit on the support that ethnic parties claiming to represent them can count on. Given the unlikelihood of the scenario described above, even fully unified support behind a single ethnic party is likely to be unable to overcome the simple numerical obstacle to win enough votes to assume office. Ethnic minority parties thus risk being electorally unviable, and voters risk wasting their votes by supporting them. However, ethnic minority voters who seek to avoid the worse possible outcome—domination at the hands of a majority group—may be able to undercut ethnic majority parties by voting for non-ethnic parties. While they know the possible support for ethnic minority parties is capped due to demographics, non-ethnic parties are likely to have some level of support within the majority group. By strategically supporting a non-ethnic party despite a true preference for an ethnic party, members of the minority group can increase the likelihood that a non-ethnic party will win out over an ethnic majority party. In this sense, ethnic minority members seeking to avoid expropriation by other groups have a strategic incentive to vote for a non-ethnic party despite a true preference for an ethnic party, but never an incentive to vote for an ethnic party over a non-ethnic party.

### **2.3 Between-District and Within-District: Variation in Incentives for Strategic Voting**

Actual elections are more complicated than the simple winner-take all example above. Mainly, they differ in two key aspects: the degree to which institutions increase or decrease the risk of vote wasting and coordination failure, and the potential for between-group conflict. The voluminous literature on electoral institutions and party systems has clearly identified several important institutional rules that increase or decrease the risk of vote wasting. Perhaps the most striking finding of this research has been the effect of district

magnitude in lessening the strategic concerns and facilitating the entry of smaller groups into government (Duverger 1954, Rae 1967, Ordeshook & Shvetsova 1994, Cox 1997, Stoll 2013). This literature has consistently found that increasing district magnitude lowers the hurdles faced by ethnic minority group members, since fewer votes are required in order to gain entry into office. This aspect of electoral rules most directly affects the strategic calculations of minority-group members who sincerely prefer ethnic parties by reducing the risk of vote-wasting. Increasing district magnitude effectively lowers this concern by reducing barriers to entry for minority ethnic parties and diminishing the incentives for strategic voting.

These institutional effects have been documented to be strongest at the district level, rather than the state as a whole (Cox 1997, Chhibber & Kollman 1998). As such, the viability of explicitly ethnic parties depends on the distribution of the population within electoral district boundaries (Bochsler 2011, Lublin 2014). Since strategic calculations from both voters and parties must take place at the electoral district level, the viability of ethnic parties depends not on who is the minority or the majority within the entire country, but within the district. In a country with a majority of members of Group A and a minority of Group B, members of Group B have concerns over vote wasting only if they live in electoral districts where they are also a minority. If members of Group B are territorially concentrated within electoral districts, then their concerns over the viability of ethnic parties are mitigated. Thus the exact same voter would strategically vote differently depending on the demographic composition of her surroundings.

Between-district concerns also matter. Voters who are members of within-district majorities do not have to worry about the viability of ethnic parties, but they do have to worry about the potential for expropriation from the state if other districts elect ethnic parties which seek to capture the state for a single ethnic group. For these voters, an ethnic party might be desirable in that it is better able to protect communitarian interests against a hostile attack from other groups. Thus while a member of a local ethnic majority does not have to worry about wasting her vote on non-viable ethnic parties, she does have to worry about whether other ethnic groups which are a majority in other districts will

		Voter's Local Demographic Situation	
		Local Majority	Local Minority
Voter's Sincere Preference	Ethnic Party	Vote sincerely	Strategically vote for a non-ethnic party
	Non-Ethnic Party	Strategically vote for an ethnically identified party	Vote sincerely

Table 1: A Theory of Strategic Ethnic Voting

be electing leaders which seek benefits for their own group only. For voters in this group, there may be strategic reasons to elect an ethnic party despite a true preference for a non-ethnic party, but not the other way around.

This is not an attempt to explain all voting behavior in an ethnically divided country. It is only to say that strategic concerns when deciding whether or not to support an explicitly ethnic party vary substantially for members of the within-district majority and minority groups. In fact, strategic ethnic voting places high cognitive demands on voters that may be too great for many citizens. It requires awareness of electoral rules and demographics, as well as comparatively complex calculations about likely outcomes. This may be somewhat counter-intuitive given the abundance of studies documenting voters' reliance on on heuristics and party brands in order to avoid the costs associated with obtaining this information (Sniderman, Brody & Tetlock 1993, Ferejohn & Kuklinski 1990, Green, Palmquist & Schickler 2004). Nevertheless, it can be said that if voters are voting strategically, then the deviation between sincere preference and observed voting (either in favor or against explicitly ethnic parties) should vary systematically between local majority and minority voters. An outline of those systematic differences is presented in Table 1.

### 3 Bosnia-Herzegovina: Ethnic Electoral Institutions

An ideal test of the theory would take a set of voters, present them with a choice between avowedly ethnic and non-ethnic parties, and vary the institutional circumstances under which those citizens cast their ballots. While doing so in a perfectly controlled laboratory

setting is not feasible, Bosnia-Herzegovina's unique constitutional arrangement presents a valuable opportunity to measure ethnic voting under a variety of institutional settings. Under Bosnia's complicated system of ethno-federalism, voters are asked to elect leaders to multiple governing bodies simultaneously, under varying levels of risk of coordination failure and vote-wasting.

Bosnia's byzantine electoral system has been called "the world's most complicated system of government" (Nardelli, Dzidic & Jukic 2014). This is largely due to the fact that the Bosnian constitution is the result of a peace treaty designed to end the Bosnian civil war, when negotiations were more concerned with putting an immediate stop to genocide than establishing effective state institutions. Bosnian constitutional design was guided by diplomatic concessions and war-time expediency: borders of administrative units in Bosnia reflect the front lines of fighting and territorial control of 1995, and the constitution defines the Serb, Croat, and Bosniak<sup>4</sup> ethnic communities as Bosnia's "constituent peoples"—ignoring the Roma, Jews, and other minority groups in the country who due to their small population had neither military strength nor diplomatic representation during the fighting. The current constitution protects the interests of these three main groups through two institutional safeguards: the political autonomy of ethnically homogenous territorial units, and a series of quotas and veto powers that ensure equal representation and authority of all three groups.<sup>5</sup>

Territorial autonomy is established by a system of asymmetric federalism, dividing the state in to two units referred to as "entities": the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina,<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>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, atheist, or adherents of other faiths. To avoid confusion between ethnic and religious labels, this paper will keep with the convention of referring to them as "Bosniaks."

