

# **Beyond the “Territorial Minorities” Discourse: Theory and Practice of Political Participation of National Minorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina through the Case Study of Jews and Poles**

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Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (DPhil)  
to the Department of Political Science and International Relations  
at the University Sarajevo School of Science and Technology,  
validated by the University of Buckingham

September, 2016

## STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

I hereby declare that my dissertation entitled “*Beyond the Territorial Minorities*” *Discourse: Theory and Practice of Political Participation of National Minorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina through the Case Study of Jews and Poles*” is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text, and is not substantially the same as any that I have submitted, or, is concurrently submitted for a degree or diploma or other qualification at the University Sarajevo School of Science and Technology or the University of Buckingham or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. I further state that no substantial part of my thesis has already been submitted, or is concurrently submitted for any such degree, diploma, or other qualification at the University Sarajevo School of Science and Technology or the University of Buckingham or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text.

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## **ABSTRACT**

Although different patterns of political participation among self-aware minority groups have spurred much debate in the academic circles, especially in stable democracies, this issue remains understudied in the newer post-communist societies and notably so the post-conflict countries of former Yugoslavia. Much of the existing research conducted in established democracies has demonstrated that increased levels of national minority political involvement are directly related to democratic development, but that these groups are shunning more traditional forms of engagement, notably political party membership in favour of direct engagement through informal participation. Nevertheless, there is very little understanding of what national minority political participation represents in post-conflict states, as much scholarly research has termed it as underground, invisible or inexistent. Despite this, there is evidence that in these states formal political participation of national minority groups is still strong, but it remains unknown to what degree this occurs, what factors influence this behavior and to what degree is this behavior present among autochthon minority groups. As active political participation of national minorities plays an important role in the democratization and stabilization of such societies, this represents an important gap in our knowledge.

This thesis aims to investigate the level of conventional political participation and the trigger factors for such engagement of two significant, yet contrasting national minority groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), namely Jews and Poles. To do this, a mixed-method approach embedded in the transformative paradigm is employed, combining qualitative and quantitative findings of fieldwork. The thesis assesses eight indicators of formal political participation and reveals whether we can observe new trends when it comes to conventional engagement of these two, but also whether their influence remains limited due to their inability to formally participate in the government. It finds that both groups are political communicators, which choose to opt out of political party membership or financial support to electoral campaigns, because they feel alienated from formal politics due to constitutional limitations. However, this exit from the highest forms of political participation is not coupled with total disengagement, as both groups are actively engaged in other forms of formal political activism. This thesis concludes that new trends of political behaviour are emerging among the two observed groups, and especially so among their youth.

# DECLARATIONS

To my loving husband, Dejan Bojanić

“Whatever you do, you need courage. Whatever course you decide upon, there is always someone to tell you that you are wrong. There are always difficulties arising that tempt you to believe your critics are right.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are too many people without whom this thesis would never have been possible. I owe each one of them my warmest thanks. In no particular order, I thank the following persons: my former student, my current colleague and my great personal friend, Maja Pulić de Sanctis for spending hours with my cross-tabulations and indicator sheets, offering much needed methodological support, as well as a word of encouragement towards the end of my research project.

Thanks also to my 4<sup>th</sup> year students, Vekas Gušo and Irfan Đozić for doing the petty statistical work as my interns.

Thanks also to many people who have read and commented on parts of my work, notably Prof. Geoffrey Alderman, Dr. Francesco de Sanctis and Dr. Matilde Fruncillo and several colleagues and peers from the University of York, Széchenyi István University from Győr, University of Lodz and University of Trieste.

I am also deeply indebted to many members of Jevrejska opština in Sarajevo and Udruženje Poljaka i prijatelja “Mak” Opština Gradiška. Many thanks also go to the Youth Club of Jevrejska opština in Sarajevo. Special thanks to my interviewees and focus group participants who received me in busy times. They are the real protagonists of this thesis and no theoretical work could ever compliment what they did for me.

I also owe my deepest gratitude to the World Jewish Relief/Connections who have unselfishly offered their financial support throughout my research and without whom the completion of my work would not have been possible.

Many thanks to my close friend Denis Berberović for his many coffee meetings during which we jointly discussed each other's projects and ideas, as well as for his encouragement. I would particularly like to thank my wonderful and supportive husband to whom this work is dedicated as he never ceased to believe in me and support me through organization of meetings in various towns, accompaniment on my many trips and carrying loads of my papers while I was carrying our baby boy. Thank you also to my wonderful son Mateo for being a good baby who slept through every night, so that I could write my dissertation. Special thanks to my wonderful parents and sister who offered their precious advice, words of wisdom and encouragement during the most physically pressing times. It is to all of them that I give my most heartfelt thanks.

Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina  
September, 2016

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# ACRONYMS

BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
CEE	Central and Eastern Europe
CoE	Council of Europe
EU	European Union
ECHR	European Convention on Human Rights
FBiH	Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina
FCNM	Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities
FYROM	Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICTY	International Criminal Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia
IEBL	Inter-Entity Boundary Line
JO	Jevrejska opština (Jewish Community)
KPJ	Komunistička partija Jugoslavije (Communist Party of Yugoslavia)
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDH	Nezavisna država Hrvatska (Independent Croatian State)
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NOP	Narodnooslobodilački pokret (People's Liberation Movement of Yugoslavia)
NOV	Narodnooslobodilačka vojska (People's Liberation Army)
OHR	Office of the High Representative
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PA BiH	Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina
PR	Proportional representation
RS	Republic of Srpska
SEE	South East Europe
SFRY	Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
SKOJ	Savez komunističke omladine Jugoslavije (Youth Communist Committee of Yugoslavia)
SHS	Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes
SRBiH	Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina
UN	United Nations
USA	United States of America
USAO BiH	Ujedinjeni savez antifašističke omladine Bosne i Hercegovine (United Union of the Anti-Fascist Youth of Bosnia and Herzegovina)

# CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

In recent scholarly literature on political participation, much attention has been devoted to claims that in established democracies people turn away from engaging in politics, notably from voting and political party membership (Putnam, 1993, 2000, Norris, 2002, Mair and Van Biezen 2001, Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2002, 2005, Stoker, 2006). Turning away from the Western world of stable democracies, the importance of active citizen participation in political processes is also not novel in the academic discourse in newer democracies of post-communist Eastern Europe, where the common emphasis is placed on the argument that the rates of political participation are astonishingly low among the general population (Van Biezen, 2003, Millard, 2004, Howard, 2003). Despite this, none of the academic studies aimed at examining political participation levels in post-conflict states of South-East Europe, namely those that emerged during the wars of Yugoslav secession. Furthermore, understanding the interaction between political processes and individual trigger factors which spur political participation has been left out of such findings, and remarkably even more so when it comes to national minority groups which constitute large ethnic communities across the Balkan Peninsula. Considering that social and political experiences of national minority groups in post-conflict and post-communist, or better socialist societies, are significantly different from majority populations, understanding their present-day political activism in newly established democracies in ways that not only monitor the levels, but also connect their historical motivations and experiences to present day trigger factors is a gap in knowledge that this thesis will unravel. Furthermore, there is a missing link between examining national minorities' understanding of political participation processes and their importance for minority group's political effectiveness. It is only through understanding the national minority past and present political engagements and the reasons for which they choose to (dis) engage in politics that these groups can hope to gain political influence on a level on which they desire.

Hence, the main aim of this thesis is to tackle the issue of national minority political participation in a new, post-conflict democracy, Bosnia and Herzegovina, through a comparative case study of two groups, Jews and Poles, and provide a clear understanding of the nature of their current political participation. By examining the level of their political participation and understanding whether the current rates of political engagement is related to the historical

circumstances that they encountered after their arrival to the country, this work will seek to identify the factors that trigger (-ed) their political participation, the understanding of the importance and patterns of political participation for national minority groups, as well as point to new and emerging trends among different generations of the members of both communities. But to understand such interactions and explain how political participation is understood and why I have chosen to examine only certain political activities, I will first offer a theoretical background rooted in the wider literature on political participation.

## **Understanding Political Participation**

### *Conventional and Unconventional Political Participation in Theory – The Differences*

In conventional political science literature on political engagement (Verba and Nie, 1972 and Barnes and Kaase 1979), political participation is most broadly defined as a behaviour and/or individual's attitude to politics. Specifically, two major subtypes of political participation exist – formal and informal. Formal or conventional political participation relates to legal, everyday political processes which occur within the system's legal norms. More precisely, it can be described as a form of political engagement “that a dominant political culture recognizes as acceptable and that is related to institutionalized actions”.<sup>1</sup> It is presumed to take place in an ordinary and politically stable society and as part of democratic development. Conversely, informal political participation, often referred to as “protest participation”, most commonly occurs during the time of political upheaval within a particular state and is often violent (Tarrow 1998, Putnam, 2000). Hence, it relates to those modes that are illegal or fall short of law of a specific society, which primarily concern political actions or practices that are directed against the system itself and aim at transforming it. This unconventional type of political behaviour is not typical of a natural political process and has a great destabilization effect, since it tends to create social tension.

However, contrary to this classic typology of political participation (Verba and Nie, 1972, Barnes and Kaase, 1979), recent studies of political engagement, such as that of Norris (2003), reiterate that the ways a citizen interacts with the act of politics has alerted, and that

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<sup>1</sup> Conway, M. 1991. *Political Participation in the United States*. Washington D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press.



today we can observe *repertoires* (type of participation), *agencies* (organizations through which citizens choose to participate) and *targets* (what/whom the citizens desires to affect) of political participation. With such interpretations, Norris, but also other scholars<sup>2</sup>, acknowledge that in the last two decades, the differences between formal and informal participation have become imprecise insofar as boycott and demonstrations are becoming more popular and legal forms of engagement, whose targets are much broader and include multinational corporations and local businesses, as well as media or specific political groups. Despite this, considering the nature of this study, I will purposefully concentrate only on formal political participation of the two national minority groups that I choose to investigate as part of this research. The reasons for this are rooted in the results of the preliminary research that I conducted for the purposes of this study<sup>3</sup>, which showed that both groups do not deem unconventional political participation important and that they do not believe that informal engagement is a way to channel political participation positions of national minority groups in present-day Bosnia and Herzegovina.

### ***Conventional Political Participation***

Authors such as Milbrath (1977) and Goel, Verba and Nie (1972) single out anywhere from four (Milbrath) to twelve (Verba, Nie) sub-categories of conventional political participation<sup>4</sup>. The following types<sup>5</sup> represent the most universal ones:

- a) Regular participation in voting;
- b) Participation at local elections;
- c) Participation in activities of an organization dealing with community issues;
- d) Active participation in solving community problems;

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<sup>2</sup> See bibliography for works of Verba et al. (1995), Van Deth (2001) and Van Deth et al. (2007).

<sup>3</sup> Due to lack of any formal and informal data on all types of political participation and for both constituent peoples and national minorities in BiH, I first conducted a preliminary study to investigate the scope of political activities that the two particular groups engage in.

<sup>4</sup> See bibliography for works of Milbrath and Goel (1977) and Verba and Nie (1972).

<sup>5</sup> Kluienko, E., 2007. Political Participation: Theory, Methodology, and Measurement with the Help of the Guttman One-Dimension Continuity Scale. In: Golovakha, Yevhen. (ed). *Ukrainian Sociological Review 2004-2005*. Kiev: Institute of Sociology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. p. 134.

- e) Attempts to convince others to vote;
- f) Active work for political parties and/or political candidates during campaign times;
- g) Contacting representatives of local authorities in order to consult on certain issues;
- h) Presence at political meetings (at least one) for the last three years;
- i) Contacts with state or local government officials regarding a certain issue;
- j) Contacts with participation in establishment of a group or organization for solving local problems;
- k) Financial support of a party or candidate during an election campaign;
- l) Membership in a political club or organization.

However, considering the specificities of the transformative paradigmatic approach applied in this study<sup>6</sup> for the purposes of examining the level of political participation of two single groups in a specific cultural context, one must take into account that due to BiH's current political set-up, not all factors listed above may be applicable or examined. The reason for this is that in certain countries, including Bosnia and Herzegovina, several contexts from above are incompatible with the current political situation. Moreover, some of the above also do not apply to the two very specific groups that will be examined. That is why I will selectively concentrate on only a few factors, and in order to avoid the superposition of western categories on non-western societies.

Conversely, regardless of the mode of political participation that is being examined, it must be noted that political engagement is not an isolated process, but that it largely depends or better, is influenced by several aspects which, in turn, help to determine the types of participants and their preferred mode of involvement. Considering these common notions pertaining to political participation, at least in Western literature, political participation can be defined "as the real actions through which people are involved in political processes (relations) and influence or try to influence them in the ways normal and/or legitimate."<sup>7</sup> Lastly, and since this study relates to measuring the level of conventional political participation, various forms of this behaviour must be considered.

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<sup>6</sup> See Chapter 2.

<sup>7</sup> Milbrath, L., 1965. Political Participation. In: Long, S. (ed.). *The Handbook of Political Participation*. Vol. 4, pp. 198-207.

The first aspect that must inevitably be examined is the influence of socio-economic status of group members, which represents one of the first indicators that will be further developed in the later part of this study. When referring to the socio-economic position of participants, we usually take into account individual factors, including age, gender, educational levels, profession, income and religious preferences. Political scientists such as Milbrath and Goel (1977), Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) and Verba, Schlotzman and Brady (1995) argue that some of the indicators of the socio-economic status, notably education, profession and religion raise the level of people's civic skills at the institutions. The underlying argument is that the longer the people live, the more skills and knowledge they are able to acquire through social contacts, which, in turn, can raise their awareness about the importance of political participation. Alternatively, these authors propose the so called *individual resources model*, which is driven by the notion that individual skills and resources such as knowledge, but also money, time and levels of individual's self-confidence can indeed impact the levels of political participation, as these factors directly allow people "to meet the economic and psychological costs of political participation".<sup>8</sup>

Conversely, two more perspectives, the social capital and the cultural view, are essential for the context in which this study took place, as well as its subjects. When it comes to the social capital perspective, I refer to the characteristics of social organization which pertain to norms, trust and social networks that may have an impact on the efficiency of a certain group or a society, in a broader perception. Within the social capital perspective, special attention is given to voluntary organizations, which, as Putnam (1993) argues, can generate social capital by encouraging interpersonal trust and enabling social relations networks, since participation in associations encourages individuals to develop cognitive skills, civic virtues and a sense of efficacy.<sup>9</sup> Here, the focus is not on private or non-political associations, such as sports clubs, self-help groups and alike, since they do not (at least not to a degree that political associations do) contribute to the public sphere as much as political organizations do. What is essential to consider in this constellation is the existence of informal social networks that are almost always

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<sup>8</sup> Rosenstone, St. J. & Hansen, J.M., 1993. *Mobilization, Participation and Democracy in America*. New York: MacMillan.

<sup>9</sup> Badescu, G., 2003. "Social Trust and Democratization in the Post-Communist Societies". In: *Social Capital and the Transition to Democracy*. Badescu, G. and Uslaner, E.M. (eds.). London and New York: Routledge. pp. 120-140.

associated with “weak ties” in comparison to “strong ties”. However, “weak ties are more likely to link members of different groups, rather than strong ties that concentrate on a particular group”.<sup>10</sup> Lastly, cultural perspective (i.e. religion) relates to political participation in a sense that it assesses individual cultural values and attitudes on political participation typical of a particular group<sup>11</sup>. But to further understand the channels through which modes influence the creation of trigger factors which motivate individuals to engage in political processes, we must also discuss the motives for political participation.

### ***Motives for Conventional Political Participation***

It is indubitable that the motives for political participation, both conventional and unconventional, differ greatly in stable and unstable political systems. Hence, in analyzing the level of conventional political participation of national minority groups in unstable societies, we must examine what are the motives for conventional political participation, since, as stated above, these societies most often tend to turn towards unconventional political behaviour. In traditional literature on measuring political participation,<sup>12</sup> the motives for political engagement are divided into two main groups. The first category represents the so-called *purely political motives*, which are founded on people’s notions about the necessity of political participation and the feeling of participation (the sense of civic duty). Of course, this scenario is based on the idea of a perfect citizen (*homo politicus*). According to Verba, political participation is closely related to standards of active citizenship. Hence, only highly self-conscious individuals will also show high levels of political self-consciousness. Alternatively, there are non-political, “rational-selfish” motives for political involvement. These motives rely on the assumption that people participate in politics in order to resolve their personal problems, which most often relate to their social status, prestige and feeling of significance. In the cases in which conventional political

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<sup>10</sup> Granovetter, M.S., 1973. “The Strength of Weak Ties”. In: *American Journal of Sociology*. no. 78. pp. 1360-1380.

<sup>11</sup> In approaching the main research topic of the large scale research essential for the study, all of these perspectives were taken into consideration when developing “type of participants” part of the survey. See Chapter 2 for more details.

<sup>12</sup> Here, the reference is made to Verba, Nie and Kim’s measurement factors used in their book entitled “*Participation and Political Equality: A Seven Nation Comparison*” (1987), since the scale used in this study has proven widely effective, valid and easy to administer across different cultures.

participation is spurred by latter motives, the underlying argument is that no form of political participation will occur if there is only group benefit or, in other words, if personal benefit is missing or has to be shared with the group. Hence, we can talk about selective stimuli for political participation, or the ones referring to any actions that individuals find appealing enough to motivate them to engage in political processes.

As it is quite clear, citizens are at the centre of the political participation process; as such, political engagement is an underlying characteristic of a democratic society, be it an already established democracy or a country on its way to democratic consolidation. Therefore, one cannot go about without considering, aside from the specificities related to the theoretical underpinnings of the very process of political participation itself, the link between political participation and democratization and why does this correlation matter in regards to national minorities.

### **Why Study Political Participation of National Minorities? The Case for Minority Rights Perspective and the Democratic Theory Argument**

In its more generic sense, political participation, as clearly indicated above, is an essential component of an established and successful democratic state. The nature in which citizens engage in political participation processes and the levels of such engagement are the main determinants of the democratic quality of a country. At a more advanced level of democratic consolidation lie the national minority rights to political participation, and as Bieber (2008) points “minority political participation is where minority rights and social attitudes towards minorities meet”<sup>13</sup> to explain the degree to which the choice of state’s approach to national minority political participation determines their actual levels of political engagement. Here, one meets the need to enquire about what are, in fact, minority rights that states choose to adopt an approach to or disregard. Formally, “minority rights include approaches to avoid discrimination and affirm cultural distinctiveness of the community”<sup>14</sup>. However, this definition is very narrow in a sense that it only recognizes the cultural aspects of a particular community and excludes

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<sup>13</sup> Bieber, F., 2008. “Introduction”. In: *Political Parties and Minority Participation*. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung - Office Macedonia. p. 5.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p. 5.

other aspects which minorities, in order to be fully participative, must also possess. Potier (2001) argues that minority rights, as such, are undefined and international standards<sup>15</sup> are “vague and invasive, not least the definition of minorities themselves”<sup>16</sup>. Much of the international legal frameworks, as well as national legislations undermined the meaning of the term ‘minority right’ as the attribute ‘cultural’ was only scarcely expanded to include educational and linguistic rights, and not rights to political participation. However, as Bieber (2008) points out, this neglect has been reduced in recent years, mainly, again, through international instruments such as the Lund Recommendations on the Effective Participation of National Minorities in Public Life drafted by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) High Commission on National Minorities.<sup>17</sup>

Conversely, the above argument demonstrates that minority right to political participation can be assessed from two different perspectives – the democratization aspect and the minority rights aspect. In the remainder of this part I choose to analyze the democratization perspective as this presents the standpoint which accounts not only for the democratic consolidation argument, but also engages in contributing to the broader understanding of what political participation means to national minority groups, how and why they can and should engage, as well as provide viewpoints on factors that have influenced the studied groups’ behaviour in relation to formal political engagement. The minority rights perspective, although plausible and fully encouraged, is not adept to this study as it implies that national minorities must actively partake in the process of decision making<sup>18</sup> and that without political participation their other rights are further weakened. Considering the peculiarities of the case study of Bosnia and Herzegovina’s two national minority groups, and the preliminary study conducted together with national minority

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<sup>15</sup> The High Commissioner on National Minorities of the Organization for Cooperation and Security in Europe (OSCE), the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities of the Council of Europe and the Copenhagen Criteria for the admission of new members to the European Union all provide understandings and explanations for advances in the promotion of rights related to national minority communities.

<sup>16</sup> Potier, T., 2001. “Regionally Non-Dominant Titular Peoples: The Next Phase in Minority Rights?” In: *Journal on Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe*. pp. 2-3.

<sup>17</sup> Bieber, F., 2008. “Introduction”. In: *Political Parties and Minority Participation*. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung - Office Macedonia. pp. 5-6.

<sup>18</sup> Chapters 1, 4 and 5 describe different aspects of national minority statuses in BiH when it comes to participation in the political decision-processes.

members in BiH, this is yet another reason why I chose to drift away from the minority rights perspective.