<sup>5</sup>Institutions protected by quotas are the presidency, a three-person body with one president from each ethnic group elected from ethnically segregated ballots; and the upper house of parliament, composed of five members of each of the three ethnic groups appointed by the sub-national entities. Each president and each ethnic caucus in the upper house can veto any legislation it deems harmful to the vital interests of its ethnic community, in theory to protect all ethnic groups against expropriation from the others. While the ethnic quota system and institutions governed by mutual veto are generally more commonly discussed as the most relevant institutional innovation in Bosnia, this paper will focus on the territorial division of the country. For a fuller explanation of the historical origins of this constitutional arrangement, see Burg & Shoup (1999) and Chandler (2000). For an overview of the workings of Bosnian consociational democracy, see Belloni (2007), Bieber (2006), and Sahadzic (2009).

<sup>6</sup>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

	<b>Cantonal Assemblies</b>	<b>House of Representatives</b>
Constituent People	1 (Either Bosniaks or Croats)	3 (Bosniak, Croats, and Serbs)
Territory Governed	1 of 10 ethnically homogenous Cantons	The entire multiethnic state of Bosnia-Herzegovina
Polity Population	<500,000	4 Million
District Magnitude	High (21-35)	Low (3-6)
Risk of Ethnic Expropriation	Low	High
Risk of Vote Wasting	Low	High
<b>Expectation of Strategic Voting</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>High</b>

Table 2: Institutional and Demographic Differences Between Cantonal Assemblies and House of Representatives

populated mostly with Croats and Bosniaks, and the Serb-dominated Republika Srpska. The Federation is itself federal, composed of ten cantons inspired by the territorial federal units of Switzerland. The empirical analysis rests on the unique circumstances of the cantons. Cantons are much more ethnically homogeneous than the country as a whole. Partially as the result of wartime migration and “ethnic cleansing,” ethnic communities are geographically concentrated within cantonal boundaries. This geographic concentration is further reinforced by official legal recognition linking the cantons to specific ethnic communities, formally granting special protected status to languages (either Bosnian or Croatian) and the use of nationalist symbols in cantonal documents and buildings.<sup>7</sup> Territorial ethnic homogeneity is far from perfect, though, as it is essentially impossible to draw a territorial boundary that perfectly includes a single ethnic group while excluding all others. Moreover, while the boundaries between cantons and entities have not changed since the end of the war, internal migration and refugee returns have served to increase

<sup>7</sup>“Bosnia-Herzegovina” refers to the state as a whole. See note 1.

<sup>7</sup>Which ethnic group a Canton “belongs” to is often made abundantly clear through the use of ethnic symbols. Cantonal seals frequently use either the red-and-white checkerboard of the Croatian flag, or the green-and-gold fleur-de-lys emblem of the medieval Bosnian kingdom used by Bosniak troops during the war. Cantonal governments also clearly indicate which ethnic group they represent by their official names. Bosniak cantons refer to themselves as “*kantoni*,” a word which entered the Bosnian and Serbian languages by way of the various languages of Switzerland. Croat cantons refer to themselves as “*županije*,” the same administrative term used to denote the subnational counties in Croatia.

the ethnic diversity of cities and towns. As a result, while cantons can be said to be much more ethnically homogeneous than the country as a whole, a significant number of people find themselves on the “wrong” side of a cantonal border, living in cantons that are legally defined to be representative of another ethnic group.

In addition, cantons are politically autonomous, and territorially overlap with the electoral districts used to elect the lower house of the parliament governing the country as a whole. In a single election, Bosnian voters will cast votes both for a Cantonal Assembly, and the country-wide House of Representatives. Bosnia’s system of cantonal federalism creates a high degree of overlapping authority between the central and local governments. Both levels are empowered to set policies regarding taxation, social services, education, and public works. While the high degree of autonomy for the cantons means largely similar competencies for both levels of government,<sup>8</sup> voting for the two levels of government takes place under very different institutional rules and demographic environments. When casting a vote for the Cantonal Assembly, a voter is part of a much smaller, much more ethnically homogeneous polity than that which is governed by the country-wide House of Representatives. Since Cantonal Assemblies are fairly large, and use the canton as a whole as a single electoral district, the district magnitude is extremely high, ranging between twenty-one to thirty-five. In the House of Representatives, district magnitude ranges from three to six.

The crucial differences between Cantonal Assemblies and the House of Representatives are shown in Table 2. An important distinction between voting in a Cantonal Assembly election and voting for the House of Representatives is in the degree to which each election encourages strategic voting. The relative ethnic homogeneity of Cantons creates virtually no risk of ethnic expropriation by outsiders for local majority groups, just as the high district magnitude of the Cantonal Assembly causes little concern over wasted votes for minority groups. Neither group is faced with strong incentives to vote strategically, and is

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<sup>8</sup>The main difference in authority between the state level and the canton level is foreign policy and defense. However, even in this area Cantonal Assemblies are more powerful than subnational governments in many countries. Cantons are even free to conduct their own international trade negotiations with other countries, an institutional quirk designed mainly to allow Croat cantons to arrange for special trade deals with Croatia.

free to vote their sincere preference. When voting for the House of Representatives, on the other hand, an extremely diverse population means within-district majority groups must deal with an increased risk of expropriation by other ethnic groups, just as the lower district magnitude increases the concerns of vote wasting for members of local ethnic minorities.

In this context, the theory of strategic voting provides four separate hypotheses about the ways in which ethnic voting will systematically vary between elections for Cantonal Assemblies and the election for the House of Representatives. The first and most basic ( $H_1$ ) is that vote share for ethnically identified and non-ethnically identified parties will vary between cantonal and state-level elections. While theories of ethnic heuristics, expressive benefits, and ethnic preferences hold that voters should support ethnic parties equally regardless of strategic concerns, a theory of strategic ethnic voting requires evidence of voters switching their votes depending on institutional and demographic circumstance. The second ( $H_2$ ) is that ethnic voting in elections for the House of Representatives will decline in proportion to those votes going to ethnic minority parties for the Cantonal Assembly. While sincere ethnic voting in the Cantonal Assembly election is not particularly risky for those who find themselves as minorities within their electoral district, those same voters have strategic incentives to support non-ethnic parties in the House of Representatives, and this change in ethnic party support should be observable in voting patterns. However, since local majority groups have an incentive to support ethnic parties in the House of Representatives, we should also see that a certain portion of voters supporting non-ethnic parties in the Cantonal Assemblies should switch their vote to support ethnic parties in the House of Representatives ( $H_{3a}$ ). This increase in ethnic voting in the House of Representatives, however, should be seen only in increased support for parties representing local majorities, since increased support for minority parties is strategically irrational ( $H_{3b}$ ). These hypotheses are outlined in Table 3.

$H_1$	Vote share for ethnically identified and non-ethnically identified parties will vary between cantonal and state-level elections
$H_2$	Ethnic voting (defined as voting for a party explicitly identified as representing a specific ethnic group) in elections for the House of Representatives will decline in proportion to those votes going to ethnic minority parties for the Cantonal Assembly
$H_{3a}$	Ethnic voting (defined as voting for a party explicitly identified as representing a specific ethnic group) in elections for the House of Representatives will increase in proportion to those votes going to non-ethnically identified parties for the Cantonal Assembly
$H_{3b}$	Increases in ethnic voting in the House of Representatives Elections will be driven by increased support for parties representing local ethnic majorities, not minorities

Table 3: Hypotheses

## 4 Analysis of Ethnic and Non-Ethnic Voting

### 4.1 Data Collection and Coding Procedures

As the mechanism at work in the theory relies on individuals' strategic calculations, the ideal unit of analysis to test this theory would be the individual. However, reliable individual-level data is not readily available in Bosnia. Instead, I rely on an analysis of precinct-level voting returns for parliamentary elections between 2006 and 2014. In doing so, I employ ecological regression to derive implications of individual-level behavior from aggregate data.<sup>9</sup> As the smallest unit of measurement in the Bosnian electoral system, precincts are the best possible unit of analysis for a test of the theory. Precincts in Bosnia are quite small, bringing them as close as possible to the individual-level. Pooling results from all three elections produces over 6,000 observations (even after excluding the two mixed-ethnicity cantons), with mean and median precinct size of roughly 300 voters. Moreover, since precincts represent individual neighborhoods within municipalities, they tend to be much more ethnically homogeneous than the cantons and municipalities as a whole. As the theory holds that membership in a majority or minority ethnic group

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<sup>9</sup>In the absence of individual-level data, ecological regression represents the best possible way to generate estimates of individual-level ticket splitting. See Gosnell (1957), Loewen & Grofman (1989), Freedman, Klein, Sacks, Smyth & Everett (1991), Grofman & Davidson (1992), King (1997) and Cho (1998).

is the primary determinant of strategic voting, analyzing homogeneous precincts should produce the same result as an analysis of individuals. Precincts are not completely homogeneous, though, and there is the potential that systematic differences between majority and minority group members could bias the results. However, this bias would most likely be towards zero, with minority and majority members canceling each other out. A false positive scenario wherein the null hypothesis is incorrectly rejected would result only if majority group members voted for non-ethnic parties at the state level despite their true preference for ethnic exclusionary parties only when they lived in the same electoral precinct as minority members, which seems unlikely. Moreover, the relatively high sample size of this study can increase confidence that any results observed are the result of systematic behavior.

Due to extremely permissive party registration laws, as well as relatively weak party nationalization, the Bosnian political landscape is extremely fragmented. The voting results data contained 149 different political parties, pre-electoral coalitions, and individual candidates who registered to contest elections in Bosnia over the three elections under study. Many of these registered parties were duplicates or alternate abbreviations of parties and candidates listed elsewhere. After consolidating the list of parties registered with the Bosnian Election Commission to eliminate these discrepancies, I was left with 91 unique parties, coalitions, and individual candidates. I then coded all political parties as either ethnic parties representing Bosniaks, ethnic parties representing Croats, ethnic parties representing Serbs, or non-ethnic parties. This was done based on party platforms, party information, candidate declarations, and mission statements downloaded from publicly available political party websites. Of the 91 registered electoral choices, 20 of them were independent candidates or parties so small that they had no trace in the public record that I could find. I therefore drop these votes from the dataset, treating them as if the people who had voted for these candidates had simply abstained. Since these parties are extremely small and had very low levels of support, it is not expected that they should systematically bias the analysis in any direction. In total, the coding scheme covers 98.48% of all votes cast in all three elections.

In coding parties, I follow the definition outlined in Section 2, wherein a party must meet the three standards of ascription, exclusion, and centrality. The standard employed is whether or not a reasonably intelligent voter would be able to clearly and quickly identify which ethnic group a party claimed to support using information made readily available by the party itself. While such qualitative coding requires a certain degree of subjectivity, in most cases it is abundantly clear which group the party represents. Many parties view the ethnic cue as so important to their brand that the name of the party includes the name of the ethnic group, such as in the case of the Croatian Democratic Union, or the Bosniak National Party. Many others employ nationalist symbols in their logo and campaign materials, such as the Bosniak fleur-de-lys prominently displayed by the Party of Democratic Action, or the Serbian flag circling the logo of the Democratic People's Alliance. Unlike in some other ethnically divided countries, Bosnian political discourse does not shy away from explicit declarations of ethnocentrism. The Croatian Republican Party (HRS), for instance, says in its program declaration (Hrvatska Republikanska Stranka 2014) that its guiding principle is "the equality of the Croat people with all other peoples" (note that this is *not* the same thing as the equality of all peoples). This message is typical of the way in which ethnic political parties communicate with their voters, turning all political issues into aspects of a larger, inter-ethnic political contest. Non-ethnic or ideological parties, on the other hand, consistently make explicit denunciations of ethno-nationalist rivals in their campaign materials. The Social Democratic Party, the successor to the Bosnian communist party and historically the most electorally successful non-ethnic party in Bosnia, explicitly advocates for a "new vision... against the Bosnia of the Dayton Accords, and against the increasing nationalist tendencies which threaten to dissolve Bosnia-Herzegovina" (Socijaldemokratska Partija BiH 2014).