### ***Political Participation and Democratization***

From its birth in ancient Greece, democracy has been closely tied to citizen participation. The concept of direct democracy, as practiced in Greek city-states was deemed ideal and as such presented the central argument of theories proposed by Jean Jacques Rousseau and later on by Marx and Engels (Behrouzi, 2006, Held, 2006), who advocated the essentiality of full citizen participation. But, as democracy as a political system progressed in its course, so did its new models with the varying approaches that they adapted in regards to the importance and the degree of citizen participation.

At the dawn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the predominant model of democracy in the West turned to liberal democracy, where the notions of citizen's rights and liberties prevailed, but the degree of citizen participation varied greatly – from extreme minimalist or procedural theories of democracy (Schumpeter, 1976) which argue that citizens should only participate in the elections and leave the elected individuals to construct political opinions to advocates of participatory democracy where only active citizenry equals the highest degree of democratic accountability (Patman 1970, Macpherson, 1983). In mid-1980s, the ideals of strong citizen involvement in the political processes were further argued by scholars such as Barber (1984) and later on Tam (1998). However, and this especially relates to the post-Cold War settlement and the emergence of new states in the European East, the population diversifications and the notion of borders moving across the people, and not people across borders, resulted in an unrealistic scenario for the implementation of strong participatory democratic model. Going further to South East Europe and the Balkan Peninsula, this model faced even greater difficulties, for the newly emerging ethnic majorities completely undermined smaller groups that once dwelled as fully participative citizens mostly due to the legacy of Yugoslav citizenship<sup>19</sup> (Sekulić, Massey, Hodson, 1994). Another case for the failure to institute participatory democracy in the case of

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<sup>19</sup> See pages 27-29 of this dissertation for more details.

these newly emerged states was that this model assumed full citizen's will to participate<sup>20</sup>, a notion which became questioned by scholars such as Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002 and 2005). In their studies the main argument contra the participatory model finds its basis in the claim that most citizens who not opt to participate in politics voluntarily, but instead choose others to make decisions for them. However, this theory fails to address the issue of power abuse by the elected officials, an issue of special importance for national minority groups who are often governed by the majority.

Contrary to the model of "stealth democracy"<sup>21</sup> proposed by Hibbing and Theiss Morse (2002 and 2005), the deliberative democracy<sup>22</sup> is an interesting counterargument to consider especially in relation to national minority political participation. In particular, scholars such as Fishkin (1991) and Dryzek (2002) call for encouraging citizens to discuss political issues in an informed manner and, in turn, call for the increase in quality of political participation, rather than quantity. Later studies, principally that proposed by Stoker (2006), calls for an improved interaction between citizens and political institutions and suggests a "politics for amateurs"<sup>23</sup> which ignites citizens to engage in those modes of political participation to which they can relate. Hence, this model is particularly apt for this study insomuch as it considers political participation of national minorities in a post-conflict, new democracy where constitutional propositions do not allow for their active participation on all levels. Stoker's interpretation proposes active citizen participation even in cases in which they do not seek representation, political autonomy or engage in formation of political parties, but simply strive to engage for other reasons, both political and socio-economic, insofar as the whole process of their engagement is informed and habitual.

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<sup>20</sup> See Chapter 2 for classifications of citizens according to participation levels used in this study.

<sup>21</sup> Hibbing, J. and Theiss-Morse, E., 2002. *Stealth Democracy: Americans Belief about How Democracy Should Work*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>22</sup> Deliberative democracy emphasizes decision justification from citizens and their representatives in a sense that both must justify the laws that they impose on each other. Deliberative democracy allows for multiple forms of decision-making as long as they are justified. As Gutmann and Thompson (2004) state "the most important characteristic, then is its reason-giving requirement". Source: Gutmann, A. & Thompson D., (2004). *Why Deliberative Democracy?* Princeton University Press. p. 10.

<sup>23</sup> Stoker, G., 2006. *Why Politics Matters: Making Democracy Work*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.



*Political Participation of National Minorities: Explaining the Patterns of Political Engagement in Newer and Post-Conflict Democracies*

The relationship between political participation of minorities and democratization has been especially salient in transition countries which emerged after the fall of the Berlin Wall, since all of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, including South East Europe, “are characterized by deep ethnocultural diversity both within and across neighbouring states, where democracy has never had a strong foothold”<sup>24</sup>. The issues surrounding political participation of national minorities in the democratization context, and the relationship that exists between the two is markedly relevant to the political situation in post-conflict and newly formed democracies that emerged after the break-up of Yugoslavia. The case is more so problematic in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the specificities of which will be explained shortly, due to the fact that the role of political participation as a process is closely related to the ongoing debates of democratic consolidation since the collapse of Yugoslavia. However, due to a complete lack of data on citizen involvement in BiH, of all ethnic origins (including constituent groups and national minorities), the open question for participation and democratization theories remains the one of how strong this aspect of democratization in Bosnia and Herzegovina really is.

To further understand the above relationship, it must be noted that most of the academic literature on political participation patterns of populations in post-communist states do not engage in assessing specific group behaviours related to political engagement and the analysis of factors which contribute to (non) participation, but mostly offer explanations and statistical basis for further studies. What has been noted in the wider literature available on these states, however, are two general trends that are common to all post-communist/post-socialist states – the so called post-socialist “period effect”<sup>25</sup> and the legacy of communist experience. The term ‘period effect’ was comprehensively defined by Norris (2003) who states that it is a “particular major historical event which had a decisive impact upon all citizens in a society at one point.”<sup>26</sup> In those terms,

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<sup>24</sup> Robotin, M. & Salat, L., (2004). *A New Balance: Democracy and Minorities in Post-Communist Europe*. Central European University Press. p. 15.

<sup>25</sup> Norris, P., 2003. ‘Young People and Political Activism: From the Politics of Loyalties to the Politics of Choice?’ Report for the Council of Europe Symposium: Young People and Democratic Institutions: from Disillusionment to Participation. Strasbourg.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, p. 9.

the last major ‘period effect’ experienced by all post-communist/post-socialist states was a complete crumble of the old communist and authoritarian government which was replaced by a new, democratic political system. However, one aspect did not come naturally. Rose and Shin (2001) explain that democratisation in the countries which emerged after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the fall of the Berlin Wall was born from scratch, meaning that the pillars of liberal democracy, such as civil society, free elections and multi-party governments emerged not out of the citizen need for a more effective addressing of social needs, but as an elite response to the requirements posed to them by the newly chosen system. They call this “democratisation backwards”<sup>27</sup> which is characterised by small, urban and elite-led leadership which scarcely influenced citizen political participation. Nevertheless, in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina this “democratisation backwards” occurred much later and was mostly led by the international community which engaged in its post-war recovery. Hence, it can be concluded that the ‘period effect’ phenomenon did occur in BiH, but the large gap in the available literature does not shed light on whether this has altered, in any way, the political participation rates of any groups and especially national minority communities in BiH. This is why this dissertation will shed light on these effects (rapid social, economic and political changes), notably by assessing the trigger factors that motivate the groups studied to engage in political processes.

On the other hand, when discussing political participation of national minority groups in post-communist/post-socialist states, one of the main queries posed is whether the legacy of the communist/socialist experience influences the patterns of their current political participation. Different authors (Rose and Shin, 2001, Howard, 2003) underline that the experiences of the communist past have had a negative influence on political participation rates at present times. Alternatively, they shed light on political participation under the roof of one-party regime where political engagement equalled holding of uncompetitive elections and was fostered by presence of communist-led social organizations which aimed at controlling and influencing the daily lives of people. Tworzecki (2003), Rose and Shin (2001) and Howard (2003) all point to the fact that this type of political participation was mandatory and hence consider it a factor that could have an influence on participation rates today. In fact, their main argument is that the fact that under

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<sup>27</sup> Rose, R., and Shin, D., 2001. “Democratization Backwards: The Problem of Third-Wave Democracies”. In: *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 31.

newly emerging democratic veil, people realized that participation turned from compulsory to voluntary, thus feeling the power of choice.

However, due to a complete lack of in-depth academic studies of national minority political participation in these states, not to mention Bosnia and Herzegovina, the above arguments only accentuate that there is very little understanding on how the ‘period effect’ trend and the communist legacy influence current rates of minority political participation today. The altering political realities which developed after more than three years of continuous bloodshed in BiH offer little comparison with states that went through more peaceful regime change. However, the unique experience of Bosnia and Herzegovina and its many ethnic groups, notably its national minorities with their specific constitutional status, can only represent a vital element in analyzing the influences of such broadly recognized effects on political participation. This is why the remainder of this chapter will shed light on these specificities and help us move along the political participation trail of small national minority groups in BiH.

### **Political Participation of National Minorities in Context: Understanding Bosnia and Herzegovina and its National Minorities**

Often referred to as “Yugoslavia in miniature”, Bosnia and Herzegovina, a small state at the heart of the Balkan Peninsula, can rightfully be considered a country of minorities. The reasons for this are manifold, but most can be traced back to the country’s post – Second World War history, which from 1945 until 1991 was part of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY).<sup>28</sup> Yet, the colourful ethno-national picture of Bosnia and Herzegovina is a difficult case for political participation theory. The consociational political system<sup>29</sup> that was instituted in BiH in 1995 by the Dayton Peace Agreement, reflects, or more so, mirrors the segregation of BiH’s citizens in everyday life. Caught in a limbo of queries pertaining to their

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<sup>28</sup> The country changed its name several times. From 1918-1929 it was called the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes – SHS, from 1929 it changed its name to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, from 1943 until 1946 it was named the Democratic Federal Yugoslavia, only to be renamed the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia when a communist government was established. In 1963, it was renamed again to the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, a name which stayed until the dissolution of the country in 1991.

<sup>29</sup> See Chapter 3 for a more detailed explanation of consociational arrangements.

majority-minority statuses, the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina can be well defined as either a majority or a minority, depending on where one goes or, better, resides. Subject to different ethno – national rhetoric, the issue of who can be considered a minority and where, lies at the core of Bosnia’s many social ills. Not only does this problem penetrate the lives of ordinary men, but rather retains a different form once it reaches the ‘power-sharing realm’, where the issue of minorities<sup>30</sup> becomes a state-wide issue.

When examining the minority status issue within broader context of the overall population in Bosnia and Herzegovina, it becomes rather clear that the question of minorities, whoever they are, is saturated with both political and social significance. And while the country continues to enjoy relative peace, the legacies of the Dayton era still hold an unyielding grip over contemporary social policies and power-sharing politics, both of which severely underscore country’s internal stability and undermine its Euro-Atlantic path. Despite the fact that Dayton Accords (and consequently Dayton Constitution outlined in Annex IV of the former) were designed with the ultimate aim to end a three and half-years of bloodshed, the unintended consequence of the constitutional arrangement turned into institutionalisation of the historical divisions<sup>31</sup>. In the context of political participation, this meant granting a right to ethnic entrepreneurs to propagate exclusive, rather than integrative political agendas. Thus, the consociational arrangement proposed by the Dayton Constitution, notably on the decision-making level, echoes societal divisions at other levels, hence penetrating into the citizen’s realm. This is precisely why the issue of minority statuses is politicized on all levels, even among the ordinary citizens, a factor that underpins socio-political divisions, but also the right to political participation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Understanding the patterns of political participation of national minorities in the democratic context might be an easy task, but when considering a new post-conflict democracy, it tends to become somewhat of a “mission impossible”. This is especially so in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the issue of political participation of different (ethnic) groups is politicized through narratives of territorial belonging, statistical data and ethnic background, all of which are factors that contribute to the endless debate of who and where is one a minority. The statistical

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<sup>30</sup> For the purposes of introducing this complex constellation, a general term “minorities” is used in the introduction in order to enunciate the scope of the issue, or the fact that both national and territorial/statistical/constituent minorities face the same problem. All of these terms will be dealt with separately later in the study.

<sup>31</sup> See Bieber (2004 and 2010).

differences in the number of constituent peoples across the country significantly contribute to state's shattered internal stability, overstressing and strengthening the pre-existing nationalistic discourses. Nevertheless, when examining the term 'minority' as it pertains to BiH, one should consider several situational aspects, all of which are important in a more general context of this thematic, but which this dissertation does not account for due to its particular focus on Jews and Poles from BiH:

- If we understand minorities according to Capotorti's definition<sup>32</sup>, then in the case of BiH we can deal with terms such as ethnic, cultural or national minorities.
- In the context of Bosnia and Herzegovina, we can differentiate between two understandings of the term minority. One is the so called *constituent minority*.<sup>33</sup> These minorities consist of members of the *three constituent peoples*<sup>34</sup> in BiH, but refer to those who live on the territory where they do not constitute a majority (e.g. Serbs in the Federation of BiH, Bosniaks and Croats in Republic of Srpska). The second understanding of the term 'minority' refers to *national minorities*, or members of any of

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<sup>32</sup> According to Francesco Capotorti's definition of minorities from 1979, it is "a group numerically inferior to the rest of the population of a State, in a non-dominant position, whose members - being nationals of the State - possess ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics differing from those of the rest of the population and show, if only implicitly, a sense of solidarity, directed towards preserving their culture, traditions, religion or language." Although, there is no uniform agreement on the definition of minorities, Capotorti's is probably the best one to use in the context of BiH since it is two dimensional and encompasses both the subjective (solidarity towards members of the minority group, usually referring to preserving cultural identity) and objective elements (ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics).

<sup>33</sup> A term first used by a philosophy professor from Sarajevo, Ugo Vlaisavljević. Despite its wide use, the term constituent minority will not be used in this study, however, as the current constitutional set-up is based on the principle of constituent peoples. If we consider the theoretical approach to the term "constituent peoples", Gro Nystuen (2005) argues that under no circumstances can three dominant groups be considered minorities. Moreover, this is not only a theoretical, but also a constitutional supposition and a dominant approach of all relevant political actors in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Thus, no such attribute as the word "minority" can be attached to constituent peoples. With this in mind, this dissertation will term them territorial or statistical minorities, as it is solely these aspects that can denote their minority status.

<sup>34</sup> As per the Preamble to the BiH Constitution, Article II.4, Article II.6 and Article III.3 (b) ("The General Framework Agreement," 1995). These articles define three constituent peoples - Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs. In BiH, these groups represent a majority, but statistically can be considered a minority in different parts of the country, depending on their actual population numbers in a specific region, canton, town or village.

the seventeen constitutionally recognized national minority groups.<sup>35</sup> Under the Dayton Constitution, the latter group is also referred to as “Others”.

- The previous aspect does not account for the fact that citizens of BiH who do not view themselves as members of any of the three *constituent groups*<sup>36</sup> are also considered a minority (these groups usually view themselves as citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina and prefer to be referred to as Bosnians. Just like national minorities, they fall under the category of “Others”).

But, in order to understand the complex network of these relations and examine the causalities of the primary issue, one must first adequately answer the question of what it means to be a “minority” in a divided society and how does this type of dilemma influence political participation of national minorities.

### **Who are the “Constituents” and who are the “Others”? - Revisiting the Minority Dilemma in the Context of Post-War Bosnia and Herzegovina**

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, both political participation and political representation rests on the concept of “differentiated citizens”<sup>37</sup>, whereby identity (ethnic, cultural or religious) plays an enormous role in the process of decision-making and political involvement. Hence, the concept of citizenship is crucial in fully understanding political participation of national minority groups in BiH, more so as it plays an enormous role in regard to their access to this minority right. When it comes to the role of citizenship and the right to political participation, the word of the United Nations Covenant on Civil and Political rights which also covers the right to political

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<sup>35</sup> Montenegrins, Roma, Albanians, Ukrainians, Slovenians, Macedonians, Hungarians, Italians, Czechs, Poles, Germans, Jews, Russians, Slovaks, Turks, Romanians, Ruthenians.

<sup>36</sup> The Constitution is based on the principle of ethnic constituency or the principle of “constituent peoples”, which implies that each “constituent group” has equal rights to governing the state. Thus, the Constitution does not deal with the term “citizen”, but instead divides the people living in BiH into three “constituent groups” – Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats. The Constitution also mentions a non-constituent group of people, referred to as “Others”.

<sup>37</sup> According to Mintz, Tossutti and Dunn (2010) the term “differentiated citizen” refers to the process of granting “special group-based legal or constitutional rights to national minorities and ethnic groups”. Source: Mintz, E., Tossutti, L. and Dunn, C., (2010). *Democracy, Diversity and Good Government: An Introduction to Politics in Canada*. Pearson Education Canada.

participation (more specifically the right to participate in public affairs, voting rights and the right of equal access to the civil service) is that “every citizens and not ‘everyone’ or ‘every person’”<sup>38</sup> have these rights. Hence, all citizens must be able to freely exercise these rights. However, when citizens are constitutionally divided across ethnic, cultural or religious lines this right is easily violated. Thus, the very approach to the concept of “minority” is dubitable in the context of post-Dayton BiH.

In the post-war period, the dilemma of who can be considered a minority escalated to a point where the term “minority”, as understood by most European democratic countries<sup>39</sup>, started being severely abused; each group, despite its constitutional status<sup>40</sup>, adopted the use of the term solely under the umbrella of their territorial and/or statistical (under) representation. In this constellation of events it is easy to understand how such territorial and statistical disputes cause an almost artificial sense of crisis, which often escalates into conflicting debates and results in talks where words such as “secession”, “referendum” and “underprivileged” are omnipresent.

Thus, in order to better understand and analyze the correlation between the word “minority” and the implications that it has on the concept of political participation in post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina, I will systematically examine the three theoretical explanations of the term, which take into account the statistical, socio-political and legal factors, but also the peculiarities of each group, including those characteristics which describe identity and time and spatial presence.<sup>41</sup> All of these dimensions are essential in understanding the many gaps in interpreting the statuses and rights of both *de facto* and *de jure* minorities in BiH, but also in bridging their current status to the issue of political participation.

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<sup>38</sup> Vertischel, A. 2010., Understanding Minority Participation and Representation and the Issue of Citizenship. In: Political Participation of Minorities: Commentary on International Standards and Practice. Eds. Weller, M., and Nobbs, K. New York: Oxford University Press. p. 92.

<sup>39</sup> See Capotorti’s definition on page 15, footnote 28.

<sup>40</sup> It can be said that Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats have a preferential constitutional status over “Others”, as they are granted the ultimate right to participate in the decision-making processes on the highest level, as well as to be elected. This is not so for the “Others.”

<sup>41</sup> Hodžić, E., Stojanović, N., 2011. *Novi – stari ustavni inženjering? Izazovi i implikacije presude evropskog suda za ljudska prava u predmetu Sejdić i Finci protiv BiH*. Sarajevo: Analitika, p. 43.

## *The Statistical Approach*

According to the statistical approach to the concept of minorities, for a group to be termed a minority it has to be numerically smaller compared to the rest of the population. Hence, a statistical minority is a group which accounts for less than 50 percent<sup>42</sup> of the entire population. However, the statistical approach does not encompass just merely numbers, but takes into account the three essential dimensions of the term “minority” per se, thus examining:

- a) *The identity criteria*
- b) *The moment of observation (time variable)*
- c) *Territorial presence (spatial variable)*

The above criteria are, then, further divided according to the sub-traits of each dimension, for it is precisely from these subdivisions that we can examine, in greater detail, the peculiarities of each case.

The identity criterion is probably the broadest one, encompassing traits which include permanent (descriptive) and contingent (dependent) characteristics.<sup>43</sup> Thus, permanent attributes include differences in gender, skin colour, and eye shape and all other birth-given or physical attributes which cannot be changed (or are difficult to change). The contingent characteristics, on the other hand, include all those personal traits which are much easier adjusted, including citizenship and ideological orientation. The contingent characteristics are not imbedded in an individual by birth, but are brought on by outside factors, such as education, socio-political circumstances at any given period of life or even economic aspects. However, there is one specific idiosyncrasy when it comes to identity criteria – where do the identity traits pertaining to religion and language fall under? Are they permanent or contingent criteria? Both undeniably fall under the identity criteria, and are probably the most important ones when examining the issue of minority statuses in BiH, but the only possible answer is that linguistic and religious traits depend on the specific context in which they are examined. To illustrate, let us take the example of Canada, where both English and French are official languages. If a person from Quebec (a

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid, p. 44.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, p. 44.



French speaking part of Canada) moves to Toronto (in the English speaking zone) and starts speaking English, he/she will not be seen as a French-speaking Quebecoise, but will be considered an English speaking Canadian. Thus, in this case, the language criterion is contingent.

Nevertheless, in many other societies language and religion are seen as hereditary traits, as something that stays with an individual for the rest of his/her life. This is certainly the case in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the issue of language is not so relevant (considering that both territorial and national minorities<sup>44</sup> speak a variant of the same language and that it is difficult to pinpoint to their ethnic background just from their accent), but the religious factor is the underlying characteristic of all communities, as it used as the main denominator of one's ethnic background. What is more, religion in BiH is inseparable from identity claims, and as such can be considered the main destabilizing factor, influencing political participation at least within the citizen's realm. Thus, religion (and language), unlike in the case of Canada, are not contingent, but rather permanent ethnic traits which are carried from generation to generation. It is, than, to no wonder that religion in BiH is closely tied to the term "nation" (nationality and ethnic group), whereby an individual is labelled as a member of a certain ethnic community based on his/her last or first name.