The criteria result in some potentially controversial coding decisions. The problem stems principally from the fact that many parties which claim to be non-ethnic are supported almost exclusively by a single ethnic group. Many scholars of Bosnian politics maintain that these parties are simply ethnic parties in disguise, hiding ethnic exclusionary agendas behind multiethnic rhetoric and parading token ethnic outsiders as entries

on candidate lists to gain a semblance of inclusionary legitimacy. Šedo (2010), for instance, classifies the Party for Bosnia-Herzegovina (SzBiH) as a Bosniak nationalist party, whereas I classify it as a non-ethnic party. There are admittedly convincing reasons to label the SzBiH as an ethnic party: its political support comes mostly from Bosniak areas, and it was originally formed as a result of an internal rift within the front-running Bosniak nationalist party. Its founder, Haris Silajdžić, has been elected to the Bosniak seat of the state presidency, and was closely associated with the Bosniak forces during the civil war. Its recent campaign rhetoric has revolved around amending the constitution to abolish the ethnic entity system entirely in favor of a single, unitary Bosnian state. Many see such a policy as a threat to the Croat and Serb communities, who would likely be electorally overwhelmed in such a state by the larger Bosniak population, making such a proposal a thinly-veiled ethnic appeal.

For this study, however, what matters most is that even if its appeal is limited to Bosniak voters, those appeals are made in non-ethnic terms. Serbs and Croats may find the policies advocated by the party unappealing, but they will only do so if those voters already had preferences for ethnic distribution of benefits in the first place. Moreover, since the empirical strategy of this paper examines voter support for ethnic and non-ethnic parties, classifying parties as ethnic or non-ethnic based on their voter support is tautological and inappropriate. Applying the above standard, based on whether parties send explicit ethnic signals to voters or not, helps to resolve that issue.

With a classification of all parties as either ethnic or non-ethnic, I calculated the vote share at the precinct level that went to ethnic parties of each group, and those that went to non-ethnic parties in races for Cantonal Assemblies and for the House of Representatives. I then used these values to produce a measure of the change in ethnic voting between the higher and lower level elections for each precinct. A positive score on this value indicates that ethnic parties (representing any ethnic group) had a higher vote share at state-level elections than they did at the cantonal level. A negative score indicates that ethnic parties did worse (and by extension, that non-ethnic parties did better) at the state level than at the cantonal level. A zero score indicates that the precinct voted for

ethnic and non-ethnic parties at the same rate at both levels of government.

## 4.2 Differences in Ethnic Voting for Cantonal Assemblies and the House of Representatives

The histogram in Figure 1 shows the distribution of scores on this variable. The large spike concentrated around 0 suggests that the modal precinct saw no change in support between ethnic and non-ethnic parties. However, the fact that the lines on the right side of 0 are higher than they are on the left side indicates a general trend towards increased ethnic voting for the House of Representatives over the Cantonal Assemblies. More precisely, the mean level of change in a precinct between Cantonal Assembly and House of Representative elections was 6.9% with a  $t$  value of 29.004, suggesting a modest, but highly statistically significant tendency towards increased ethnic voting in House of Representatives elections over voting for Cantonal Assemblies. This is consistent with the predictions in the theory given the general demographic conditions of Bosnia. As a result of the cantonal system and the relative concentration of ethnic communities, most voters will find themselves as local majorities within their own canton—a situation which the theory predicts favors strategic voting for an ethnic party in the House of Representatives.

Focus on the mean, though, obscures the amount of split-ticket voting that does happen throughout the Federation. More than 1,000 precincts covered in the study saw a change in ethnic voting (in either direction) of more than 25%. Recall that this measurement is in the context of a single election, meaning a substantial numbers of Bosnian voters are casting votes for ethnic parties and non-ethnic parties on the same ballot. The variation is shown in Figure 2. Those points on the 45° line represent a precinct where voters supported ethnic and non-ethnic parties in equal proportions in elections for Cantonal Assemblies and the House of Representatives. Points above the line are those in which precincts supported ethnic parties at a higher level in the House of Representatives than they did in the Cantonal Assemblies, and those below the line represent lower levels of ethnic party support in the House of Representatives than in the

## Change in Ethnic Voting Between Cantonal Assemblies and House of Representatives

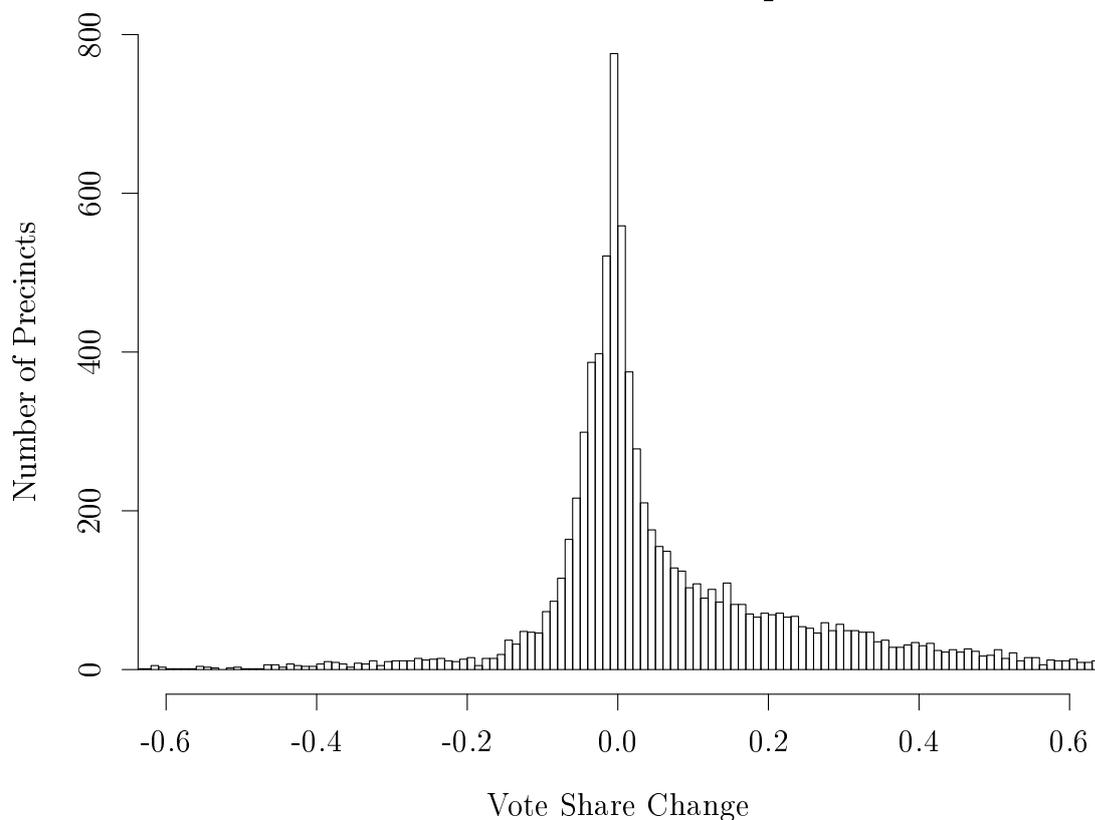


Figure 1: Change in Ethnic Voting

Cantonal Assemblies. While a large number of precincts are concentrated on the 45° line, a significant number of precincts deviate substantially, suggesting a high degree of split-ticket voting between ethnic and non-ethnic parties. All of this suggests that ethnicity is not deterministic on individual voting behavior in the Bosnian context, providing support for  $H_1$ .

$H_2$ ,  $H_{3a}$  and  $H_{3b}$  claim that the variation in ethnic voting observed above should be systematically correlated with ethnic voting for parties that represent local majorities or minorities. I therefore run a series of linear regressions on the change in level of ethnic voting, regressing this value on the vote share for majority group ethnic parties, minority group ethnic parties, and non-ethnic parties in the Cantonal Assemblies. Making the assumption that a party that advocates for the interests of a specific ethnic group would gain no votes from members outside that ethnic group, regressing the change in ethnic

## Split Ticket Voting in Bosnia and Herzegovina

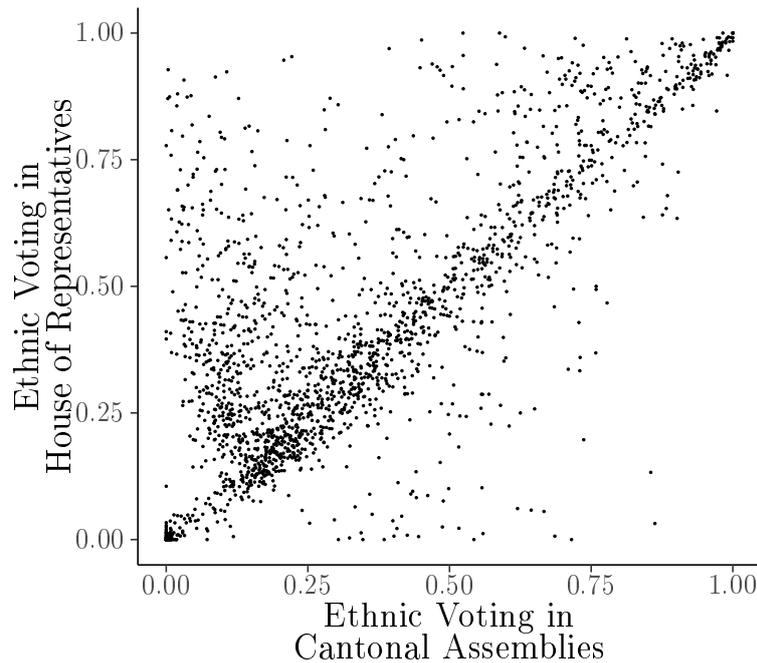


Figure 2: Ethnic Voting Scatterplot

voting on specific ethnic group vote shares at the cantonal level should provide estimates of the proportion of voters from that group that switched their vote. Note that the terms “majority” and “minority” refer to local, cantonal context. Since cantons vary over which group is the majority, parties are classified as minority or majority depending on the canton. The Bosniak SDA, for instance, is classified as a majority group party in Una-Sana, Tuzla, Zenica-Doboj, and Sarajevo; while classified as a minority party in Posavina, Bosnian Podrinje, West Herzegovina, and Livno.<sup>10</sup> Such classifications would be switched for the Croat HDZ.

In these regressions, I include fixed effects to control for potential differences between cantons and elections. There are several theoretical reasons to believe that differences between cantons could affect strategic ethnic voting. Most notably, some cantons are substantially more rural, and thus differ in average education and development levels

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<sup>10</sup>Two Cantons, Central Bosnia and Herzegovina-Neretva, are designated as “mixed” cantons, which entails no legal designation of a dominant ethnic group and requires special protection for both Croats and Bosniaks. In the statistical analysis that follows, I exclude these two cantons, as majority/minority distinctions are not readily apparent. For a study which compares mixed cantons to those with a clear majority group, see Hulsey (2010).

which could conceivably affect voter sophistication and propensity to vote strategically. Due to differences in size, cantons also differ somewhat substantially in district magnitude at the level of Cantonal Assembly elections. Since the literature on institutions and ethnic politics predicts that this could cause voters to be less likely to vote for ethnic parties at the cantonal level, without cantonal fixed effects there is the concern that any observed correlation could be biased by unobserved heterogeneity between cantons. Fixed effects for election year are included to control for differences between elections. In this way, the model specification also controls for variation in candidate quality. Voters may be moved to vote for a specific party list because of the presence of a specific candidate running only at one level (Burden & Kimball 2009), in which case observed ticket splitting could be unrelated to ethnic concerns. Since party lists are uniform for both Cantonal Assembly and House of Representative elections within cantons, the potential effect of particularly strong or weak candidates would operate at the cantonal level, and including a canton-year fixed effects avoids the potential bias this could introduce.