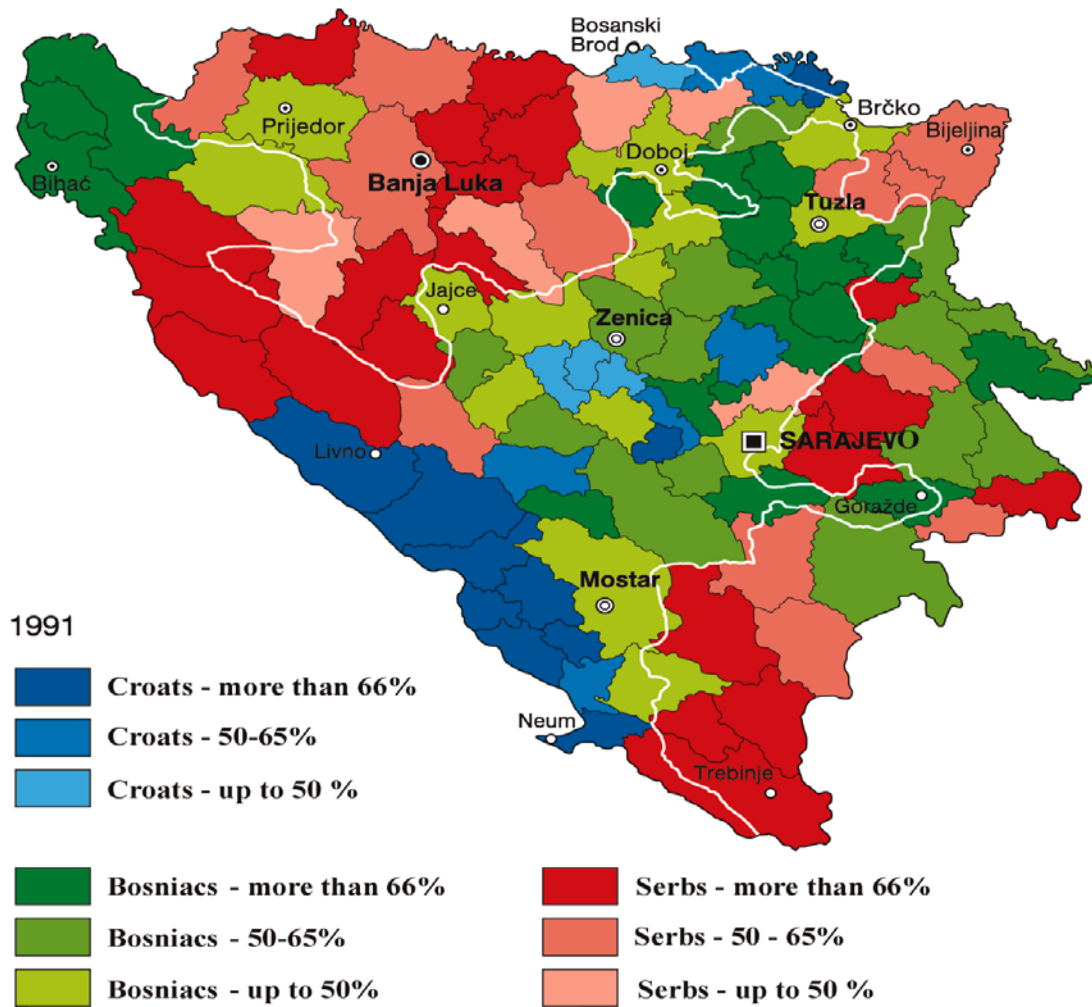
The second dimension considered under the statistical approach to the term "minority" is closely related to the time aspect. What this means is that, depending on the time of observation, a certain group, can be termed either a majority or a minority. Hodžić and Stojanović (2011) provide the examples of Switzerland and Italy, where each citizen can become a majority or a minority in a matter of minutes.<sup>45</sup> Thus, it is clear that the time dimension encompasses primarily the contingent criteria (notably political orientation). However, if one observes a historical period or any other longer time stretch, it can be argued that demographic changes influenced by immigration, wars, births, etc., can also create a situation in which a former majority becomes a minority. Here, again, we can examine the case of BiH. If we look at the pre-war map of Bosnia and Herzegovina from 1991 (see Map 1), we can observe an intricate mosaic of different colours, each indicating one of the three ethnic groups.

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<sup>44</sup> This statement does not apply to national minorities who converse in their minority language within their closed communities (e.g. Roma in BiH), as they all fluently speak Bosnian/Serbian/Croatian when speaking to the rest of the population.

<sup>45</sup> Because of the institution of citizen referendums, citizens can be in a majority or a minority depending on the vote they give and the size of the group which voted the same as he/she did. Source: Ibid, p. 44.

**Ethnic composition before the war in BiH (1991)**



**Map 1**

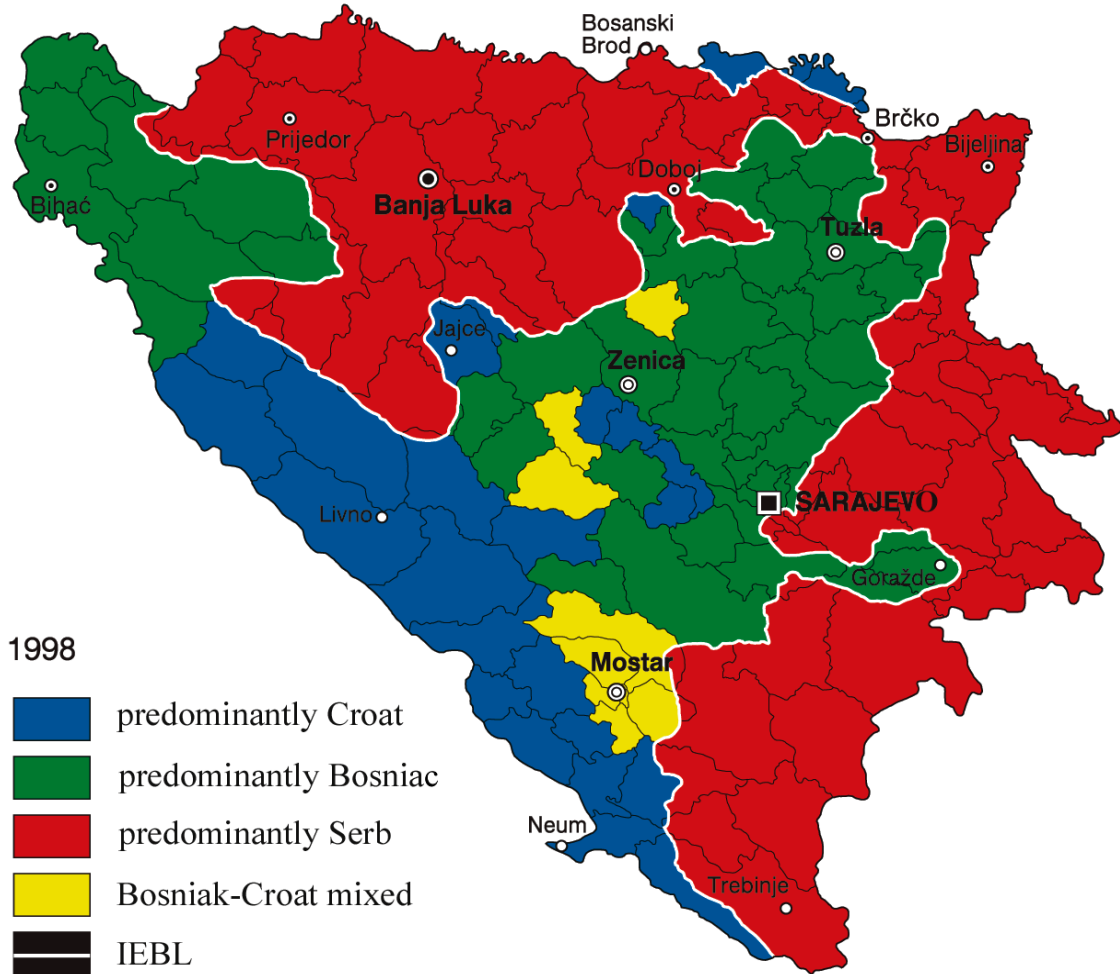
**Ethnic Composition of Bosnia and Herzegovina prior to 1992-1995 War<sup>46</sup>**

**Three major ethnic groups are relatively evenly spread across the entire territory**

Examining the same map from post-1995 (see Map 2),<sup>47</sup> we can notice a shift in colours, or delineate strict single colour areas, which now designate many more majority regions and a very few mixed-colour provinces.

<sup>46</sup> Source: Office of the High Representative (OHR), 2005. *Ethnic composition before the war in BiH (1991)*.

Ethnic composition in 1998



Map 2

**Ethnic Composition of Bosnia and Herzegovina after the 1992-1995 War<sup>48</sup>**

**Three major ethnic groups have strong territorial presence, without major “island” spots. This is especially the case with the Serb group, which has no majority areas outside of the territory of Republic of Srpska (designated in red).**

<sup>47</sup> Note: The white inter-entity boundary line (IEBL) line represents a division line between a Croat-Bosnian Federation of BiH (51% of the territory) and Republic of Srpska (49% of the territory). This territorial division of the country was introduced through the 1995 peace settlement agreement known as the Dayton Peace Accords.

<sup>48</sup> Source: Office of the High Representative (OHR)., 2005. *Ethnic composition of BiH in 1998*.

As it clearly stands, these time-relative changes were brought on by demographic switches induced by the war, thus influencing the long-term statistical representation of different ethnic groups across the country.

Lastly, the preceding dimension considered by the statistical approach, and the one that is essential in the case of BiH's issue of political participation, is territory, or spatial relativity. Hodžić and Stojanović (2011) claim that "person X can be a majority in his city, a minority in his region, and then again a majority in his country".<sup>49</sup> Illustrating this statement on the example of BiH, and taking into account all previous statements, we can with certainty claim that in the case of BiH this is probably the most essential dimension of all. To clarify, let us observe the following scenario – a Croat woman who lives in Banja Luka is a minority in her city, because Banja Luka is overwhelmingly populated by Serbs. She is also a minority in her region, because she lives in Republic of Srpska (RS), where there is an insignificant Croat population. However, she is a majority in Bosnia and Herzegovina, her country, because the Constitution of BiH recognizes her as a majority or one of the three constituent groups, granting her equal rights to those who belong to the Serb or Bosniak majority, respectively.

Hence, we can conclude that in the post-war period in BiH, the statistical dimension of the minority question is extremely relevant. This is notably so in regards to understanding identity and territorial dimensions, both of which contribute to the issue of artificially and politically created dispute over the right to political participation of non-constituent groups.

### ***The Socio-Political Approach***

Despite an overwhelming relevance of the statistical approach, it is not necessarily the case that minorities are solely defined by statistical factors. To illustrate, we can consider the case of South Africa, where the black *majority* was considered a *minority* during the years of Apartheid. Thus, although the black-African population in South Africa constituted a majority, they were a minority in both social and political sense up until 1994. Hence, one can argue that territorial minorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina (e.g. Croats in Republic of Srpska) can also be considered as socio-political minorities, although this cannot be legally accepted due to the fact that on the state-level (not territorial – entity level), these groups are a majority in a sense that

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid, p. 45.

they enjoy all social, political and economic privileges granted to them by the Dayton Constitution. However, it can be concluded that in the case of BiH, territorial (or statistical) minorities are also minorities in the socio-political context.

### ***The Constitutional Approach***

Despite the fact that a single group can be considered either a statistical or a socio-political minority (or both), it does not mean that it is a *de jure* minority. What this means is that under the Constitution of its state that particular group cannot be considered a minority. The reasons of this vary from state to state. To illustrate, let us consider the case of Switzerland. Switzerland is a federal state, whose federal and cantonal legislation does not recognize or define neither the term “majority” nor the word “minority”.<sup>50</sup> Yet, Article 70 of the Federal Constitution states that the traditional “indigenous linguistic minorities shall be respected”.<sup>51</sup> Consequently, Article 4 of the Swiss Constitution recognizes four national languages<sup>52</sup>, of which Rhaeto-Romansh is the least spoken one.<sup>53</sup> In this context, the Romansh speaking minority must fluently speak either German or French, in cases in which they are state officials or members of the Federal Parliament. Nevertheless, they are not a *de jure* minority, considering the fact that their language is recognized as a national one, and that all citizens have equal rights.

On the other hand, when considering most East European states, we cannot observe anything similar to the Swiss model, but can with certainty say that these countries base their system on the principle of the *nation-state of a single nation*, with constitutional recognition of specific minorities.<sup>54</sup> In the case of BiH, the term “nation-state” as such, cannot be applied, as

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<sup>50</sup> Only some certain subnational (cantonal) constitutions recognize the notion of minority. This is the case with Canton of Grison, which uses the term in relations to education.

<sup>51</sup> Biaggini, G., 2004. Federalism, Subnational Constitutional Arrangements, and the Protection of Minorities in Switzerland. In: Tarr, A., Williams, R. and Marko, J. ed. 2004. *Federalism, Subnational Constitutions and Minority Rights*. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, p. 222.

<sup>52</sup> German, French, Italian and Romansh (since 1938, following a referendum).

<sup>53</sup> Only 0.6% or approximately 40.000 Swiss speak this language as their mother tongue. Source: Ibid, p. 214.

<sup>54</sup> An example is the Republic of Croatia, whose Constitution states that the “Republic of Croatia is hereby established as the national state of the Croatian people and a state of members of other nations and minorities who are its citizens: Serbs, Muslims, Slovenes, Czechs, Slovaks, Italians, Hungarians, Jews and others, who are guaranteed equality with citizens of Croatian nationality and the realization of ethnic rights in accordance with the

there is not one, but three dominant nations. However, what we can talk about is the existence of *de jure* and *de facto* minorities. If we are to consider *solely* the constitutional approach, then we can say that territorial minorities in BiH are not *de jure* minorities; however, they can be deemed *de facto* minorities. Hence, this complex constellation causes a number of disputes, but with one predominant belief – territorial minorities in BiH do exist and mainly include Bosniaks and Croats living in Republic of Srpska. An alternative belief, although arguable<sup>55</sup>, is that Serbs are a minority in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH). One way or the other, the opposing interpretations of the term “minority” have an enormous effect on political participation rights, but also participation levels and individual motivations of national minority group members in post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina. This is precisely what this thesis aims to show.

### **From a Definition of National Minorities to Who They are in BiH: A Short Overview**

The term “national minorities” is omnipresent in social sciences terminology. Yet, when examining any of the issues related to national minorities it is crucial to note that there is no universal or legally accepted definition that would adequately address these social groups. Despite the fact that institutions such as the United Nations (UN), the Council of Europe (CoE) and the OSCE have pioneered the promotion of minority rights, they have failed to establish an all-encompassing definition that would pertain to wide-ranging diversities of these groups. As Thornberry (1991) states “there seems to be only general agreement that there is no generally agreed definition of ‘minority.’”<sup>56</sup> Conversely, nationalism scholars such as Anderson (1991) and Gellner (1997, 1983 and 2006)<sup>57</sup> in their seminal texts approach the issue of minority definition through the prism of ethnicity and nation, thus examining them within a wider context of nation-state creation, but without analyzing or defining the term ‘minority’. On the other hand,

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democratic norms of the United Nations and countries of free world.” Source: *The Constitution of the Republic of Croatia*. Available at: <http://www.constitution.org/cons/croatia.htm>

<sup>55</sup> Due to lack of recent census data; the last census was conducted in April 2014, but this data has not been published to date.

<sup>56</sup> Thornberry, P., 1991. *International Law and the Rights of Minorities*. Oxford: Clarendon. p. 164.

<sup>57</sup> See bibliography for more details on their works.

Smith argues that: “most nation-states are polyethnic and many have been formed in the first place around a dominant *ethnie*, which annexed or attracted other *ethnies* or ethnic fragments into the state”.<sup>58</sup> Clearly, while some definitions find their basis in international legal documents, others relay on academic sources, but linguistically the term “national minority” necessarily dictates that, within a given context (i.e. a state), there must also exist a “majority group” to which one has to refer. This is precisely what Smith’s assertion tells – it reinforces majority as a ‘monolithic cultural bloc in opposition to the minority.’<sup>59</sup> This is done in order to recognize both groups’ civil rights and liberties (including the right to political participation) on one hand, and relate to minorities’ distinct cultural identities and their right to refuse to be culturally assimilated with the majority on the other. In addition, when analyzing and applying these two concepts in a post-conflict society, one has to recognize that the issue of political participation of national minorities in a post-conflict state, such as BiH, is problematic from yet another aspect: the fact that most minority discourses were created in developed, post-industrial societies results in a situation in which they cannot be successfully applied in Western Balkan contexts, where internal migrations occurred mainly as a result of major imperial collapses and foreign influence that governed these regions over centuries.<sup>60</sup>

Hence, considering the peculiarities of the discussed context, maybe the best definition to use for this work is that of Francesco Capotorti, which states that national minorities represent:

*“a group numerically inferior to the rest of the population of a State, in a non-dominant position, whose members - being nationals of the State - possess ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics differing from those of the rest of the population and show, if only implicitly, a sense of solidarity, directed towards preserving their culture, traditions, religion or language.”*<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Smith, A., 1991. *National Identity*. London: Penguin Books. P.

<sup>59</sup> Thornberry, P., 1991. *International Law and the Rights of Minorities*. Oxford: Clarendon. p. 7.

<sup>60</sup> Vlajčić, K. and Fetahagić, S. 2009. *(Zlo)upotreba principa garantiranih mjesta: politička participacija nacionalnih manjina BiH u lokalnim izborima 2008*. Sarajevo: Asocijacija Alumni Centra za Postdiplomske Interdisciplinarne Studije (ACIPS). p. 6.

<sup>61</sup> Capotorti, F. (1979). *Study on the Rights of Persons Belonging to Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities*. UN Documents, E/CN.4/Sub.2/1979/384. p. 568.

Capotorti's definition, although radical, is two-dimensional, and thus encompasses both the subjective (expressing solidarity towards members of the minority group, usually referring to preservation of cultural identity) and objective elements (a national minority is a group of people – citizens, which is numerically smaller than the rest of the population, a non-dominant group whose members have particular ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics that are different from the rest of the population).<sup>62</sup> Other prominent authors, such as Eide and Deschenes offer similar definitions, but all agree on several important elements that, in theory, define a national minority:

- A numerically small or a group of people that is smaller than the rest of the population;<sup>63</sup>
- Minority groups can have distinct ethnic, linguistic and religious backgrounds. Not all of these elements have to exist in all minority groups simultaneously;
- These groups are traditionally present on a single state's territory.<sup>64</sup>

However, in the case of BiH, there are several problems associated with the above definitions of minorities. The main reasons for this lie, firstly in BiH's recent history and secondly in its constitutional peculiarities, both of which will be further discussed.

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<sup>62</sup> Vlajčić, K. and Fetahagić, S. 2009. *(Zlo)upotreba principa garantiranih mjesta: politička participacija nacionalnih manjina BiH u lokalnim izborima 2008*. Sarajevo: Asocijacija Alumni Centra za Postdiplomske Interdisciplinarne Studije (ACIPS). p. 6.

<sup>63</sup> Note that minorities are considered citizens of a state (State A) in which they live and in which they constitute a minority. Other identical minority groups can live in other states, but not be citizens of State B, nor citizens of their kin-state.

<sup>64</sup> Recent (see bibliography for the work of Boris Krivokapić pp. 93-103) studies have started noting a difference between autochthon minorities and alochtone minorities. The former have been traditionally present on a territory of a single state, while the latter are „new“ minorities, usually going back two or three generations, and have arrived due to migration (either political, social, economical, etc.)



## *National Minorities in BiH*

The present status of national minorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina cannot be observed in isolation from the common legacy of Yugoslav citizenship. It is beyond the focus of this thesis to assess the very formation and causes for the creation of common Yugoslav identity, but what is essential to note is the term “Yugoslav” was first introduced in 1961 to accommodate people who did not have a preferred nationality. As Petrović (1983) states, Yugoslav identity was a “treated as a residual category for those who offered no particular national identity”.<sup>65</sup> Hence, former Yugoslavia was an instance where the attempts to integrate people of different language, religion, ethnicity and historical experience became a state-wide plan for a common policy of equality among many nationalities that inhabited its republics and provinces. However, as Sekulić et al. (1994) point “behind the social fact of ‘Yugoslav identification’ lies a diversity of motives, inclinations and rationales”<sup>66</sup>, among which, they argue, is political participation. As post-war socialist propaganda grew, so did the feeling that all people, regardless of their ethnic, religious or linguistic differences, fought alongside each other to end foreign occupation. When the Partisans took the power from the occupying forces at the end of World War II, they “stressed the unity of all nationalities in the federal republic”<sup>67</sup>. The new government used common Yugoslav identity as a symbolic representation of the state and provided equal opportunities to all to share patriotism and historical rituals (Chirot, 1988, Smith, 1986). Alternatively, nationalism was perceived as a divisive tool, and so to claim Yugoslav, instead of an ethnic identity was to condemn those who “betrayed the memory of war and to identify with the efforts of the Partisans to create a progressive, socialist society”<sup>68</sup>. Thus, the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (KPJ), as a political arena, was common ground for all groups, regardless of their ethnic belonging to politically contribute and prove their loyalty to the Yugoslav state. The

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<sup>65</sup> Petrovic, R., 1983. The National Composition of the Population. In: *Yugoslav Survey*, Vol. 24 (3 August). pp. 21-34.