I run three separate regressions, using cantonal-level vote shares of the majority ethnic group parties, minority ethnic group parties, and the non-ethnic parties, as the primary explanatory variable in turn. The rationale for running three separate regressions is that since all votes are classified as one of these three categories, all three values sum to one, and thus including them in the same regression produces collinearity. Due to potential correlation in the residuals within cantons, standard errors are clustered by canton-year.

The results of these regressions are shown in Table 4. Since the independent variable is a measure of vote share, the traditional interpretation of a one unit change would in this case mean going from 0 (representing no votes) to 1 (representing all the votes). As such, the best way to interpret the coefficients is to think of them as the aggregate likelihood that a voter will switch between voting for an ethnic party or a non-ethnic party when voting at different federal levels. The sign on the coefficient indicates direction: a negative sign means ethnic voting is less likely in the House of Representatives election, while a positive sign indicates ethnic voting is more likely at the higher level elections.

Consistent with the theory, vote share for non-ethnic parties in the Cantonal Assem-

blies is correlated with a tendency for increased ethnic voting in the House of Representatives. The results suggest that in aggregate, 26% of the votes cast for non-ethnic parties in cantonal elections will switch to ethnic parties at the state level. Likewise, 33% of the votes cast for parties representing cantonal minorities in Cantonal Assemblies will switch to non-ethnic parties at the state level. Both of these estimates are statistically significant at the .01 level. The theory does predict that no majority group votes should switch to multiethnic parties, and therefore the value of the estimated coefficient on the Majority Party variable should be zero. The estimated value of -.109, however, does achieve statistical significance ( $p = .013$ ). This estimate, though, is substantially smaller than the values estimated for the other two coefficients, suggesting that while there may be some vote switching for voters from majority groups, it is much less common than that which occurs in members of minority groups and multiethnic party supporters. These estimates are consistent with the theory, and support  $H_2$  and  $H_{3a}$ .

In assessing the magnitude of the estimates, it is important to keep in mind that 10% of a vote share in a proportional system as permissive as Bosnia's can have a substantial impact on election outcomes. Due to the extreme fragmentation and high district magnitude, even small vote shares are enough to gain access to office. In some Bosnian districts, parties win seats in parliament with extremely small vote shares. Under these conditions, the impact of strategic vote switching may very well be enough to sway election results. The Social Democratic Party, for example, did very well at the House of Representatives elections in the northeast of the Federation in 2010, pulling in roughly 87,000 votes. But they pulled in substantially less votes, roughly 67,000 at the Cantonal Assembly level. This difference of 20,000 votes is not an insignificant figure, especially given that the smallest party to be seated in parliament in that district was the Union for a Better Future, which earned only 27,000 votes (or roughly 11% of the district). The magnitude of these estimates is therefore enough to suggest a curious counterfactual: without strategic calculations from voters considering supporting ethnic or non-ethnic parties, seat totals in parliament could have ended up very different.

The analysis so far shows that split-ticket voting in Bosnia comports with the pre-

OLS Analysis			
Dependent Variable is Change in Ethnic			
Voting Between House of Representatives and Cantonal Assembly Elections			
Non-ethnic Parties	0.265*** (0.068)		
Minority Parties		-0.326** (0.115)	
Majority Parties			-0.109* (.044)
Adjusted $R^2$	0.459	0.452	0.401
$N$	6483	6483	6483

Standard Errors in Parentheses.

\*: $p < .05$ ; \*\*: $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*: $p < .001$

Model includes Canton-Year fixed effects (Coefficients not shown)

Standard errors are clustered by Canton-Year

Table 4: Regression Results

dictions of a theory of ethnic strategic voting. For the theory to be correct, though, the increase in ethnic voting should not be for all ethnic parties equally, but exclusively for parties that represent local majorities. If those ethnic parties that are winning votes in the House of Representatives at the expense of the non-ethnic parties are actually claiming to represent local minority groups, than the data would suggest an increase in strategically irrational voting, and thus falsify the theory. Showing what type of ethnic parties benefit in the House of Representatives therefore serves as an important hoop test in supporting the theoretical mechanism (Bennett 2010). As a test of  $H_{3b}$ , I disaggregate the dependent variable measuring change in ethnic party voting into measures of change of support for ethnic parties that represent the minority group within the canton, and parties representing the majority group in the canton. I then run separate regressions regressing these new disaggregated measures on the measures of multiethnic vote share at the cantonal level.

The results in Table 5 support the predictions of  $H_{3b}$ . While multiethnic voting at the canton level is correlated with an increase in ethnic voting at the state level, this increase is almost entirely directed towards parties which claim to represent local majorities. Strategically voting for an ethnic party despite a sincere desire for a non-ethnic party only makes sense for those who are in the majority group, which we see reflected in the

Analysis of Increases in Ethnic Voting		
	Change in Majority Ethnic Party Vote Share	Change in Minority Ethnic Party Vote Share
Multiethnic Party Share	0.205** (0.063)	0.059* (0.030)
Adjusted $R^2$	0.609	0.301
$N$	6483	6483

Standard Errors in Parentheses.