<sup>66</sup> Sekulić et al., 1994. Who were the Yugoslavs? Failed Sources of a Common Identity in the Former Yugoslavia. *American Sociological Review*. Vol. 59, No. 1. p. 84.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid, p. 85.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid, p. 85.

common identity was especially important to Yugoslav republics that were ethnically mixed, so it was to no surprise that in 1961, 1971 and 1981 population censuses the highest number of people expressed themselves as “Yugoslav” in BiH.<sup>69</sup> The situation did not change much in the last Yugoslav census which took place in 1991. Hence, it is obvious that in order to adequately assess the issue of political participation of national minorities in BiH today and understand the legal basis for their rights to political participation, one should observe the statistical data relating to national minority numbers and their territorial dispersion across BiH.

Currently, the records pertaining to the numbers of national minorities in BiH can officially be acquired only from the 1991 census documents,<sup>70</sup> according to which the Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (SRBiH)<sup>71</sup> in 1991 had seventeen national minorities (see Table 1.

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<sup>69</sup> 1961 (8.4%), 1971 (1.2%) and 1981 (7.9%). Source: Yugoslavia Government Printing Office., 1982. *Statistički Bilten SFRJ*, no. 1295. Belgrade.

<sup>70</sup> See footnote no. 23.

<sup>71</sup> At the time one of the six republics constituting the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY). Refer to part 2.1. of the paper for more details.

<b>NATIONALITY</b>	<b>1991 (numerical data)</b>
<b>Montenegrins</b>	<b>10.071</b>
<b>Roma</b>	<b>8.864</b>
<b>Albanians</b>	<b>4.925</b>
<b>Ukrainians</b>	<b>3.929</b>
<b>Slovenians</b>	<b>2.190</b>
<b>Macedonians<sup>72</sup></b>	<b>1.596</b>
Hungarians	893
Italians	732
Czechs	590
Poles	526
Germans	470
Jews	426
Russians	297
Slovaks	297
Turks	267
Romanians	162
Ruthenians	133

**Figure 1**  
**National minorities (nationalities) according to 1991 census<sup>73</sup>**

Besides the fact that the above presented data goes back to 1991<sup>74</sup>, and as such is mostly unusable for the current context of political participation of minority groups in BiH (notably in regards to participation on the local level), there are several other issues which need to be taken into consideration:

1. The 1991 census also included „Yugoslavs“, a category which after the breakup of SFRY became irrelevant. 5.6% percent (or 242.682 people)<sup>75</sup> of SRBiH's population denoted

<sup>72</sup> Bolded categories denote those national minorities which numbered more than 1000 members.

<sup>73</sup> *Statistički godišnjak Federacije BiH*. (2008). Federalni zavod za statistiku, Sarajevo.

<sup>74</sup> In fact, the last census in BiH was held in April of 2013. However, no official results were published to this date. This why this dissertation deals with data from 1991.

<sup>75</sup> Vlačić, K. and Fetahagić, S. 2009. *(Zlo)upotreba principa garantiranih mjesta: politička participacija nacionalnih manjina BiH u lokalnim izborima 2008*. Sarajevo: Asocijacija Alumni Centra za Postdiplomske Interdisciplinarne Studije (ACIPS). p. 8

themselves as Yugoslavs. Many of SRBiH's minorities listed themselves as member of this category/group.

2. Data presented as part of this census also includes individuals who expressed territorial belonging (i.e. Herzegovina), instead of their nationality (224 people).<sup>76</sup> However, it is assumed that this number does not include a significant portion of minorities, if any at all.
3. It is interesting to note that at the time of the census, Montenegrins, Slovenians and Macedonians were the “constituent” people of SFRY, as they lived in Montenegro, Slovenia and Macedonia, respectively, and where they belonged to a majority. Thus, in today's context in BiH, members of these national minority groups can be referred to as „new minorities“.<sup>77</sup>
4. Lastly, the term „nationality“ as used in the 1991 census, is highly confusing, as its lexical meaning continuously changed from 1948 until 1991 (ethnicity, ethnicity or ethnic background, nation, ethnicity or ethnic group, and finally nationality). Therefore, in the present context, the term „nationality“, as used in Table 1 is irrelevant.

This is the background against which this thesis takes an interest in investigating the level of political participation of two significant national minority groups, more precisely Jews and Poles<sup>78</sup> from Bosnia and Herzegovina. It also examines the reasons for their political participation, or its lack thereof, as well as trigger factors that motivate them to participate. The research conducted in this dissertation ties in with the historical narrative of these two groups or better the presence and reasons for political participation and modes of engagement during three different periods in Yugoslav and Bosnian history. It must be noted that the original goal of this work was to investigate political participation of national minorities in BiH by linking in-field

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid, p. 8

<sup>77</sup> Although, it can be argued that the difference between “new” and “old” minorities appeared relatively recently and that, as such, is not formulated in the context of international law, this division is omnipresent in many states. This is especially true for countries that emerged after the breakup of the Soviet Union, as well as Central and Eastern European (CEE) and South-East European (SEE) politically fragmented states. Thus, it can be said that “old” or “autochthon” minorities include all those religious, national (ethnic) and linguistic minorities who have historically been present on a specific geographic territory (i.e. a state). “New” or “alochtone” minorities are all other minority groups, which live on a specific territory, but have moved there due to wars, changes of national borders or immigration. Thus, their legal minority status has just recently started to be discussed in the international legal context. (i.e. Chinese in BiH).

<sup>78</sup> As most relevant according to size, historical influence, current participation rates and availability.

data with the multicultural theoretical framework. However, repeated fieldwork with several minority communities demonstrated that political participation rates are generally of equal level among most groups, while trigger factors appeared to differ and that they depended on the historical context of a specific group. Hence, this work aims at answering to what degree is political participation of Jews and Poles, as most relevant according to size, historical influence, current participation rates and availability, in BiH really present? In answering the main query, this dissertation will also pose several sub-questions:

SQ1: What are the trigger factors for political activism of these two groups in BiH?

SQ2: Have these trigger factors remained the same or have they changed through history?

SQ3: How do these groups envision political participation?

SQ4: What factors influence their political action/engagement/affiliation?

SQ5: What types of participants are these groups (active, communicators, passive or voters)?

Within the general framework of the previously defined theme, three main hypotheses will be tested:

H1: Bosnia and Herzegovina faces an increased pressure from self-aware minority groups which seek their right to political participation.

H2: Jews and Poles are not active participants in Bosnia and Herzegovina's political life.

H3: Factors that trigger (-ed) political participation of Jews and Poles in BiH have changed through history.

The above hypotheses are additionally strengthened by the following six sub hypotheses:

SH1. It is indispensable for the issue of political participation to be examined within the context of a democratic state.

SH2. The basis of liberal democracies founded on the principles of freedom and equality of all individuals/citizens based on the code of “one person, one vote” is slowly being abandoned in favour of “collective/group rights”.<sup>79</sup>

SH3. The application of the principle of “collective rights” can help in overcoming the issue of political non-participation of national minority groups.

SH4. The right to political participation and national minority integration is not realized in a way as to paralyze the existing state apparatus.

SH5. National minorities must participate on all levels.

SH6. The existing political and constitutional set-ups in BiH do not allow for adequate protection of national minority rights to political participation.

This illustrates the context in which this thesis situates the political participation of Jews and Poles from Bosnia and Herzegovina, and as such it will aim at pointing to most common trigger factors for political activism, discovering how these groups view political participation and what influences their political action. To do so, after a comprehensive methodological description offered in chapter two, chapter three gives a theoretical overview of sources of minority political power in democratic states. As a politically complex and ethnically fragmented state, BiH is a country where these possible models could have different, yet plausible implications. Therefore, this part will theoretically present how national minorities are dealt with and defined in state constitutions and sub-state constitutions, asymmetrical regional federalism models, multinational federations and lastly consociational systems. This chapter will, thus, place, national minorities in a context of political arrangements and help in understanding what is so different in BiH and how and whether these models can serve as a possible functional basis for full political participation of national minority groups in this country. Moreover, it will offer a theoretical background to understanding the current political divisions in BiH, a matter which will be

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<sup>79</sup> Rights held by groups, rather than individuals. The term “collective” or “group” rights has often been used in relation to indigenous, minority and other marginalized groups. Source: Jones, P., 2010. "Cultures, group rights, and group-differentiated rights". In: Dimova-Cookson, M. & Stirk, P. *Multiculturalism and Moral Conflict*. Routledge Innovations in Political Theory. 35. New York: Routledge. pp. 38–57

discussed in the fourth chapter. In addition, this chapter forms the background against which the fourth chapter offers a comprehensive analysis of the political and constitutional status of all national minority groups in BiH. The chapter will examine whether there are any sources of political power for national minorities in BiH, and if so, where do they lie? Lastly, and connected to the latter question, this chapter will help in answering what type of political participation can one talk about in the case of BiH's national minority groups and do these systems, at least to an extent, really determine the factors that trigger these communities to participate. After the analysis of sub-state political divisions in BiH and what they mean for its national minorities, the fifth chapter will investigate the historical perspective on political participation of Jews and Poles in BiH by offering a historical account of political participation of these two groups, from the periods of their arrival (Jews from the Ottoman Empire and Poles from the arrival of the Austro-Hungarian rule, respectively) until the break-up of Yugoslavia. In particular, this chapter will help in understanding the empirical part of this work, but most importantly the following questions: what type of political participation to examine? what indicators to use? are these groups still triggered by the same factors as during history? what factors to use in determining the level of political participation? Hence, the historical analysis chapter will be of crucial importance in later analysis of research results, the author's choice of indicators and correlations that will be made and presented in light of current political set-ups and their linkage to political participation of national minority groups.

The concluding parts of the dissertation consist of two chapters. The sixth chapter observes whether the Six Position Model (Verba, Nie) predictions and analysis will be valid and of use for future empirical approaches to examining the level of conventional modes of political participation of Jews and Poles in BiH. Furthermore, the research data will show whether culture-specific motives and models of political participation factors constitute a valid participation measurement in predicting the level of political participation of national minority groups. Lastly, the data will show whether the predictors taken from my own hypothesizing and observation (predictors of socio-demographic characteristics, civic skills, social capital, individual and collective values and evaluation of country's economy) alongside classical theoretical studies on political participation mentioned above hold true for the two specific national minority groups living in BiH. The seventh, concluding chapter situates the whole subject and research problem into the empirical framework within which the following questions

will be addressed: can the patterns identified be a starting point for examining other national minority groups?; do high/low levels of political engagement imply a change in the BiH's constitutional set-up?; what is the likelihood for formation of minority political parties?; are both groups the same in terms of their political behaviour? Moreover, this chapter will offer a brief analysis of what the approaches applied in this study are inclined to teach us and how they contribute to the discipline of studying political participation of national minority groups in post-conflict and pre-determined power-sharing systems. It will outline several policy related issues, as to provide a basis for future work in several other disciplines that tackle the issue of minority socio-political and economic inclusion. Hence, the concluding remarks will systematically formulate the most important research results and answer several questions which are deemed important in relations to national minority political participation rights in BiH.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter presented and discussed the underpinning definitions and questions used and presented in this dissertation. In particular, this chapter has offered a wide definition of political participation in general, but also its subtypes, as well as provided a rationale for focusing the remainder of the work only on conventional political participation. The definitions of the main concept of political participation are rooted in the wider literature and are necessary for understanding the application of the indicators and measurements of it which are presented later in the study. This understanding of political participation as a broader concept is also relevant to the issue of national minority political engagement, notably so because national minority political participation, at least in states that emerged after the fall of the Berlin Wall, is closely related to the aspect of democratization and less so in terms of minority rights perspective. This is mainly so because the patterns of political participation in those states largely relate to existence of active participation which is indispensable for the process of democratic development. National minorities have an essential role in this process, hence assessing their levels of political participation and not theorizing about their right to it, is important in understanding the future trends that can develop both on state level, but also within groups when it comes to new trends in political engagement. In particular, there is a need to understand whether these groups, especially in post-conflict and highly divided societies such as BiH, where formal political participation is subject to limited constitutional rights of such groups, engage in



formal political participation and if they do, whether they follow a historical pattern of triggers that motivate them to continue today or whether there is evidence that these groups have new motives embedded in the idea of power and/or social (in) injustices. In order to address these issues and understand the relationships that exist between these concepts, the following chapter will present the methodological framework within which this research is posited.

## **CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY**

### **Introduction**

The present chapter outlines the research design and describes the methods that have been used in testing the research questions that underpin this work. It explores the research questions in a deeper manner and, given the nature of the research, examines it within an ontological and epistemological position in order to discuss how both affect the addressing of the above outlined questions. For the purposes of a clearer design, this chapter will be divided into two parts, the first of which will focus on the research design used in the dissertation, as well as the epistemological approach, while the second describes the practical execution of material collection and data analysis, but also issues related to positionality, reflexivity and research ethics.

### **Part I**

#### **Paradigm, Ontology, Epistemology and Methodology**

##### *Introduction*

The main aim of this research was to examine to what degree is political participation of Jews and Poles, as most relevant according to size, historical influence, current participation rates and availability, in BiH really present? The ambition to investigate this topic was enhanced by recent debates in Bosnian, but also wider European policies employed to enhance national minority rights to political participation within a broader democratic development context. These present discourses have put a rather controversial topic for most post-communist states into the agenda, but much of the research posits this discussion within the umbrella of democratization theory and/or a legal narrative related to Central and Eastern European countries. The missing link in this retrospect remains that of former Yugoslav national minority groups, where the scenario of people moving across borders has been replaced by one of borders moving across people, thus creating not new minority groups, but new contexts within which their rights are posited. Hence, in terms of local (BiH's context) parity, the question of national minority political participation remains crucial for the development of internal policies that will aid in the process of resolving the constitutional discrimination of seventeen recognized national minority groups living in post-

Dayton Bosnia and Herzegovina, whereby these groups, which are citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina cannot remain excluded from the process of political participation and ultimately political-decision making. Therefore, the foundational research question posed in this dissertation is to what degree is political participation of Jews and Poles, as most relevant according to size, historical influence, current participation rates and availability, in BiH really present?

Although the principal research question is region-centric, within this there are differing theoretically proposed issues, capable of generalisation, that merit further discussion before the main question can be answered. Such research is instrumental for three reasons: first, it suggests the research potential that analyzing questions of national relevance have on democratic development studies in general and regional ethnic studies on a micro-level; secondly, this type of research can be used as a pilot study in which the very first ideas about the behaviour of national minority groups in post-conflict, transitional societies are shaped and uncovered, and as such can be used to generate new research ideas in this or similar contexts; and thirdly, given the complexity and multi-faceted dimension of researching political participation patterns of national minority groups in a post-conflict and ethnically divided society, it has allowed me to realize, on a methodological level, that although interviews and focus groups are an essential way of gaining first-hand insights into an un-researched topic where groups that are central to the research study are gaining voice for the first time, they should be used as one of many methods of data collection.

This last point is ever more relevant since it suggests that political participation of national minorities, be it framed by national actors to satisfy their own political goals and feed campaigns, a new policy development mechanism or as a multi-faceted diversity approach to governing a multi-ethnic state, obliges the researcher to adopt different methods and types of analysis. In deciding about this, I have not decided on the employment of different methods just according to methodology inductivism, but also reflection which occurred during the preparatory research carried out before enrolling in the doctoral programme. Consequently, this dissertation applies a mixed-method research, thus requiring explicit explanation of its paradigmatic foundation.

## *Articulating a Paradigm for Mixed-Methods Research*

All research projects require a researcher to articulate the basis for claiming to know what he or she knows. The original Kuhnian perspective stating that paradigm is a “way to summarize researchers’ beliefs about their efforts to create knowledge”<sup>80</sup> has been challenged by modern researchers in a variety of ways, notably in the context of mixed-method research. For the purposes of this dissertation, paradigm is understood as defined by Morgan (2007) as a “system of beliefs and practices that influence how researchers select both the questions they study and methods that they use to study them.”<sup>81</sup> Hence, a paradigm is seen as a guide that researchers use to frame their research. According to Shannon-Baker (2016), there is an ongoing debate about the usefulness of paradigm for mixed-method studies<sup>82</sup>, but although this is the case, paradigms help new “researchers align themselves with other researchers who follow similar beliefs.”<sup>83</sup> Furthermore, by providing a discussion on the paradigm, researchers offer their readers knowledge of the potential influence of their works<sup>84</sup> and this is why an explanation of paradigmatic foundations is especially beneficial for mixed-methods research, which this dissertation also utilizes.

In view of the above and considering that the present dissertation discusses the matter of political participation of two specific national minority groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina in post-Dayton reality, this research takes as its basis the transformative-emancipatory paradigm, which is “characterized by the intentional collaboration with minority and marginalized groups or those whose voice is not typically heard in particular issues.”<sup>85</sup> Hence, the context within

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<sup>80</sup> Morgan, D., 2007. “Paradigms Lost and Pragmatism Regained: Methodological Implications of Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Methods”. In: *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*. 1 (1). p. 5.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, p. 49.

<sup>82</sup> Shannon-Baker, P., 2016. “Making Paradigms Meaningful in Mixed Methods Research”. In: *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, Vol. 10 (4).

<sup>83</sup> Johnson, R.B., 2011. “Do We Need Paradigms? A Mixed Methods Perspective”. In: *Mid-Western Educational Researcher*, Vol. 24 (2).

<sup>84</sup> Shannon-Baker, P., 2016. “Making Paradigms Meaningful in Mixed Methods Research”. In: *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, Vol. 10 (4). p. 321.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid, p. 326.

which transformative-emancipation is employed is precisely the one where there is a need for a framework that entails work toward social justice with marginalized groups.<sup>86</sup> More precisely, the transformative paradigm “directly engages the complexity encountered by researchers and evaluators in culturally diverse communities when their work is focused on increasing social justice.”<sup>87</sup> Greene (2008) goes on to say that the transformative paradigm is concerned with tensions that occur as a result of unequal power relations that saturate the context within which a particular research takes place<sup>88</sup>. The power battle translates into economic, religious, ethnic, gender and many other privileges that different groups enjoy. The importance of the transformative-emancipatory paradigm that is applied in this research lies in the fact that it has allowed me to engage directly with the researched groups in the context of an unequal political right of the access to political participation of national minority groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina, a matter that relates to an unequal political power relation between the constituents and the “others”. Hence, this paradigm is suitable for this dissertation in its entirety, meaning also from its axiological, ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions.

The transformative paradigm finds its basis in the early works of Guba and Lincoln (2005) who defined a paradigm as being inclusive of four assumptions – axiology (beliefs about the meaning of ethics and morals), ontology (beliefs about the nature of reality), epistemology (nature of knowledge and the relationship that exists between the knower /researcher/ and the observed) and lastly the methodology (process of systematic investigation).<sup>89</sup> The following subsections of this chapter will critically assess the four assumptions mentioned above, as well as discuss the chosen methods and how they align with the transformative paradigm, the data analysis process, as well as matters of positionality and reflexivity. In addition, a separate sub-part will critically assess the axiological assumptions or better ethical issues and challenges that I

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<sup>86</sup> Mertens, D.M., 2003. “Mixed Methods and the Politics of Human Research: The Transformative Emancipatory Perspective”. In: Tashakkori, A. & Teddlie, C. (eds.). *Handbook of Mixed Method Social and Behavioral Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

<sup>87</sup> Mertens, D. M., 2009. *Transformative research and evaluation*. New York, NY: Guilford. p. 10.

<sup>88</sup> Greene, J., 2007. *Mixed Methods in Social Inquiry*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

<sup>89</sup> Mertens, D.M., 2012. “What Comes First? The Paradigm or the Approach? In: *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, Vol. 6 (4). p. 804.

faced as a researcher during the process, a matter of extreme importance when working with different social groups and communities.

## **Conceptual Framework**

### ***Ontological Assumptions of the Research***

Ontology concerns the interaction between social structures and individuals, as well as the study of being.<sup>90</sup> Guba and Lincoln (2005) state that the ontological assumptions are those that respond to the question ‘what is there that can be known?’ or ‘what is the nature of reality?’<sup>91</sup> The two broadest configurations of ontology, as described by O’Gorman and MacIntosh (2015) are subjective and objective perspectives<sup>92</sup>. Objectivism in general asserts that reality is made of solid objects which are tested and measured, or better that social phenomenon and meanings exist independently of social actors. Contrary to this, a subjective approach “looks at reality as made up of the perceptions and interactions of living subjects.”<sup>93</sup>

This research takes the ontological approach of the transformative paradigm, falling under subjectivism, which holds that reality is socially constructed. However, it does so with awareness of power issues and by recognizing that different versions of what is believed to be real exist. Likewise, the argument is that “damage is done when differences of perceptions of what is real are accepted, and when factors are ignored that give privilege to one version of reality over another, such as the influence of social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, gender, and disability lenses in the construction of reality.”<sup>94</sup> The ontological assumption extends to include social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, racial, age and other relevant contexts in

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<sup>90</sup> Crotty, M. (1989). *The foundations of social research*. London: Sage. p. 10.

<sup>91</sup> Guba, E.G. & Lincoln, Y.S., 2005. “Paradigmatic Controversies, Contradictions, and Emerging Confluences. In: Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S., (eds). *Handbook on Qualitative Research*. . Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. p. 83.

<sup>92</sup> O’Gorman, K., & MacIntosh, R., 2015. *Research Methods for Business and Management: A Guide to Writing Your Dissertation*. Goodfellow Publishers Limited. p. 56.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid, p.56.

<sup>94</sup> Mertens, D.M., 2012. “What Comes First? The Paradigm or the Approach? In: *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, Vol. 6 (4). p. 807.

order to determine whether they govern the access to power of marginalized groups. As Neuman (1997) states, transformative paradigm scholars believe that social reality is historically bound, that reality has many layers (surface and deep structures), and while the visible reality is easily observable, the deep structures can only be seen through historical orientation.<sup>95</sup> These assumptions justify the use of historical analysis of the two groups that are examined in this research, as they explain the two distinct realities that emerge among the two groups in relations to the factors that trigger their political participation, as well as the level of participation that they exhibit. Furthermore, the analysis of historical socio-economic, cultural and above all political positions of these groups, as presented in Chapter 7, shows that different levels of power are associated with characteristics of the participants. As transformative researchers need to be aware of societal values and power related issues in the determining the reality that holds potential for social transformation, the historical analysis about studied groups' political habits, patterns of participation, access to power, societal treatment and cultural obstacles as related to political activism were essential to unravel and discuss before embarking on establishing any truths about them in the current contexts. Furthermore, the use of mixed-methods, quantitative for the measurement of the level of political participation and qualitative for examining the beliefs about current political realities for national minority groups as related to constitutional rights and the absence of the notion of 'citizen' in Bosnia and Herzegovina's constitution, as well as trigger factors that create political participation impetus in the studied groups' cases, provide a critical analysis of the framing of the research focus and illuminate on the participant community's responsiveness to research dimensions applied in the study.

### ***Epistemological Assumptions of the Research***

Epistemology concerns the identification of acceptable knowledge or better it helps answer the question of "how do I know what is true?"<sup>96</sup> In addition to this, epistemology aids in formulating the approach which researchers use to look at how individuals understand the world

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<sup>95</sup> Neuman, W. N., 1997. *Social research methods: qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon Publications.

<sup>96</sup> Cope, M. 2002. Feminist Epistemology in Geography. In: *Feminist Geography in Practice: Research and Methods*, ed. Pamela Moss. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers. p. 43.

that surrounds them and defines the relationship between the researcher and participants.<sup>97</sup> In view of the fact that this thesis accepts the transformative paradigm, the epistemological assumption that underpins this research is concerned with understanding the culture of participants and building trust. As Mertens (2007) states: “the transformative paradigm’s epistemological assumption leads to a cyclical model of research that includes the establishment of partnerships between researchers and the community members, including the recognition of power differences and building trust through the use of culturally competent practices.”<sup>98</sup> Hence, true knowledge in this approach is embedded in, as Neuman calls it (1997) “collective meaning-making by the people”<sup>99</sup>, which posits individual and group action in the context of improving the lives of people. The transformative epistemological assumption believes that knowledge is constructed in the way that participants frame it.

Another point to consider is the one that concerns the nature of the relationship between researchers. Mertens (2012) raises these questions in the context of power and privilege and argues that in order to understand varying dimensions of reality and how that reality is tied to power issues, the researcher must create a very close and interactive link with the researched community, which, in turn, relates to knowing and understanding their socio-historical positions, as well as build relationships that account for power differences and trust-building. Several scholars, such as Christians (2005) challenge the notion of neutrality and objectivity because of power-relations that must be acknowledged when addressing cross-cultural communities in meaningful dialogues.<sup>100</sup> Hence, building a close collation with the researched group is the key. This thesis is, therefore, posited within the epistemological assumption described above. It is an interpretation of the situation of national minority political participation in post-conflict divided society with significant minority-specific rights to political participation of small, culturally and

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<sup>97</sup> Mertens, D.M., 2007. “Transformative Paradigm: Mixed Methods and Social Justice”. In: *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, Vol. 1 (3). p. 218.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid, p. 218.

<sup>99</sup> Neuman, W. N., 1997. *Social research methods: qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon Publications.

<sup>100</sup> Christians, C., 2005. “Ethics and Politics in Qualitative Research”. In: N. Denzin, & Y. Lincoln, (eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. pp.139-164.



ethnically different minority groups. In addition, this epistemological approach greatly justifies the use of mixed-methods research as community participation was needed at the beginning, throughout and at the end of the research, with the aim of bringing forward more general conclusions about their patterns of political participation, the factors that trigger their political activism and a view about their role in the socio-political reality in BiH, which, in all present literature, is ignored and overwhelmingly misunderstood.

### ***Research Methodology***

The transformative paradigm within which this research is posited, leads to reframing of the existing understanding of national minority political participation. This, in turn, calls for corresponding methodological decisions, which also need to be reframed. What this means is an opting for the use of mixed-methods research, as specified on several occasions in the text above. Additionally, Mertens (2007) claims that there must be a “conscious awareness of the benefits of involving community members in data collection decisions with a depth of understanding of the cultural issues involved, the building of trust to obtain valid data, the modifications that may be necessary to collect valid data from various groups, and the need to tie the data collected to social action.”<sup>101</sup> As pointed in the section on epistemology, the cyclical method of research lies in the hands of the researched group (community) and it allows for their participation at all times. This is why mixed-method research is applied in this thesis.

Consequently, the decision to apply a mixed-method research was a result of preliminary research that was undertaken prior to enrolling in the programme with the aim of establishing research guidelines that were developed together with community members. From the ontological and epistemological points, meaning factors that relate to power issues and the potential for social change and establishment of a relationship in order to make the study culturally responsive, were the key elements that led the choice of methodology in this study. The inclusion of qualitative methods, namely interviews and focus groups, was critical in the preliminary, but also post-quantitative research phase, since there was a need to establish a dialogue with both groups. The awareness about the contextual and historical factors that

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<sup>101</sup> Mertens, D.M., 2007. “Transformative Paradigm: Mixed Methods and Social Justice”. In: *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, Vol. 1 (3). p. 220.

influence present-day political participation of both groups was key in determining which factors were to be analyzed and taken as indicators from traditional political participation measurements, as well as creation of a set of interpretations which were developed in order to realize the political potential that the two groups carry. The information that was gathered through the use of both qualitative and quantitative data was steered in such a way as to allow the information to feed the research, the context and inform the next level that could bring about the change for these communities, and, on a more generalized level, to similar groups.

## **Methods and Methods of Data Collection**

Although scarce and limited mostly to Western democracies, studies of national minority political participation in post-conflict and post-communist transition states rarely employ mixed-method research. However, similar research that has been undertaken in established democracies suggests that this approach is vastly useful for two reasons – firstly, the quantitative data often produces the very first results ever recorded, making sense of large sets of data and allowing for comparison between groups, and secondly, the qualitative data sheds light on a small set of variables that might be specific of only one group and allows the researcher to posit particular findings against the context in which the research has evolved. The data analysis used in this dissertation was both quantitative and qualitative in its design and influenced by the above described ontological and epistemological foundations. This multi-method analysis recognizes the complementary of both types of findings, and as argued by Cappoccia and Freeden (2006) and Bergman (2008), breeds confident and well-rounded research results. As quantitative methods and its corresponding measures and indicators of measures are specified in much detail in the subsequent parts of this chapter which explains the measuring of political participation, the following subsection will shed light on the qualitative approach that was applied and the corresponding data analysis that resulted from the interviews and focus groups.

### ***A Qualitative Approach***

The study of people and the social world they dwell in is the subject of social sciences, and hence, a researcher must position him/her-self in the observed community. This allows for

understanding the meanings that the studied groups apply to certain concepts and the experiences they share with the context within which a concept takes place. In scholarly research this is achieved by inquiring into people's views, their understandings of the contexts in which they live and experiences that shape their lives within these realities. In this dissertation, and in alignment with the transformative paradigm approach, these relations were established by in-depth interviews and focus groups that were conducted throughout the research process and sometimes also simultaneously during quantitative phase.

In line with the above, the qualitative research that took place as part of this dissertation's making sought to describe, understand, posit and most importantly explain the situation in its context – how two specific national minority groups describe and define political participation, against which background do they understand it, what drives their need or its lack thereof to participate in different political forms and how do they relate it to their minority status and the post-Dayton political context. This has been achieved by providing striking opinions and descriptions of these group's thoughts and opinions in order to allow for a deeper understanding of their roles in political engagement in Bosnia and Herzegovina. To embark upon understanding the background of these complex relationships and with particularly understudied groups, this research, again in alignment with the transformative stance, was particularly dependent on the historical events which helped unravel the patterns of these groups' political participation and how they unfold over time. Hence, the historical analysis, which was a difficult process due to severe lack of scholarly data and writings on the groups since their arrival, helped record the situation as it once was, but most importantly helped me realize and observe the patterns of political participation, which later formed the questions that were discussed during both interviews and focus groups.

Accordingly, the qualitative approaches that I used in my dissertation allowed me to remain flexible in terms of how to define the structure of my work. I took advantage of the patterns that emerged as previously unknown, sometimes not so main-stream, but nevertheless essential for these groups, an approach that helped me make sense of much new data that I consider a new interpretation. Posited against this, I feel the need to comment on the fact that qualitative research often implies that new concepts are uncovered as the outcomes of the research process and not a pre-formulated idea, which, in broader terms, implies a grounded theory approach. As Bryman (2001) argues, many projects, although claiming that they are

coming from a grounded theory perspective and are inductive in nature, are in essence not so.<sup>102</sup> This is precisely the case with this dissertation. Although new in its entirety, from the groups observed, the variables applied and the paradigmatic foundation, this dissertation follows an inductive approach. This was done with the aim of presenting the situation of both groups in relation to their right to political participation and the power that they current have or not have in this regard, but also to provide some understanding of the post-conflict multi-ethnic context as the potential catalyst for change the way these groups are thought of and the ways in which they observe themselves. Hence, this research was not conducted within grounded theory approach.

### ***Methods of Data Collection for the Qualitative Approach***

Recent studies of political participation patterns of different groups, but mainly youth in long-established democracies, such as those of Henn et al. 2002, O'Toole et al. 2003, Sloam, 2007<sup>103</sup> have all noted that there is a divergence in the way the researcher as the knower and the participants perceive political participation. All these studies argue that most people associate politics with politicians and political parties and can thus form negative views about the whole process of political participation. This, in turn, negatively influences their interest in politics and leads to apathetic answers. To illustrate, let us consider the study of Henn et al. from 2002 in which the authors used both qualitative and quantitative methods to study British young people between the ages of 18 and 24. The surveys showed that the participants were very disinterested in formal politics, but focus groups revealed results that showed that they (the participants) were, in fact, very opinionated and knowledgeable about issues that concern them<sup>104</sup>. Due to a severe lack of literature on mixed-method use for researching political participation of minority groups, I opted to look at studies that apply a similar method to other groups (e.g. youth). I am of belief that qualitative methods, especially focus groups and interviews, allow people to speak about

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<sup>102</sup> Bryman, A. 2001. *Social Research Methods*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

<sup>103</sup> See bibliography for more specific details on these studies.

<sup>104</sup> Henn, M, Weinstein, M, Wring, D., 2002. 'A Generation Apart? Youth and Political Participation in Britain'. In: *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 4(2).

sensitive issues in their own language and help researchers explain the results they generate through quantitative means. Hence, I used qualitative approaches to generate views of studied groups, gather their inputs on how my own research should be constructed in order to produce results that would be valuable to them as groups that need participatory empowerment and then to contextualize these findings to the post-Dayton reality in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Related to this is the research design I opted to apply for the present study. I was led by the logic of the research questions outlined in Chapter 1. I considered the specific historical characteristics of political participation of both groups (early activism, communal organization, ideological orientation through different periods, existence of radical political involvement and movements, as well as present day democratic forms of political participation including electoral participation, party activism and sponsorship, communication with politicians, being informed about politics and interest in being active in minority associations). These forms of formal political engagement were considered in order to understand and describe the specific activities that both Jews and Poles participated in during history, but also those that they engage in today. However, qualitative methods were not appropriate for political participation forms such as electoral participation, party activism and sponsorship, as they would fail to generate findings about the wider population. Instead, surveys were used and the procedure is described in detail in the section that follows below.

In contrast to the above, membership in minority associations and various types of communication with politicians, besides being included in the surveys (in order to assess the level) were also discussed through focus groups and interviews in order to generate answers on what are the trigger factors for such political engagement, have they remained the same through history or do differing socio-political and economic circumstances influence their prevalence, and how do these groups envision political participation in the minority context. This means that it was especially important to understand how the two studied national minority groups conceive their political engagement and experiences of involvement and whether they are aware, as groups, of the power that active political participation can bring to them. In this constellation, focus groups and interviews were necessary in order to provide in-depth context to the generated quantitative findings. Hence, the following section will outline the type of data and research techniques used in this work.

## *A Focus Group Discussion as a Selected Method*

In order to acquire in-depth data on the two groups that have never been studied in BiH, but also elsewhere and connect their presence and patterns of political participation with the trigger factors and the ways they perceive political participation, I opted for focus groups with members of Jewish and Polish minority associations in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The choice of focus groups was made on the basis of data that is acquired through this process, notably the discussion between groups that produces great deal of data which, in turn, generate a wealth of insights necessary for the understanding of group political behavior in complex political settings (Nagy Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2006). As existing studies of political participation conclude that in unstable or repressive societies political oppression and/or dissatisfaction is a driving factor for opting to participate in politics (Riesman and Glazer, 1965), the primary objective was to discover whether this conclusion also holds true for two representative national minority groups in BiH. However, in doing so, I had to take into account their current constitutional rights (power) and historical, as well as socio-political circumstances in which they dwell. Why I opted for focus group discussions is, thus, explained by the reasoning that individual discussions would only limit the interaction of a larger number of people that focus groups generate. Throughout the process, nevertheless, I was aware of the general disadvantage of this method, as focus groups can often generate discussions which overshadow individual's true feelings and perceptions.<sup>105</sup> I reduced this possibility by carefully selecting the respondents based on a set of different criteria, which included age, location and the level of activity in the minority association.

Overall, I conducted seven focus groups. Two were held in Sarajevo and two in Banja Luka, while three single sessions were conducted in the cities of Gradiška, Zenica and Tuzla. Each of the focus groups consisted of 8 to 10 respondents and lasted anywhere from 1 to 2.5 hours. They were conducted in Bosnian/Serbian/Croatian language. Participants from the two national minority groups were not mixed.<sup>106</sup> Within groups, they were selected according to age. Consequently, there were three age groups, 18-30, 31-50 and 50 and above. This choice was

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<sup>105</sup> Ritchie, J. and Lewis. J., 2003. *Qualitative Research Practice: A Guide for Social Science Students and Researchers*. Sage Publications, London.

<sup>106</sup> Separate sessions were held with both groups and they were never put in contact throughout the entire process.

based on reasoning proposed by Ritchie and Lewis (2003) that people of similar age and experience feel more comfortable in each other's presence when discussing sensitive issues. All participants were approached through their associations, initially by contacting the public affairs office, and later on, as we got closer, also individually. For the participants based in Sarajevo and Banja Luka, I had very close personal connections with several members of the association and these contacts were made easier. However, my personal friends did not take part in this research. The discussions took place during traditional gatherings or other times during which the associations were visited by their members due to various occasions (movie projections, women's club meetings, youth club meetings, Sunday school). All focus groups, including the gathering of participants and data collection took place in the first phase of the research, between June and September 2014. The participants who took part in focus group discussions were not asked to fill out the surveys.

### *Interviewing as a Selected Method*

During both the preliminary and mid-term research that I engaged in for this dissertation I also conducted eleven semi-structured interviews. Interviewees were selected on the basis of purposive sampling (Patton, 2002), which means that they were chosen according to a specific set of political, ethnic and geographical criteria. All interviewees were highly politically engaged individuals, influential representatives of the particular minority group or active members of the association (employed by the association). I define 'highly politically engaged individuals' as political party members or leaders of their associations, as well as minority representatives in the minority consultative body of the Parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Six were from the Jewish associations (Sarajevo and Tuzla) and five were from Polish associations (Gradiška and Banja Luka).

All the interviews with Jewish representatives were conducted face-to-face. Interviews occurred in participants' offices or public places (mostly restaurants and cafés). The five interviews that I conducted with Polish participants were conducted over the phone due to my physical inability to travel extensively during the given time. All interviews lasted between 1.5 to 2 hours. Just as focus groups, all interviews were conducted in Bosnian/Serbian/Croatian and interviewees were briefed about the general terminology used by the researcher and its meaning.

An on-line consent form was sent via e-mail and returned to the researcher with a signature. Apart from the researcher and the participant no other persons were present during interviews. Interviews included the following questions:

1. What is your opinion about (Jews'/Poles') involvement in politics?
2. Would you agree that your association is a place from which active political participation can originate?
3. What motives you to be so highly involved in politics?
4. Did the social, political and economic changes play a role in your decision to engage in politics so profusely?
5. What forms of political inclusion models would you suggest under the current political set-up in BiH?
6. What forms of formal political participation would you single out as most relevant to your group?

Although, the framework of these questions is broad, they were designed to allow for individual perceptions, stories and opinions to dominate the discussion and explain matters that were deemed important to the interviewee him/her self. This approach was in-line with the transformative framework which this study uses as its basis, and hence is not only useful for studies on ethnic groups, but also when seeking an understanding into different processes that concern these groups and how it can help them gain more power. In addition, due to a complete lack of data about these groups, such choice of questions allowed for generation of new data that could not be predicted from policies and reports that generally represent the only insight about these groups in BiH. Lastly, it is important to stress that none of the participants refused to participate in the focus groups and interviews.

Methodologically, the aim of the interviews and focus groups was to acquire “personal reports” on political behaviour/participation of single group members with the ultimate goal of uniting all data on all indicators on political participation (see section on quantitative methods) levels of Jews and Poles living in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This method was chosen in order to meet one specific characteristic of political participation and that is cumulative involvement,



which, according to various cross-cultural studies conducted across Eastern Europe, but also elsewhere, has been registered as typical for mixed societies.<sup>107</sup>

### *Data Analysis*

As a qualitative method, focus groups produce a large volume of verbal data, but the process of uniting all the data into a readable summary and drawing useful conclusions is often daunting.<sup>108</sup> Although, the analysis of focus group data differs from study to study<sup>109</sup>, the method that was applied in this work included three stages – *preliminary* (what I predicted to achieve), *identification* (identifying emerging concepts) and *organization and analysis* (reading notes and transcripts, cutting out unnecessary information, creating indicators for measuring political participation). In the first step, identification, which occurred before the scheduled session, I made outlines of what I predicted to achieve. I used this approach in order to have a clear picture of what is that I should learn from the discussion. At this point, I would outline concepts and ideas that I expected to acquire from the conversation, and these depended on the age group that I was discussing with, their geographical belonging and their level of engagement in the work of their minority association. As focus groups occurred in the preliminary part of my research, in order for me to become close to the groups, gain their trust and consequently feedback, the preliminary phase was constructed with the purpose of designing the study. Again, as a result of the transformative foundation of my work, the aim was to include the groups in the construction and active participation in the research process. Secondly, this phase acted as a benchmark for how detailed the analysis of the focus groups had to be. The analysis turned out to be complex, because my purpose at this stage was directed at analysis (how people perceive political participation, what triggers them, what do they think it is, what is their place in the process, how do they think they influence it, etc.).

On the other hand, the identification phase was reserved for identifying emerging concepts. This phase was probably the most important, because it helped me in avoiding the use

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<sup>107</sup> See bibliography for the work of Eduard Kluienko.

<sup>108</sup> Manheim, J.B., et al., 2001. *Empirical Political Analysis: An Introduction to Research Methods*. Longman Publishing Group. p. 359.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid, p. 360.

of traditional indicators of political participation that are more prevalent among majority groups or more traditional of western societies. In this phase, I also opted to observe only formal political participation, as non-conventional means of participation (as described in Chapter 1) emerged only on two occasions as trustful or known means of political engagement. The last phase, organization and analysis, was the most time consuming. Since in the beginning I opted for the use of recording the sessions in order to be sure that the context of the participants was taken into account and understood, this meant that there was a need to produce a transcript and read through it in order to narrow down the concepts that emerged in the first phase of the process and give these contexts and concepts actual meaning. Hence, content analysis was used in order to help identify discussion themes, sort participants according to participatory groups and use this information to support what was later to emerge as quantitative data. All of these steps helped my research in a way of highlighting the larger significance of the political participation process and patterns of the two observed groups.