\*: $p < .05$ ; \*\*: $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*: $p < .001$

Model includes Canton and Year fixed effects  
(Coefficients not shown)

Standard errors are clustered by Canton-Year

Table 5: Disaggregated Dependent Variable

fact that the local majority group party gains are so much greater than those gains for ethnic minority parties. The coefficient in the model regressing cantonal minority ethnic party gains is not only substantively smaller, but statistically less significant ( $p = .05003$ ).

In short, the statistical analysis shows evidence of large amounts of split-ticket voting through the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The most common ticket splitting happens between explicitly ethnic parties and non-ethnic parties in a way that is best explained by strategically-minded voters making sophisticated calculations incorporating their own ethnic identities and the ethnic geography of their surroundings to determine likely electoral outcomes and avoid undesirable outcomes.

The theory outlined in Section 2 contrasts with other explanations in the literature in that the distinction between local-level majority or minority status matters more than intrinsic group attachment. In other words, it is less important whether a voter is a Croat or a Bosniak than it is whether the voter is a member of a cantonal-level minority or majority group. If it were possible to hold the voter's ethnic identity constant, but vary whether that identity group is a majority or minority group within their district, the theory predicts variation in voting behavior. While it is not possible to randomize group status, it is possible to compare group behavior across regions, exploiting the fact that in the Bosnian context the same groups can be majorities or minorities depending on which canton they find themselves in. I do this in Figure 3.

## Change in Ethnic Voting Between Cantonal and State Parliaments

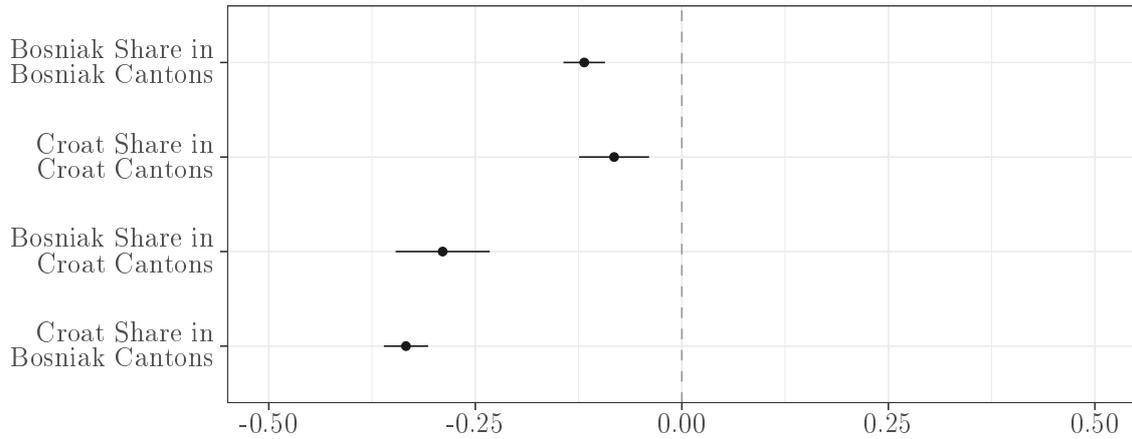


Figure 3: Comparison by Group

These plots show the differences in the coefficients discussed in Table 4 disaggregated by ethnic group. This figure shows that the majority/minority distinction matters more to split-ticket voting behavior than specific ethnic group identification. The coefficients for majority share in Bosniak Cantons and Majority share in Croat Cantons overlap (i.e., a Croat living in a Croat canton who voted for a Croat party at the cantonal level has roughly the same chance of changing her vote to a non-ethnic party as a Bosniak living in a Bosniak canton who voted for a Bosniak party). Likewise, the coefficients for minority share in Bosniak Cantons and minority share in Croat Cantons overlap (i.e., a Croat living in a Bosniak canton who voted for a Croat party at the cantonal level has roughly the same chance of changing her vote to a non-ethnic party as a Bosniak living in a Croat canton who voted for a Bosniak party). The differences between ethnic identification given majority or minority status are not statistically significant. However, the differences between majority and minority do not overlap, and the differences between them are statistically significant. All this suggests that a local-level minority group members is more likely to behave the same way as local-level minority group member of the other ethnicity than she is a her coethnics living in areas where they are the majority. When it comes to ticket splitting, local demographics matter more than intrinsic group attachment.

## 5 Robustness to Alternate Coding: Voter Perceptions over Candidate Declarations

Perhaps the biggest concern with this analysis is that it relies on a coding scheme which privileges the ways that parties describe themselves. However, since the theory rests on the strategic calculations of voters, the ideal measurement would be the way that voters perceive the parties, not the way that parties try to describe themselves. This is a particular concern, since the Bosnian media tends to describe several of the parties I have coded as non-ethnic as if they were supported exclusively by single ethnic blocs.

I therefore test the results against alternate coding schemes that take this into account. For some parties, there is absolutely no reason to question whether or not they are ethnic. Parties like the Bosniak SDA, and the Croat HDZ are nearly universally accepted to be explicit ethnic group advocacy parties, and make that advocacy central to their party programs and electoral campaigns. There are also some parties which are undeniably non-ethnic. The Social Democratic Party and the Democratic Front openly broadcast that they are running multiethnic candidate lists and have declared themselves as left-leaning alternatives to Bosnia's ethnic blocs. Some of these parties go so far as to run multiple candidates for the various ethnic seats of the presidency in order to make it clear that they are privileging no single ethnic group over others.

The concern, then, is in the parties which describe themselves as non-ethnic, civic-minded parties but in fact draw nearly all of their support from a single ethnic group. If voters perceive these to be ethnic parties despite the parties' own rhetoric, then the strategic calculation theory could be called in to question. I therefore created an alternate coding scheme that is more generous in assigning ethnic affiliation. On the Bosniak side, The biggest changes to the coding scheme concern Haris Silajdžić's Party for Bosnia-Herzegovina (SzBiH) and Sefer Halilović's Bosnian Patriotic Party. Both parties are closely tied to the personalities of their founders, both of whom were actively identified with Bosniak military forces and have been extremely vocal in their condemnation of Serb war criminals against Bosniak civilians. While their parties generally advocate

Regression Results–Alternate Coding Scheme			
Dependent Variable is Change in Ethnic Voting Between State and Canton-Level			
Non-ethnic Parties	0.125*** (0.030)		
Minority Parties		-0.126* (0.054)	
Majority Parties			-0.075* (0.029)
Adjusted $R^2$	0.289	0.275	0.261
$N$	6483	6483	6483

Standard Errors in Parentheses.

\*: $p < .05$ ; \*\*: $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*: $p < .001$

Model includes Canton and Year fixed effects (Coefficients not shown)

Standard errors are clustered by Canton-Year

Table 6: Robustness to Alternative Codings

for European principles of civic national identity for Bosnia, it is not unreasonable to suspect that at least some part of the Bosnian population may view them as Bosniak nationalists. On the Croat side, the biggest change is the People’s Party for Work and Betterment (NSRzB), founded by Mladen Ivanković-Lijanović. While more sedate in his explicit identification as an ethnic Croat, Ivanković-Lijanović has been the NSRzB’s only presidential candidate, contesting only the Croat seat of the Bosnian Presidency, and media sources often describe the NSRzB as a party whose support derives predominately from Croats.

Having modified the party codings, I run the regressions again on the change in ethnic party vote share. The results are listed in Table 6. Comparing with the results shown in Table 4, it is clear that the alternative coding scheme does have an effect on the coefficient estimates. The estimates are greatly diminished, taking the value of roughly half of the estimated values in the standard coding. However the general pattern predicted by the theory remains, albeit in diminished form. The coefficient on the majority party variable is much smaller than the minority or non-ethnic party variables, and the signs on the coefficients are in the expected directions. Essentially, what this means is that the strategic vote-switching seen in Bosnia, even when limited only to the explicitly avowed multiethnic parties and regional non-ethnic parties, is still of a magnitude great enough

to support the predictions of the theory. Moreover, under this alternative classification, the values on the Adjusted  $R^2$  drops substantially. This suggests that the previous coding scheme, relying on the explicit declarations of candidates and parties, explains a substantially larger proportion of the observed variation in Bosnia ticket splitting than this alternative coding that relies on subtext and assumed perceptions.

The coefficient estimates are smaller because those voters switching from the SzBiH—an avowedly non-ethnic party with a solid mono-ethnic support base—to the overtly Bosniak SDA under this coding is ignored as unimportant. This coding would, however, produce a *larger* coefficient on the multiethnic support base if large numbers of voters were switching from avowed multiethnic parties like the Social Democrats to the SzBiH, which the estimates suggest is not happening. These findings shed some light on a pervasive puzzle in Bosnian politics. If parties like the SzBiH rely on a single ethnic base, why do they insist on pretending to a non-ethnic identity justified by ethnicity-blind rhetoric? These results suggest that the advocacy of civic over ethnic nationalism may be an asset in attracting voters who are strategically concerned about wasting their votes on non-viable ethnic parties.

## 6 Interpreting the Findings

The literature on Bosnia has largely been pessimistic about the prospects for the country under the Dayton constitution. The constitution has been seen to entrench elites pushing a nationalist agenda (Pugh 2004, Jenne 2009), increase ethnic tensions to the point of preventing refugee return (Heimerl 2005), block even widely popular policies from enactment (Bahtic-Kunrath 2011), and make the country increasingly dependent on the EU and NATO for even basic state capacities (Fagan 2010). This paper finds, as have others (Hulseley 2010, Stojanovic 2014, Touquet 2011), that Bosnian political institutions have systematically disadvantaged parties which appeal to voters on broad, non-ethnic bases, and thus contributed to the success of ethnic exclusionary parties. However, where this analysis differs is that it also highlights that for a certain, previously under-studied

segment of the population, Bosnian institutions have actually bolstered multiethnic parties by allowing those who are most likely to be excluded from power to instead support multiethnic political coalitions. These results suggest the claim that multiethnic parties are inherently doomed to failure by Bosnian consociationalism may be overstated.

The results also suggest a unique irony in that the system of ethnically delineated cantonization within the Federation may actually provide increased representation for ethnic parties from local minority groups at the expense of multiethnic parties. Even though western politicians had opposed the canton system on the grounds that an ethnically inclusive, centralized system would lessen ethnic tension, the actual result is that ethnic minorities show a greater willingness to vote for ethno-nationalist parties at the cantonal level than they do at the state level. The same irony is that by advocating for a cantonal system, war-time Croat and Bosniak leaders had hoped to create ethnically exclusive territories; the actual result was a system where elections empower local minorities to vote their true preferences to a greater extent than they can at the higher, consociational level. The fact that nationalist leaders and international interventionists seem to have actually advocated for institutions that have disadvantaged their desired outcome speaks not only to the complexity of institutional engineering but also supports the notion that the consequences of institutions can be far removed from the intentions of those who established them (Taagepera 2002).

Outside of the Bosnian context, this study has broader implications for the study of institutions, ethnicity, and electoral politics in divided societies. Much of the literature making institutional recommendations rests on assumptions about how identity constrains voting behavior in proportional electoral systems. This analysis suggests that the effect of Bosnia's consociational system has actually varied based on demographic context. In this vein, the paper joins a growing body of work that focuses on local-level demographic factors in shaping inter-ethnic political relations (Kasara 2013, Ichino & Nathan 2013). Moreover, the broader institutional literature which has argued that institutions are likely to encourage ethnic voting may have assumed away a significant force working in the opposite direction, by encouraging local ethnic minorities to support

avowedly non-ethnic parties. While a certain subset of Bosnian voters have strategically voted for ethnic exclusionary parties, others have voted strategically against them, suggesting that electoral institutions affect voting behavior through the intervening mechanism of strategic decisions. Since both increased and decreased propensity towards ethnic voting can simultaneously be observed in different subsets of the population, asking if Bosnian democratic institutions have encouraged or discouraged ethnic electoral mobilization sets up a false dichotomy that is likely to lead to biased results and inaccurate conclusions.

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