Similarly, just as useful of a qualitative method for groups studied within the transformative paradigm, are interviews. However, interviews, and notably so semi-structured ones, are very time consuming, costly, tend to become overly personal and open to bias.<sup>110</sup> Sometimes, interviews can be difficult to conduct due to reserved or reticent participant, or become a personal history, unless the interviewer is able to steer the discussion into the primary and planned direction. However, for the transformative approach, interview participants are individuals whose experiences are highly valued, especially if we take into account that this approach tries to avoid situations of power being imposed by others. In order to preserve the information that was gathered during interviews, interview notes were analyzed immediately after the interview in order to make comments about my interpretation of the conversation and observe words, situations, stories or descriptions that were repeated on several occasions during the conversation. Additionally, upon completing an audio transfer to my personal computer, I created complete transcripts of the whole interview. My aim was to complete the whole process within three days of the interview for several reasons:

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<sup>110</sup> Gorman, G.E. & Clayton, P., 1997. *Qualitative Research for the Information Professional: A Practical Handbook*. London: Library Association Publishing. p. 125.

1. Some interviews were scheduled close to each other, first with one group and then with the other. I wanted to observe similarities, patterns and ideas that emerged and that I could potentially use in making up the questionnaires and discussions, thus in order to do this I wanted to have a list of terms that I could think of, read about and develop further into main ideas.
2. To have a fresh memory of the conversation and avoid forgetting important data, ideas and stories.

All participants during both focus groups and interviews were informed of the research scope and purpose and all of them read and signed the ethics statement. Following the qualitative research stage was the quantitative one, which included the highest number of participants, and was used to produce the first numerical data related to the main research question. The subsequent section, hence, explains the details related to this research approach.

### *A Quantitative Approach – Analyzing questionnaires*

#### *Participation Position and Indicators of Political Participation*

##### *A) Participation Positions*

When examining the level of political participation of a group or an individual, one factor is essential – participation position. In determining people’s positions in light of political participation, one must consider the so called “politicization panorama”<sup>111</sup> in the society, a term referring to classification of respondents on the basis of the type of their political engagement. Different Western authors, determine various types of political positions, and hence British sociologists Parry and Moyser (1992) single out three positions of political participation in the United Kingdom: ordinary voters, active and practically inertial.<sup>112</sup> On the other hand, Olson, an

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<sup>111</sup> Kluienko, E., 2007. Political Participation: Theory, Methodology, and Measurement with the Help of the Guttman One-Dimension Continuity Scale. In: Golovakha, Yevhen. (ed). *Ukrainian Sociological Review 2004-2005*. Kiev: Institute of Sociology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. p. 136.

<sup>112</sup> Parry, G., Moyser, G. and Day, N., 1992. *Political Participation and Democracy in Britain*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

American political sociologist, suggests the following division: political leaders, activists, communicators, citizens, marginal and isolated.<sup>113</sup> The Six Position Model is also supported by Verba and Nie, but the main conclusions about political participation developed according to these different empirical models are:

1. Political involvement of citizens significantly differs;
2. Political participation can be presented hierarchically:

The drawbacks of these conclusions are several, but the major problem lies in the fact that people are linked to certain positions of political participation. Alternatively, these conclusions might not stand for a non-stable and democratically underdeveloped society. Consequently, the choice of indicators that are more specifically outlined in the section below is not accidental, since several situational variables (political system in BiH, culture and traditional forms of political participation that have proven typical of these groups throughout history) were taken into consideration in choosing the most appropriate ones. The aim was to group the indicators presented in order to determine the real level of formal political participation separately for both groups. The main criterion applied was the popularity of political participation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which, if we take into account the increase in number of political parties and party members, can be termed to be on the rise.

### ***B) Indicators of Political Participation***

Building up on participation positions, when assessing it in relations to the level of political participation of a particular group, one must consider different types of political involvement, from those that are more general and applicable to larger portions of a specific group to more complicated and demanding forms of participation which are specific only to smaller fractions of a group or not specific at all. After analyzing previous studies on political participation, such as the work of Nie and Verba, a list of eight empirical indicators was developed along with subsequent questions and presented in a form of questionnaire and distributed to participants. The main criterion that was taken into consideration when choosing

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<sup>113</sup> Olson, M., 1965. *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups*. Harvard University Press.

these particular indicators and not others was the popularity and scope of these political behaviours among the two examined groups, which was observed through previously held focus groups and individual interviews. Hence, not all existing varieties of specific forms of political participation were used, and hence voting was chosen as an indicator, but subtypes of voting (e.g. local and general elections) were not specified, mainly because this research is interested in voting as a kind of political participation and not its particular sub forms.

Furthermore, when it comes to developing the questionnaire, each of the eight general kinds of political participation were represented by a single indicator. The purpose of this was to collect a number of factual statements on respondent's level of political involvement and how he/she sees him/her self in the sense of political behaviour. The answers offered were either scaled (1 indicating no history of particular behaviour and 5 relating to full practice of a particular action),<sup>114</sup> presented as "yes" or "no" questions or offered as multiple choice statement with the possibility of providing only a single answer. There were no open-ended questions. The following is a list of empirical indicators for the chosen kinds of political participation, placed in no particular order (the indicators are not grouped according to how demanding they are). They will help determine whether the participants engage only in electoral forms of participation, or go further through expressive and/or verbal and cognitive types of behaviour.

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<sup>114</sup> 1 - Completely disagree, 2 – disagree, 3 – I don't know, 4 – agree and 5 – strongly agree.

Indicator		Operationalization	Question asked
1.	<b>General involvement in political communication</b>	Contacts and/or communication with political actors	Do you contact or communicate with representatives of political parties or movements?
2.	<b>Verbal communication</b>	Oral expression	Do you talk about politics and discuss political issues?
3.	<b>Non-institutional practices of involvement</b>	Non-associated activity that favours certain political actors	Do you or have you ever done something in favour of a certain social and political movement or party, a politician or a representative?
4.	<b>Cognitive involvement</b>	Using information about politics that is consumed from mass media	Do you read about politics in newspapers, watch TV and/or listen to the radio?
5.	<b>Personal influence on forming opinions in small groups</b>	Using propagandistic talks and agitation for the learned social and political position	Do you attempt to persuade your friends or other people that your political opinions are right?
6.	<b>Institutional involvement</b>	Membership in civil society groups	Are you an active member <sup>115</sup> of a social/political association or a party?
7.	<b>Occasional involvement (motivated by a problematic situation)</b>	Relations with political actors in order to achieve a personal goal or solve a problem	Do you apply to political authorities in order to solve a problem?
8.	<b>Electoral involvement</b>	Voting (general)	Do you always vote/take part in elections)?

**Figure 2**  
**Empirical indicators of political participation of Jews and Poles in BiH**

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<sup>115</sup> The term “active member” will be defined as an individual’s regular participation in party’s or association’s activity.

### *Survey Sample Data – Procedures and Participants*

Measuring political participation, at least its conventional modes, is a research process that can rely on questions used in classical studies of political activism, notably those conducted by Nie, Verba and Kim (1978). Nevertheless, considering the specificities of particular groups that represent the subjects of this research, the survey was composed in such a way as to include questions that will, besides the conventional modes of political participation, measure the influence of the above mentioned perspectives in order to determine which type of participants these two particular groups represent in the society. In other words, are we looking at active or passive participants? The hypothetical model of factors that determine political participation included:

1. Socio-demographic traits;
2. Civic skills;
3. Social capital perspective;
4. Individual and collective values;
5. Evaluation of the economy of the country and individual's own economic situation at present and in the future.

In order to adequately measure each of the five factors, a set of predictors was developed for each one. The socio-demographic characteristics were represented by age, education and profession, while civic skills took into account the self-assessment of one's capability to write a letter against a government decision. On the other hand, three different predictors, namely membership in organizations, socializing with members of the group with whom the respondent is not familiar and general trust in people were used as predictors of social capital. When it comes to individual values, two predictors (opportunity to present one's requirements to politicians and respondent's ability to trust in political decisions) were used alongside collective values which were assessed by looking at evaluation of politicians' sensitiveness to ordinary citizen opinions and citizens' understanding of what happens in politics. Lastly, the indicators of the political system included the evaluation of the political system at present and in the last four years, while the evaluation of the economic system included indicators of the

present economic situation and the overall economic situation in the country in the last four years and economic self-assessment (individual's household) at present and in the last four years.

### *Participants*

The sample included a total of one hundred participants from each group (Jews and Poles from BiH) aged 18 and above, for a total of two hundred participants. The mean age for Jews was 57, while for Poles it was 47. Participants from both groups were members of their respective group's association (Association of Jews and Association of Poles in BiH). Data was collected from six different communities based in Sarajevo, Banja Luka, Gradiška, Mostar, Tuzla and Zenica. The selection of participants was random and participation was on voluntary basis. Only seven participants that were approached directly refused to fill out the questionnaire. Five of these participants believed that their answers would not contribute to my study as they expressed themselves as "apolitical", while two did not explain the reasons behind their decision not to participate.

### *The Predictors*

In revealing the importance of the type of participants that are typical of Jewish and Polish national minority groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina, several predictors were outlined in the text above. The choice presented here is not fortuitous, as there are several hypotheses which will be presented and tested in order to answer a more general question of what types of participants these two groups represent.

#### *a) Age*

The first significant predictor that will be taken into consideration is participants' age. The supposition is that age is a stronger predictor of active participants in comparison to passive participants.<sup>116</sup> This means that the younger the participant, the less likely he/she is to participate in politics. When it comes to "voters", the prediction is that they constitute the oldest group. However, what will be essential in considering this group is that their political behaviour does not go beyond voting, meaning that they do not engage in any other type of political activity.

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<sup>116</sup> The prediction made in this study corresponds to impact of age in classical studies of political participation, as demonstrated by Milbrath and Goel (1977), Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) and Verba, Schlozman and Brady (2000).



These assumptions rest on classical studies of political participation and their assumption that younger individuals participate in politics less than older ones.

b) *Education*

The primary hypothesis when it comes to participants' education is that the more educated the respondent, the more likely he/she is to belong to the active type.<sup>117</sup> In order to distinguish between different education levels, participants were asked to choose what type of education they have completed and were presented with the following options: elementary school, secondary (not complete), completed secondary, higher education (university) and advanced degrees (master's and doctoral). This supposition is based on theoretical perspectives of socio-economic status that argues that education offers people the necessary knowledge and skills to participate in politics<sup>118</sup>, including participation in social networks that can inform them about politics and the importance of citizen political action. Knowledge allows active participants to be educated about political acts as it provides them with necessary skills to understand and consequently participate in political acts.

c) *Membership in organizations*

Membership in organizations, both social and political, is considered to be a significant indicator in predicting the types of political participants.<sup>119</sup> The primary argument is that the more active an individual is in social or political organizations, the more knowledge and skills he/she has about the importance of political participation. Moreover, through organizational membership, people are able to develop skills and knowledge, cognitive and organizational skills and civic virtues which give them a sense of what it means to be politically engaged. Hence, participants who are active in social and political organizations are highly likely to fall under the category of active participants.

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<sup>117</sup> As shown in classical works of political participation of Conway (1991), Parry, Moyser and Day (1992), Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) and Verba, Schlozman and Brady (2000), as well as studies on political participation in post-communist states including those of Norris (2002) and Markowski and Tucker (2005).

<sup>118</sup> Conway, M., 1991. *Political Participation in the United States*. Washington D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press.

<sup>119</sup> Foley, M. W. and Edwards, B. (1996). The paradox of civil society. *Journal of Democracy*, 7. pp. 38-52.

d) *Self-assessment of civic skills (internal efficacy)*

Self-assessment of civic skills is a significant predictor, which will be examined through two sub-predictors “ability to write a letter to government representatives” and “socializing with unknown people in order to exchange views on their social networks”. This predictor hypothesizes that the former sub-predictor is more characteristic of middle-active (communicators) to active participants. The same is true of latter participants, whereby the assumption is that active participants have more developed social networking skills which help them in acquiring more information about different political matters. In turn, social networking contributes to participants tending to become more active in organizations.

e) *Belief that politicians are attentive to people’s needs and opinions (external efficacy)*

This predictor of external efficacy<sup>120</sup> allows us to test the hypothesis that the higher the respondent evaluates the statement that “politicians are attentive to people’s needs and opinions”, the more likely they are to belong to passive participants. This is because they are usually unaware of the type of communication and difficulties connected to it when it comes to addressing people’s needs and opinions on behalf of politicians.

f) *Evaluation of the economic situation of the participant’s household*

In Uslander’s and Brown’s (2005)<sup>121</sup> study on civic engagement, the underlying argument is that with a fast increase in economic inequality the level of optimism about the future is more pessimistic among active participants, while the opposite is true of passive participants. This is an important predictor in determining the types of participants, but it remains to be seen whether this assumption applies to respondents of the present research, and whether it holds that younger participants who are less likely to participate in politics are also more optimistic about their future because of age and because they have less experience in socio-economic inequality in the society.

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<sup>120</sup> Ingelhart, R., 1979. Political Action: The Impact of Values, Cognitive Level, and Social Background. In: Barnes, S.H., Kaase, M., et al. (eds.). *Political Actions. Mass Participation in Five Western Democracies*. London: Sage Publications. pp. 343-381.

<sup>121</sup> Uslander, E.M., Brown, M., 2005. “Inequality, Trust and Civic Engagement”. In: *American Political Research*, no. 33 (6). pp. 868-894.

## **The Importance of Assessing the Type of Participants in Relations to Political Participation: What the Empirical Analysis Contributes To?**

Whether citizens constitute an active or passive political body represents a query that is essential in assessing political participation within a society, but becomes even more relevant on small group basis, such as minority groups. In fact, assessing the type of participants in relation to political participation in transition democracies constitutes a viable factor in discussing democratization levels among members of a particular group, which, in turn, enables one to consider the overall democratization process in a particular society. Types of participants are always easily characterized by typical and straightforward patterns of political behaviour, which include their general interest in politics, voting and more direct participation, as through membership in political associations or engagement in electoral campaigns. By now, it has become very clear that passive participants contribute to these three factors the least, while active participants contribute the most. However, this general notion pertains to general political participation, but when it comes to other, less conventional modes of political participation, it will be interesting to evaluate whether passive participants contribute more to other political acts, aside from voting and political membership. As some recent studies in post-communist states have shown (e.g. Lithuania, Romania), passive participants contribute to voting the least, but are more active in other political acts than a more specific category of voters.<sup>122</sup>

In constructing a survey on the type of political participants several classical theoretical approaches to measuring political participation were taken into consideration in order to adequately choose the predictors that are most closely associated with determining the types of participants, or better, whether they fall within the categories of passive, active or voters groups. Hence, in a more general sense, three types of participants were determined through this survey – active, passive and voters – as characterized by their political behaviour which relates to either simple interest in politics, to voting and full political participation. The fundamental benchmark is that active participants are most interested in politics, that they, besides voting in elections, also participate in other political acts (membership in organizations, communication with politicians, etc.) and are more likely to engage in further political activities. On the other hand,

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<sup>122</sup> The category of “voters” will be introduced in order to differentiate between participants who are deemed active when it comes to voting, but passive when it comes to other forms of political participation. Their behaviour will be assessed on the same basis as passive and active participants.

voters are quite interested in politics as they always or almost always vote, but are not characterized by further involvement in political life. Lastly, passive participants are not at all interested in politics, as they contribute to voting the least, but can turn out to contribute more to other types of political activity than voters, but only at times of concerning issues that are of interest to them (temporary participation).

Consequently, in constructing such a survey, the predictors taken from my hypothesizing and observation alongside classical theoretical studies on political participation<sup>123</sup> were taken into consideration. This was done in order to examine whether they hold true for the two specific national minority groups living in Bosnia and Herzegovina which are the subject of this study. The predictors of the resources (age, education and self-assessment of civic skills), social capital perspective (membership in organizations and socializing with unknown people), as well as attitudes (evaluations of the economic situation of one's household) are considered very relevant in the post-conflict, transition period in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and after preliminary research conducted for the purposes of designing the survey (through individual interviews and focus groups) they were expected to significantly differentiate between the types of participants of these two groups. Hence, with the purpose of testing the initial observations, and in line with the above predictors and classical theoretical observations, several hypotheses are expected to be either confirmed or rejected through this survey:

H1. Active to middle-active participants participate in most political activities and vote in elections.

H2. Voters almost always participate in elections and represent the largest participatory group.

H3. Passive participants are least educated and rely heavily on media sources to learn about politics. They show high level of interest in domestic political events.

H4. Belonging to social networks and personal attitudes significantly influence the type of political behaviour.

H4.1. Active participants have the most social network resources, developed networks and support the political system. They are the most educated participants.

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<sup>123</sup> Conway (1991), Parry, Moyser and Day (1992), Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) , Foley, and Edwards (1996), Verba, Schlozman and Brady (2000), Uslaner and Brown (2005).

H4.2. Passive participants are young, have the least social network resources and more developed networks when compared to active participants. They do not strongly support the political system. They support the economic system because they focus on improving their economic situation. This is why they are not much interested in politics.

H4.3. Voters belong to the oldest group, have the lowest levels of social network resources and least developed networks. They are the most pessimistic when it comes to the support of the economic system and the benefits it can bring them.

H5. Older generations are more politically active compared to younger voters.

Starting with these five hypothesis and three sub-hypothesis, the expectation is also to answer the question of whether we can observe a shift from formal and elite directed forms of participation among minority participants (e.g. voting, political party membership) to more informal, issue-specific engagement in politics by passive minority participants and whether they will form a new, catalyst group of minority participants in BiH with the tendency to influence more than the other two categories.

## Part II

### Positionality, Reflexivity and Ethical Issues

Research that involves humans as participants often commences with an ethical tension, and often ends up as a process of asking people to participate and engage in procedures that they are unfamiliar with, did not request to or seek to know and that, in many cases, do not directly benefit from the research itself.<sup>124</sup> Although this last case does not stand for the transformative paradigm within which this research is posited, whereby participants in the research are expected to benefit from the results and were engaged in the research process throughout the entire period, the tension that arises out of individual participant's perception that he or she is only a mere subject of research, rather than somebody who benefits from it, is a tension that is very often present in researching social groups.<sup>125</sup> In practice, this issue is resolved with providing the participants with a free and informed consent form, which is a matter of procedural ethics.<sup>126</sup> Nevertheless, ethical research in practice goes beyond the practical procedures, which is why a researcher must also be aware of the principle of reflexivity, which, as Guillemin and Gillam argue "is also a bridge to the procedural ethical issues that can often seem out of place in the everyday practice of social research"<sup>127</sup>

In regards to the connection between reflexivity and transformative paradigm within which this research posits national minority groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the constant questions that I engaged with myself were: what do I know about these groups? and how did I come about this knowledge? One of the most obvious answers that emerged every single time I thought about these questions was my insider status, the fact that I lived alongside these groups, that my knowledge of the context within which my research was taking place was wide and deep and that, throughout the process, and notably towards the end of my research, I have become personally close to these groups. Hence, in this respect, reflexivity was a process of my own

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<sup>124</sup> Guillemin, M. & Gillam, L., 2004. "Ethics, Reflexivity and 'Ethically Important Moments' in Research". In: *Qualitative Inquiry*, Vol. 10 (2). p. 271.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid, p. 271.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid, p. 271.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid, p. 271.

critical scrutiny, something that has followed me from the beginning to the end of the whole procedure. Engaging with groups about which I had decent, but still limited knowledge and operating within the research environment in which not much is known about them, often made me question how I can improve the validity of the research that was never carried out before and how many limitations will this research have. In contrast to this, connecting my epistemological approach with my reflexivity, my position as a researcher implied that my research was conducted in a particular way – my research participants had a say in how my research was framed, what contexts were relevant for their patterns of political participation and factors that trigger it, what experiences and stories from other similar contexts can help in the process of their empowerment, what questions should be asked, how questions should be answered, how particular research findings pertain to them and how can they be used for their advantage. Although, this approach ensured that the autonomy of the research participants was safeguarded in a way that they played an active role in the whole process, I was especially reflexive on my primary research aims and questions when I found myself in situations in which older or highly politically engaged participants sought to steer the focus in a different direction. Although, as implied by the paradigmatic approach I used, their concerns, stories and ideas were highly accounted for in terms of their overall contribution to the goals of my research, I took a more careful approach when talking with similar group or individuals in future occasions. Hence, in this context my reflexivity into the whole process made me think of new ways in which I would ask the questions and word them, the way I would frame questions and the period in the research process when I would ask these questions. Overall, the way I asked myself certain questions and the way I analyzed qualitative data (a process described above) enabled me to continuously develop skills that made me more aware of my role as a researcher and of my status within the researched community.

Related to the precedent discussion is my role as a researcher. Quite obviously, in this research I was an insider, a person born and raised in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but an outsider in terms of belonging to the groups that I researched. Hence, I ultimately arrive to answering the question of what impact has my insider status had on my research. Kanuha (2000) defines insider research as a process during which a researcher conducts research with a population to which

he/she belongs to.<sup>128</sup> Hence, the insider as a researcher shares linguistic, historical, experiential and other characteristics with the researched group. This collision of insider epistemology is greatly considered by Asselin (2003) who argued that it is best for the insider researcher to gather data with her or his ‘eyes open’ but assuming that she or he knows nothing about the phenomenon being studied.<sup>129</sup> Furthermore, she points that, just as I claim above, the researcher might come from the studied culture, but may not know much or even understand the subculture, or in my case, different ethnic groups that I live alongside. This situation is reflected in three subtypes of insider qualitative researchers which Adler and Adler (1987) went further to identify: a peripheral member researcher (the one that does not participate in the core activities of group members, an active member researcher (the one who is involved in main activities, but does not commit to goals and values of the researched group) and a complete member researcher (a member of the group or somebody who becomes affiliated with the group during the process).<sup>130</sup>

Reflecting on my personal type of researcher, I cannot say that I was, during any stage of my work, just a peripheral researcher, but rather an active member researcher since I intentionally became engaged with the studied groups, in their religious and holiday activities and in their daily lives, all in order to fully understand first their history and how they viewed themselves in terms of historical influences on their present political activism, to how they understand their political role in Bosnian post-Dayton reality. I must admit that towards the end of my research, notably because I was engaged with these groups very closely for almost four years, I just about became a complete member researcher. This is especially true of the Jewish community in Sarajevo, which, at one point, funded my research and became very interested in the results and the benefits of this study for their community. This complete membership role enabled me to own a certain degree of privilege in a sense that I had frequent, fast and complete acceptance by my participants. I claim this because my participants often told me that they were

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<sup>128</sup> Kanuha, V. K., 2000. “Being” Native versus “Going Native”: Conducting Social Work Research as an Insider. In: *Social Work*, Vol. 45 (5).

<sup>129</sup> Asselin, M. E., 2003. “Insider research: Issues To Consider when Doing Qualitative Research in Your Own Setting”. In: *Journal for Nurses in Staff Development*, Vol. 19 (2).

<sup>130</sup> Adler, P., & Adler, P., 1987. *Membership Roles in Field Research*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.



‘happy’, ‘excited’, ‘humbled’ and ‘honoured’<sup>131</sup> that I researched their group. My participants were very open with me, but this feeling of openness emerged the most when I spoke to Jews from Sarajevo, as they saw me as a real insider, a Sarajevan. What this meant for my research was that I was able to gather in-depth data about the studied groups, as there was a great degree of trust and openness that I believe would not have been easily acquired had I been an outsider. At the preliminary stages of my research, as well as during the mid-point, I felt as if I had complete access into these groups. I was always welcomed, I had very personal conversations with most of my interviewees and focus group participants, especially the youth.

Although the certain shared experiences that I indeed held in common with the studied groups were very valuable during the entire process, I did, however, many times reflect on the questions I might receive from outsiders about the validity of my research. My primary questions to myself were – do my participants really tell me everything, or do they, because I am an insider, skip certain points assuming that I know the context well? If this is true, does this mean that I am not hearing full stories? Due to this, I always made sure to tell my participants to explain the background of the issue, to talk to me like I did not know anything or knew very little. This way I assured that the research was guided by the participant’s experiences and not my own. As is clear, there are many benefits of the insider status, but I am fully aware that this situation can inevitably cause issues of questioning my influence on the participants. However, I am of the opinion that the opposite researcher status cannot make one immune to the influence of personal perspective, and, considering the nature of the groups I study in this dissertation, much of the information would not have been available to me were I an outsider.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter outlined and critically examined and explained the main methodological approaches applied in this study. The first part concentrated on the transformative paradigm and discussed the ontological and epistemological assumptions of the chosen paradigm, as well as the choices of methods, indicating a mixed-method approach and justifying the reasons for such predilection. The qualitative methods which included focus groups and interviews were explained alongside data analysis, giving both approaches a dose of validity in terms of their application. In the

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<sup>131</sup> These words emerged the most during the focus groups and interviews, but mostly personal conversations that I had with members of different Jewish and Polish participants across BiH.

following chapters I apply the methods described here to present and analyze data on conventional political participation of Jews and Poles in BiH. In addition to this, the chapter commented on positionality and reflexivity issues, a part in which special focus was placed on my insider status as a researcher. Thus, this chapter offers a methodological reasoning for the applied approach for the overall research on political participation of national minority groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is the main topic of this work. Moreover, and related to the fact that transformative paradigm research considers social reality as historically bound, this part serves as a basis for understanding the strong focus on the historical chapter that will follow later in the study. But, in order to first understand the connection between representations as a source of minority power essential for research under the auspices of the transformative paradigm, I now turn to discuss these concepts as they relate to representation and political participation of national minorities in different democratic systems.

# CHAPTER 3: MINORITY REPRESENTATION AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN DIFFERENT DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL SYSTEMS

## Introduction

After theorizing political participation in its more general scope, I now turn to the question of representation, as representation and participation are termed to be intertwined insofar as they require each other's presence in order for a state to be termed as highly democratic.<sup>132</sup> Established democracies or better strong democratic states are expected to have institutions of direct democracy, but it is often the case that, as Young (2002) calls them "anti-representation" positions emerge even in most stable democracy. The latter scenario largely depends on the existence of radical democrats who see representation as an ill of the very value of democracy. They suggest that "representation alienates political will at the cost of genuine self-government, impairs the community's ability to function as a regulating instrument of justice"<sup>133</sup>. The major objection to representation of all groups in the society is that only states that are large enough, meaning that they have a large polity and population, can afford representation. Alternatively, small states that have de-centralized units cannot afford representation. Robert Dahl (1989) suggests that democracy, regardless of their size, cannot evade representation. Young (2002) supports and extends Dahl's argument by saying that "even in relatively small units of political decision making political [...] equality may best be served by institutions of formal representation"<sup>134</sup> Yet, the institutions of some democracies do discourage citizens from participating in political processes and ultimately decision-making. This taking away of rights typically occurs in relation to national minority groups. The chapter that follows will engage the argument of special representation of marginalized groups with the wider literature, while the second part will focus on explaining the approach to national minority right to political participation. Hence, this chapter discusses the sources of minority political power, from

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<sup>132</sup> Young, I.M., 2002. *Inclusion and Democracy*. Oxford University Press. p. 124.

<sup>133</sup> Barber, B., 1984. *Strong Democracy*. Berkeley: University of California Press. pp. 145-146.

<sup>134</sup> Young, I.M., 2002. *Inclusion and Democracy*. Oxford University Press. p. 125.

representation to the right to political participation and explains how they are viewed and contextualized in various democratic systems.

## **PART I**

### **Minority Representation**

An essential mode for the promotion of efficient representation of members of under-represented groups<sup>135</sup> is through political and associational institutions. However, representation of marginalized groups does not mean an immediate commitment to political equality (Phillips, 1993). A remedy for this that is often proposed in the wider theory of political participation, especially related to minority groups, and that is the concept of “descriptive” or “mirror” representation. As such, the represented are all members of the marginalized group (s) as related to the proportion that it has in the general public<sup>136</sup>. Pitkin (1971) argues that ‘mirror’ representation equals representation which only serves as a “standing for” rather than asking about being represented. Such arguments are appealing, as the practice of ‘mirror’ representation can represent an inclusive forum for political participation of groups that are under-represented. Again, this is especially relevant for national minority groups and the issue of political participation. Several studies (Mansbridge, 1980, Williams, 1998) confirmed that in places where there is history of exclusion of groups from the political processes, members of such groups are likely to be disengaged in politics, largely because they have become apathetic or simply because they refuse to try to engage with the majority.<sup>137</sup> Secondly, due to marginalized groups’ social positioning as “minority”, they often tend to have different understanding of social and political problems, which also implies that they have different solutions for them. As Williams (1998) and Bickford (1999) propose, such groups perceive each other differently; have different opinions about the society, its history and current contexts. Hence, in this case

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<sup>135</sup> Under-represented groups include women, working-class people, ethnic and racial minorities, disadvantaged castes, etc. However, for the purposes of this dissertation, I will consider only national minorities as under-represented groups in the context discussed. Source: Young, I.M., 2002. *Inclusion and Democracy*. Oxford University Press. p. 141.

<sup>136</sup> Pitkin, A., 1971. *The Concept of Representation*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

<sup>137</sup> Williams, M., 1998. *Voice, Trust and Memory: Marginalized Groups and the Failure of Liberal Representation*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

representation can only ease such imbalances. Accordingly, the next parts of this chapter will outline theories of how different democratic systems contribute and accommodate national minority political participation.

### **Sources of Minority Political Power: Representation in the Government**

Minority participation, at least in democratic states, is termed to represent the highest and most advanced form of minority representation. Considering this, it can be stated that most European countries or better those with a longstanding legacy of democratic rule, have, in one way or the other, successfully managed to include their national minority groups into the political processes on all government levels. Of course, the focus here is on countries with a strong record of successful mechanisms of inter-ethnic cooperation, a long history of minority inclusion and an effective state apparatus which allows for different groups' political participation but more so, political influence. Nevertheless, the right to political participation of national minorities does not derive purely from minority rights, but quite the contrary - it primarily stems from the political concept of power sharing.<sup>138</sup> And although the executive power sharing is relatively non present in international legal documents on minority rights, it has become an important segment of states' political efforts to include their minority groups into the governing political bodies. The general non-recognition of the term "power-sharing" within the general international law context can, at least in part, be due to the fact that the very terminology of "power-sharing" is both viewed and understood differently across varying political contexts and realities. Hence, power-sharing in post-conflict states, such as BiH, is viewed as a modus for engagement and cooperation between two former belligerents and is, thus, not understood as a minority-related instrument, but rather a tool for the creation and sustainability of a post-conflict government which aims at consolidating the historical enemies. On the other hand, in most stable democracies, power-sharing is based on broad coalitions,<sup>139</sup> but also other mechanisms, such as group-specific motivations and loud presence of minorities in the media, but also short-term

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<sup>138</sup> Bieber, F. Power-sharing at the Governmental Level., 2010. In: Weller, M. and Nobbs, K. (eds.), *Political Participation of Minorities – A Commentary on International Standards and Practice*. Oxford University Press. Pp. 414.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid, p. 415.

coalitions between majorities and minorities. However, for the purposes of this dissertation, I will orient towards the definition of power-sharing as used in works by Brendan O’Leary which states that executive power-sharing is understood “as the inclusion of all major ethnic groups in the executive.”<sup>140</sup> Not least, when using the term executive power-sharing in the context of minority inclusion it must be noted that such rights derive both directly from international human rights standards, but also indirectly from other mechanisms of minority inclusion in the areas of cultural recognition, use of language, education, etc. And while the former represent an already formed and relatively rigid form of inclusion norms, the latter are created and argued for by minorities themselves, provided that they already constitute a significant group on any given governmental level. Yet, other more significant differences between these two sources of minority inclusion in the power-sharing realm remain.

Firstly, let us consider the international human rights standards that span into minority rights sphere. Most, if not all of these instruments are scarce of detail when it comes to defining the political representation of minority groups.<sup>141</sup> Although they do prohibit minority exclusion from the government, there is a lack of precise delineation between mere rejection of inclusion and a right to be represented. In other words, governments may interpret these norms according to their political tradition, type of democratic rule and the existing established system of power-sharing, but also in the context of time and space, which refers to short-term circumstances that may arise between majority and minority groups. Hence, the legal regulation (or its absence thereof) of minority presence in the government is subject to interpretation. This can make such provision highly allusive and misleading for minorities that seek representation. Another contested dispute presented by international human rights standards on minority inclusion is the dilemma of when and how minorities should be included in the government. One example is the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM) and the Commentary of its Advisory Committee on the Effective Participation of National Minorities in Public Life which states that there should be a possibility for “posts assigned for minority representatives in

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<sup>140</sup> Ibid, p. 415.

<sup>141</sup> I will use the term “minority” here, as these instruments do not pertain only to national minorities, but also other marginalized groups.

the executive on all levels.”<sup>142</sup> The Commentary, however, falls short of defining how such representation should occur, through which mechanisms and according to what standards, thus leaving much space for controversy and different interpretations. What the Commentary does acknowledge is the danger of using veto rights, which can also be employed as tools in power-sharing systems. As Bieber points “the scepticism of the Advisory Committee is borne primarily out of the experience of Bosnia and Herzegovina, rather than any theoretical and comparative study of these mechanisms.”<sup>143</sup> It is, then, clear that the Advisory Committee is ill equipped in a sense of offering mid-way recommendations for multi-ethnic states governing, but maybe rightfully so, considering different political histories and traditions, as well as types of democracy that vary the interpretation of international norms. In addition to the Advisory Committee, one more international norm within the field of minority rights protection needs to be consulted – the Lund Recommendations, which state that:

*States should ensure that opportunities exist for minorities to have an effective voice at the level of the central government, including through special arrangements as necessary. These may include, depending upon circumstances:...formal and informal understandings for allocating to members of national minorities cabinet positions...*<sup>144</sup>

There is a clear reference to power-sharing in this recommendation, but since Lund Recommendations do not provide binding standards, this interpretation can only be used in the sense of best practice. Hence, the international human rights norms on the issue of minority inclusion in the government are weak and defenceless. They offer a good starting point and a valid framework for states’ behaviour, but fall short of binding provisions which could ensure better efforts by multi-ethnic democracies to include their marginalized groups. Thus, the interpretation of these notes rests in the hands of domestic sources of political and legal power.

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<sup>142</sup> Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, Commentary on the Effective Participation of Persons Belonging to National Minorities in Cultural, Social and Economic Life and in Public Affairs, 27 February 2008, ACFC/31DOC (2008), para. 128.

<sup>143</sup> Bieber, F. Power-sharing at the Governmental Level., 2010. In: Weller, M. and Nobbs, K. (eds.), *Political Participation of Minorities – A Commentary on International Standards and Practice*. Oxford University Press. Pp. 415.

<sup>144</sup> Foundation on Inter-Ethnic Relations., 1999. “The Lund Recommendations on the Effective Participation of National Minorities in Public Life, and Explanatory Note.”

Finally, minority representation in the executive also derives from minorities themselves. What this means is that if minorities do influence the decision-making processes in the domain of minority language usage, education in their mother tongue, access to minority media channels and cultural recognition, than this means that their government require their active participation in the decision-making on minority questions.<sup>145</sup> But yet again, there is room for analysis. The new dilemma in this context is represented by the impasse between mere symbolical representation and influential power-sharing, while the room for interpretation still remains in the hands of domestic sources of legitimacy, or better the long-established spaces of political tradition and constitutional provisions. Hence, there are some underlying questions here – to what degree is minority representation effective and do minority representatives really effectively represent their minority group or are they puppets of their (often majority) political parties? In order to offer an answer to the former query, O’Leary discerns between “a complete, concurrent and weak consociational executive”<sup>146</sup>, whereby the first includes all relevant parties, the second parties which represent the majority of the community and the last where only the plurality of the minority community is present. The second matter regards the influence of minority members within the government, an issue which highly depends on the form of minority representation within a given state. But in order to offer a deeper meaning to the former issue, mainly in the context of BiH where this problem is widely present, I will briefly discuss the theoretical viewpoints of minority representation and constitutional executive power-sharing.

### ***Minority Representation and Constitutional Executive Power-Sharing***

Compared to power-sharing, minority representation can be termed to represent a subordinate and consequently weaker form of minority inclusion in the executive. The basis for this lie in the fact that minority representation is temporary because of a clear lack of political

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<sup>145</sup> This type of participation is accomplished through different mechanisms, from consultative roles to cultural autonomy and self-determination. Of course, autonomy and self-determination form the widest basis for executive-power sharing, but since national minorities in BiH do not aspire for such rights, these mechanisms will not be discussed in the wider theoretical context of this dissertation. Not least, the attention will be drifted to different sources of minority inclusion which are relevant to the country in question and its national minority groups, including state and sub-state constitutions, and federal arrangements in their more specific forms.

<sup>146</sup> O’Really, B., Debating consociational politics: Normative and explanatory arguments, In: Noel, S. (ed.), *From Power Sharing to Democracy: Post-Conflict institutions in ethnically divided societies*. pp. 12-13.



and legal norms which would make it a constitutionally embedded regulation. Hence, it is up to majorities to decide whether and how to include minorities in the executive; this makes it clear that they (the majorities) are not obliged to do so. Yet, majorities can benefit from minority inclusion in the government, despite the obvious lack binding international norms. The reasons for this are manifold and include preferential coalitioning, easy-to-satisfy minority demands vs. hard-line majority party demands, conditionality (e.g. EU), an advanced diversity policy and government's commitment to multiculturalism, symbolism, but also control.

Firstly, majorities include minorities in the executive for, as Bieber (2010) points, "arithmetic reasons", which means that majority party can secure for the minority party to enter the executive, thus allowing the majority to obtain the obligatory parliamentary majority to govern.<sup>147</sup> This is especially true of governments where majority parties are in such sharp opposition that coalitioning becomes impossible, and where minority inclusion in the executive through a majority party is much less costly than the inclusion of other smaller parties which already enjoy majority support. Related to this is the fact that minority parties/representatives are almost entirely concerned with minority rights, so that it becomes much easier to satisfy these demands than to make much harder concessions to opposing majority parties. On the other hand, minority parties are sometimes included in the executive to balance the majority parties of both extreme right and extreme left, as they tend to be much more moderate than their majority counterparts. Hence, minority parties can offer an alternative to governments where extreme right/left wing parties gain most seats.

Not least, soft power tools as exercised by, for example, the European Union, can serve as a stimuli for domestic sources of legitimacy in getting the much needed external support benefit from including minority parties into the executive realm. As pointed out by Bieber, several countries which sought EU-accession (e.g. Croatia, Bulgaria and Romania) have opted for minority party inclusion in the government only to satisfy their ambition to join the European supranational actor. Lastly, some countries (e.g. Serbia) opt for minority party inclusion in the government due to their multiculturalist orientation and diversity policies. In these countries, more than in other, the justification for minority inclusion does not find its basis in conditionality or concessional benefits, but rather in power demonstrations and control. International standards

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<sup>147</sup> Bieber, F. Power-sharing at the Governmental Level., 2010. In: Weller, M. and Nobbs, K. (eds.), *Political Participation of Minorities – A Commentary on International Standards and Practice*. Oxford University Press. Pp. 421.

do not represent the foundation for their inclusive-behaviour as these countries and their ruling parties can (and have done so in the past) withdraw their support for minorities at any given time. Bieber and McRae argue “that such forms of minority inclusion resemble the model of ‘control’ – a model of majority control over the minority – such a conceptualization carries strong negative connotations.”<sup>148</sup> However, apart from the issue of control, such arrangements make much sense in countries where minority groups are relatively small, unless we are considering cases where formal and legally enshrined power-sharing is necessary for historic reasons (e.g. Kosovo).

Aside from minority representation which is obviously weak and subject to interpretation and majority motives and preferences, executive power-sharing “can be described as a firm and durable commitment towards the inclusion of different groups within government. Such a commitment might be expressed either by a political agreement, which has evolved over time into a tradition, or a legal requirement.”<sup>149</sup> In a large majority of Western European states with a history of democratic heritage, such power-sharing arrangements evolve out of tradition. At this point, I will turn the attention to some of the major sources of minority powers both legally enshrined and those prescribed by the postulates of political organization (mainly federalism and its sub-forms). The focus will be not on all minorities, but on national minorities and the sources of their right to political participation.

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<sup>148</sup> McRae, K.D., 1998. *Conflict and Compromise in Multilingual Societies: Switzerland*. p. 131.

<sup>149</sup> Bieber, F. Power-sharing at the Governmental Level., 2010. In: Weller, M. and Nobbs, K. (eds.), *Political Participation of Minorities – A Commentary on International Standards and Practice*. Oxford University Press. pp. 422.

## **PART II**

### **Accommodating National Minorities' Rights to Political Participation in Different Democratic Political Systems**

It was a dream of nineteenth-century nationalists to unite the people of the state around a common story of one language, history and habitual life practiced among ordinary men in order to create nation-states that would serve as representations of ethnically homogenous groups (Gertz 1973, Isaacs 1975, Rokkan 1975, Smith 1986). A century later, states established numerous political mechanisms to accommodate the growing ethno-national diversities within their borders, and hence instituted legal instruments which would protect national minorities, as well as sets of policies relating to these groups and the areas they inhabited<sup>150</sup>. Cohen and Warwick (1983), Collins and Waller (1992), Enloe (1973) and Nielsen (1985) all argue that modern institutions of mass political importance (notably communication and education) played a vital role in emphasising common these identities. The hope of states which embarked upon this past of unity was to erode the national differences upon which the members of the population were basing their identity<sup>151</sup>. But to establish an ethnically diverse state that would adopt a common identity, it was crucial for the people to be recognized as members of one nation. Even more so was critical that the citizens adopt the common identity and participate as members of a single political system, regardless of their ethnic, linguistic or religious origins. Such provisions, thus, became mostly regulated by state constitutions, but it is not a rarity that these integrative political mechanisms fail as different ethno-nationalist groups fight to maintain their sovereignty<sup>152</sup>. In democratic states, where citizen participation is considered an essential characteristic of democratic development such issues are again, regulated by state constitutions, but also other state-instituted arrangements. Hence, to fully understand how such political mechanisms function, but more importantly how they relate to national minority rights to

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<sup>150</sup> These policies related especially to economic development. Source: Sekulić et al., 1994. Who were the Yugoslavs? Failed Sources of a Common Identity in the Former Yugoslavia. In: *American Sociological Review*. Vol. 59, No. 1. p. 83.

<sup>151</sup> Davis, H., 1978. *Toward a Marxist Theory of Nationalism*. New York: Monthly Review.

<sup>152</sup> This was certainly the case with Yugoslavia, notably in the 1980s after Tito's death and following the 1990s wars of Yugoslav secession.

political participation, the following sections offer a systematic overview of most relevant and common political mechanisms used to accommodate national minority rights to participation in the political processes.

### **National Minorities in State Constitutions: A Conceptual Clarification**

When considering state constitution as a source of minority power, it is necessary to make a quick definitional differentiation pertaining to national minority rights. Within state constitutions, national minority rights may refer to one of three different types: minority rights that are exercised individually, minority rights that are exercised collectively, or individual (non-collective rights). Minority rights that are exercised individually are rights that have been conferred to an individual precisely because he or she belongs to a specific group or community.<sup>153</sup> In contrast, minority rights that are exercised collectively depend on the existence of a sufficient number of people within a minority community such that the group, as a whole, can receive particular treatment.<sup>154</sup> Finally, individual (non-collective rights) refer to those rights that may be particularly important to national minorities (such as non-discrimination) but that are granted to all, including the members of the majority.<sup>155</sup> A large part of the academic literature refers to the first and second types of rights listed above, as will I hereafter<sup>156</sup>. But where do these constitutionally embedded rights stem from and what are their origins is a question which needs to be considered next within the broader context of constitutionally enshrined rights for national minorities.

The question of general minority rights first entered the international dialectic indirectly through the Treaty of Westphalia of 1648. The development of the concept Westphalian

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<sup>153</sup> Bell, G. F., 2001. "Minority Rights and Regionalism in Indonesia-Will Constitutional Recognition Lead to Disintegration and Discrimination." *Sing.J. Int'l & Comp. L.* 5 p. 796.

<sup>154</sup> O'Leary, B., 2008. "The Logics of Power-Sharing, Consociation and Pluralist Federations". In: Weller, M. and Metzger, B. (eds.), *Settling Self-Determination Disputes: Complex power-sharing in theory and practice*.

<sup>155</sup> Bell, G. F., 2001. "Minority Rights and Regionalism in Indonesia-Will Constitutional Recognition Lead to Disintegration and Discrimination." *Sing.J. Int'l & Comp. L.* 5 p. 796.

<sup>156</sup> For a more thorough academic overview of these concepts as proposed in the fields of minority rights and human rights see works of: Casals 2006; Crawford 1988; Felice 1996; Freeman 1995; Kymlicka 2001; Malik 1996; Mello 2004; Van Dyke 1985, Eisenberg and Spinner-Halev 2005; Green 1994.

sovereignty, which sermonized the supreme authority of the state and through the concept of state sovereignty also set the basis for national self-determination, contained within it the premise that states could be recognized as independent entities with power over their people as long as they did not violate the rights of minorities.<sup>157</sup> Following World War I and the establishment of the League of Nations, the question of minority rights, though acknowledged as an important issue, was conveniently swept aside as conflict arose over the precise meaning of self-determination: at that time the focus was on equal rights for citizens, not nations. Thereafter, the multi-national states that emerged after the Great War in Central and Eastern Europe differed greatly from the liberal and Republican states of the West.<sup>158</sup> This can be, in part, attributed to the reality that many of the Western states were held together through a civic principle, whereby citizenship in the polity was taken as the foundation for national cohesion or patriotism.<sup>159</sup> On the other hand, many of the states in CEE were held together by a national principle, which “defines the nation in terms of ‘blood and soil’ conceptions of ethnicity”<sup>160</sup>, embedded in primordial theories of nations. Still, following World War II, the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights went even further to dissociate rights with any sort of collective identity<sup>161</sup>.

The collapse of communism revealed the underdevelopment of the historical progression of West European minority norms in several key aspects. First, was the question of self-determination of nations and minority autonomy; second, the defence of individual rights over

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<sup>157</sup> Deets, S., 2006. “Reimagining the Boundaries of the Nation: Politics and the Development of Ideas on Minority Rights.” *East European Politics & Societies* 20.3, p. 421.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 424.

<sup>159</sup> Rhodes, M., 1995. “National Identity and Minority Rights in the Constitutions of the Czech Republic and Slovakia.” *East European Quarterly* 29.3, p. 347.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 347.

<sup>161</sup> In order to limit the use of the term of “collective identity” to autochthon national minority groups, but also due to the fact that “collective identity” is out of the scope of this dissertation, I refer to the definition of it as put forward by Polletta and Jasper (2001) who define collective identity “as an individual’s cognitive, moral, and emotional connection with a broader community, category, practice, or institution. It is a perception of a shared status or relation, which may be imagined rather than experienced directly, and it is distinct from personal identities, although it may form part of a personal identity. Collective identities are expressed in cultural materials—names, narratives, symbols, verbal styles, rituals, clothing, and so on—but not all cultural materials express collective identities.” Source: Polletta, F., and Jasper, J.M., 2001. “Collective Identity and Social Movements”. In: *Annual Review of Sociology*. Vol. 27. Columbia University. p. 285.

collective rights and third, the relation between kin states and co-ethnics.<sup>162</sup> Accordingly, three different competing visions on constitutional minority policy emerged in Eastern Europe. The first vision, which can be considered “strong democracy”, emphasized majoritarianism, denying “the state had any role in promoting or preserving minority culture, including funding schools and accommodating nonstate languages, unless the majority specifically authorized it.”<sup>163</sup> The second and less prevalent, “broad liberalism”, allowed citizens in the private sphere to pursue the goals of their cultural community and provided access to the state in minority languages, while the third, “liberal pluralism”, was geared toward the recognition of multiple national communities.<sup>164</sup> It was not until 1995 and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, a multilateral treaty of the Council of Europe, that the vision in which governments are required “to provide ‘appropriate’ levels of minority-language education, media, and other cultural goods, but they are not required to make them available to specific persons, nor can they limit the enjoyment of these goods by any persons”<sup>165</sup> was articulated. However, a 1996 re-examination of the convention clarified that there is no recognized right of special status for minorities and that international law cannot impose any territorial solution for national minorities.

Hence, and as noted previously, the opinion of democratic states still differs as to whether there is a need for special minority rights within their state constitutions. Some states such as France and Greece support national minority rights by avoiding any language that would grant citizens who are members of national minorities any special rights beyond the human rights that are universally accepted, ignoring linguistic and cultural differences.<sup>166</sup> For others, such as Hungary and Germany, the unity of state and nation is less important (though for different reasons), and the protection of special minority rights appears a state goal in official politics, “...so that the preservation of the country’s ethnic and cultural diversity may even appear a

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<sup>162</sup> Deets, S., 2006. “Reimagining the Boundaries of the Nation: Politics and the Development of Ideas on Minority Rights.” *East European Politics & Societies* 20.3, p. 432.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 438.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 438.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 438-9.

<sup>166</sup> Majtényi, B., 2005. “Special Minority Rights and Interpretations of the Nation in the Hungarian Constitution.” *Regio-Minorities, Politics, Society-English Edition*. p. 16.

constitutional duty.”<sup>167</sup> In Eastern Europe, the national (as opposed to civic) orientations of the constitutions can likewise manifest in different policies toward minorities. For example, the Albanian, Estonian, and Lithuanian constitutions rest on sovereignty principles deriving from the nation, which seems to undermine or even deny national minorities. However, many post-communist constitutions based in national principles include different minority protection mechanisms, spanning from guaranteeing the right to receive education in their own language and some access to the state in minority languages, to the right to freely determine and develop their national identity. Still yet, some states choose to mix national and civic ideas, such as the Polish Constitution, which opens with, “‘We, The Polish Nation – all citizens of Poland.’”<sup>168</sup> This mixture, of course, might prove confusing for national minorities in how they choose to identify themselves.

A case study comparison between the Czech Republic and Slovakia by Rhodes reveals that a constitutional emphasis on the civic principle instead of the national principle has proven to better resolve conflict pertaining to minorities. The Czech Republic outlines the rights of national minorities, stating that “‘citizens who constitute national or ethnic minorities are guaranteed all-round development’ as well as the right to ‘education in their language’, to ‘use their language in official contact’, and to ‘participate in the settlement of matters concerning national and economic minorities.’”<sup>169</sup> But the document exclusively refers to the inhabitants of the country as citizens, not as a nation or a people. In contrast, though the Slovakian constitution also outlines rights for national minorities, it adopts the national principle: “‘We the Slovak nation...together with members of national minorities and other ethnic groups living on the territory of the Slovak Republic, that is, we the citizens of the Slovak Republic, adopt through our representative this Constitution.’”<sup>170</sup> This seemingly minute difference in vernacular has proven to exacerbate domestic challenges within the state, particularly by antagonizing the large

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<sup>167</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid. 430

<sup>169</sup> Rhodes, M., 1995. “National Identity and Minority Rights in the Constitutions of the Czech Republic and Slovakia.” *East European Quarterly* 29.3. p. 347.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid, p. 347.

Hungarian minority.<sup>171</sup> All of the above examples clearly demonstrate that the merits of a constitution based on the civic principle versus the national principle remain inconclusive and necessary of evaluation on a case-by-case basis that accounts for the particular history and culture of each respective state.

Hence, the question of territorial autonomy for minority groups still poses a conundrum in the state constitution-making process of today. Discussing the necessary requirements for minorities to make an Iraqi constitution viable, Mutua argues that in addition to equal protection and anti-discrimination requirements, a Bill of Rights must guarantee:

*“minority groups, such as the Assyrians, Christians, and Armenians, the right to use their own language, the right to practice their own religion, and the right to enjoy their culture...not hinder or prohibit, the efforts of minority groups to establish institutions in which their languages are the primary media for instruction.”<sup>172</sup>*

This stance is in line with the international precedent established in 1995. Yet, although Mutua (2006) acknowledges that autonomy regimes may prove the best solution for minority groups to defend, advance, and enjoy their basic rights as a collective or group entity, he notes that “...neither the international law regime on minorities nor the human rights corpus directly and explicitly authorize autonomy regimes.”<sup>173</sup> He elaborates, “note should be taken of the fact that the Declaration on Minorities neither uses the terms ‘peoples,’ nor ‘self-determination,’ nor ‘autonomy’ ”.<sup>174</sup> This question of territory has thus become key in the present-day discussion of minorities in state constitutions. This is especially true of federal systems where power is divided among its constituting territories by a state constitution.

Nevertheless, in most federal systems, state constitutions remain a weak source of constitutional arrangements for sub-state units, or better federal units that constitute a state. Rather, most state constitutions prescribe procedures for their own changes and leave space for

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<sup>171</sup> Ibid, p. 347.

<sup>172</sup> Mutua, M. 2006. “The Iraq Paradox: Minority and Group Rights in a Viable Constitution.” *Buff. L. Rev.* 54. pp. 943-4.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid., p. 944.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid., p. 937.



sub-national constitutions, which, in most countries, stay largely invisible. Despite this and considering the fact that sub-federal units also represent legal political entities, then it becomes logical for them to have their own constitutions. However, the degree of freedom which a state constitution grants to its subnational units largely depends on the “completeness” of the state constitution itself. Hence, the more incomplete it is, the more power lies in subnational constitutions. This is especially true in multi-ethnic states where it is not uncommon for federal units to be divided along ethnic lines. Thus, minority rights are very often regulated by sub-state constitutions, which is why this topic merits its own section.

### **National Minorities in Sub-State Constitutions**

In recent years, notably so in post-communist countries of CEE and later on in the states of the Balkans, the renaissance of political awareness about group and regional identity has resulted in states searching for new inclusion mechanisms for the previously unorganized and marginalized groups, mostly national minorities. And since a creation of a new country is never an option and since no state, except for Ethiopia, allows for subnational units to secede, subnational constitutions remain the most widely accepted instrument. In fact, in all federal states subnational constitutions govern the rights of different groups, including national minorities. Not least, granting constitutional space to subnational units makes it easier for all groups to gain recognition of their rights at the subnational level. Hence, unlike state constitutions, sub-state constitutions have the potential to safeguard both the rights of geographically concentrated minorities and the rights of internal nations within multinational federations.<sup>175</sup>

Sub-state constitutions protect political rights, “particularly the rights (within parameters established by the federation) to affirm one’s own identity, to set one’s own social and political goals, and to devise those institutional arrangements best suited to the achievement of those goals.”<sup>176</sup> Specifically, they can protect the right of groups to maintain their distinctive identities made manifest through religion, language, or ethnicity, as “local conditions and values may lead

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<sup>175</sup> Tarr, A. G., 2008. “Subnational Constitutions and Minority Rights: A Perspective on Canadian Provincial Constitutionalism.” *Rutgers LJ* 40. p. 791.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid*, p. 791.

particular constituent unites to use their subnational constitutions to go beyond the federal minimum.”<sup>177</sup> In addition, sub-state constitutions can also provide a roadmap for how government policies toward minorities will be carried out on a state level. Finally, these documents may serve as “instruments of conflict management during periods of political instability”,<sup>178</sup> for the process of constitution making provides opportunities for political involvement and socialization (though sometimes it runs the risk of reinforcing a separate identity from that of the larger federation).<sup>179</sup>

Despite the reality that sub-states in some federations such as the United States of America (USA), Switzerland, and Australia possess their own constitutions, this practice is far more an exception than a norm. Indeed, many widely studied federal states such as Canada, Belgium, Nigeria, and India contain charters or legislation pertaining to their sub-states, but they do not have separate sub-state constitutions. Often, this absence of a sub-state constitution marks a deliberate attempt by the federal government to ensure that constituent units do not occupy too much constitutional space or cause conflict. For example, in Nigeria and India, the contents of would-be subnational constitutions are prescribed within the federal constitution, obviating the need for separate sub-national constitutions. Another mechanism employed to minimize conflict while allowing for sub-state constitutions is the creation of mechanisms for federal review of the choices made by constitution-makers; in other words, the federal government gains some control over the content of sub-national constitutions at the time when they are created.

On the other hand, there are instances when sub-state constitutions are created, certain measures aid in maximizing their impact for the constituents. First, it is important for sub-state governments to communicate the norms of the sub-state constitution to the constituents. In all cases, this means duplication and dissemination of constitutional texts in sufficient copies, translation of the texts into local languages and teaching of the contents of these texts. In this way, constituents can exert their minority rights by putting federal power in check, and more generally, they can aid in making these state constitutional texts more visible in the federal discourse. A second measure to be employed is “norm implementation”, in which sub-state

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<sup>177</sup> Ibid, p. 791.

<sup>178</sup> Regassa, T., 2009. “Sub-national Constitutions in Ethiopia: Towards Entrenching Constitutionalism at State Level.” In: *Mizan Law Review* 3.1 pp. 38-9.

<sup>179</sup> Tarr, A. G., 2008. “Subnational Constitutions and Minority Rights: A Perspective on Canadian Provincial Constitutionalism.” *Rutgers LJ* 40. p. 783.

constitutional principles are put into practice, even when political actors may suffer temporary political losses as a consequence. This recognition gives “strength and vibrancy” to the constitutional system.

Building on from this, it is clear that the consequences of sub-state constitutions cannot definitively be classified as positive or negative for the functioning of the federal system, despite the voice given to minorities. Sub-state constitutions may foster unity between the federation as a whole and its respective states, providing a format by which citizens can re-affirm their commitment to the political principles propagated by the federal system on a local level, in a more specific and detailed manner. Thus, sub-state constitutions “have the most potential to legitimate these citizens’ instinctive commitments and thereby reduce citizen estrangement from the union.”<sup>180</sup> However, sub-state constitutions may result in divisive effects: “In part, this is because some citizens in constituent states are bound to be dissatisfied with the compromises forged in the constitution-making process; these individuals are likely to be more frustrated than if the underlying issues had continued to be held in abeyance.”<sup>181</sup> Furthermore, sub-state constitutions may encourage discrimination of populations that may not be considered minorities in the federation but become minorities in the state due to the concentrated, homogenous presence of a particular ethnic group. This has been the case with Ethiopian sub-state constitutions, whereby the government has ignored the emergence of new minority groups that are calling for “ethnic sovereignty”, a notion that emerged after Ethiopia became a federal state.

But to approach subnational constitutions requires a legal assessment of the amount of subnational constitutional space and competences that are prescribed to sub-state units by the national constitution. While some countries, such as Switzerland and the United States allow their subnational entities much subnational constitutional freedom, countries like South Africa restrict these spaces to its national subunits. This issue of “policing” national subunits and their constitutional spaces is especially relevant in multinational federations. These entities, thus, represent our next unit of analysis within a wider context of sources of minority political rights.

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<sup>180</sup> Dinan, J., 2012. “The Consequences of Drafting Constitutions for Constituent States in Federal Countries.” *Multinational Federalism: Problems and Prospects.* , pp. 234-235.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid, p. 233.

## Multinational Federations: Establishing a Definition

Before providing a definition of a multinational federation, it is useful to review the components of a mere federation. A concise definition of federalism reads that it is: “ ‘a form of territorial organization in which unity and regional diversity are accommodated within a single political system by distributing power among general and regional governments in a manner constitutionally safeguarding the existence and authority of each.’ ”<sup>182</sup> Beyond the primary component of central-regional division of power, federalism often assumes a set of secondary characteristics: “...a written constitution, bicameralism, equal or disproportionately strong representation of the smaller component units in the federal chamber, decentralized government, and the right of the component units to be involved in the process of amending the federal constitution but to change their own constitutions unilaterally.”<sup>183</sup> The academic literature lists multiple types of federalism including territorial federalism, regional federalism, multinational federalism, and ethnic federalism. Unfortunately, there does not appear to be universal consensus on the precise differential characteristics among them.

Differentiating between the different types of federalism depends, to an extent, on the civic versus national principle. Political philosopher Will Kymlicka defines multinational federalism as “creating federal or quasi-federal subunit in which the minority group forms a local majority, and so can exercise meaningful forms of self-government...the group’s language is typically recognized as an official state language, at least within their federal subunit, and perhaps throughout the country as a whole.”<sup>184</sup> In principle at least, multinational federalism can be thought of as much fairer than other systems in accommodating the desires and concerns of minorities. The key distinction between regional and multinational federalism is whether ethnic identity or universal citizenship is the basis for the federal unit.<sup>185</sup> In regional federalism, “...different ethnic groups share a common citizenship in a civic homeland where two levels of

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<sup>182</sup> He, B., 2006. “The Federal Solution to Ethnic Conflicts.” *Geo. J. Int’l Aff.* 7. p. 30.

<sup>183</sup> Lijphart, A., 1979. “Consociation and Federation: Conceptual and Empirical Links.” *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 12.03. p. 502.

<sup>184</sup> He, B., 2006. “The Federal Solution to Ethnic Conflicts.” *Geo. J. Int’l Aff.* 7. p. 32.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid*, p. 32.

government share power.”<sup>186</sup> In contrast, in multinational federalist states, ethno-national groups seek self-governing by ethnicity. Let us consider the American and French territorial models of federalism, since they represent the two main liberal traditions. Both systems rest on the civic principle (citizen model), but are not concerned with ethnicity. In fact, the American and the French model do not recognize other ethnicities in the population, or better they do not find them relevant.<sup>187</sup> For them, the only relevant and recognized unit is the *nation*, a principle according to which all *citizens* are *equal individuals* who *belong to the nation*. Moreover, the American model goes as far as not accounting for the cultural element; cultural belonging is irrelevant and all groups must assimilate culturally into an all-inclusive American culture. However, the United States does recognize individual cultures, but does not deem them relevant in the political processes and granting of special participation rights. Alternatively, France assumes cultural homogeneity of all its citizens, while different cultural groups other than the nation or within the nation are not recognized by the constitution and are, thus, irrelevant.

Despite its inclusivity of different groups, the multiregional federal model is both challenged and praised. On one hand, some contend that multiregional federalism contains inherent flaws that undermine its legitimacy as an effective system of governance. For example, multinational federalism has been classified as unstable and problematic, for it can promote violence and is likely to bring an end to the state itself. A common corollary to this line of thought, therefore, is the belief that the act of giving minorities portions of majority power undermines the ability of a democracy to function. Another criticism is the occurrence of “ethnic engineering”, in which an ethnic group within a member state that is a minority in the federation but a majority within the sub-state uses its autonomous position to oppress other ethnic minorities.<sup>188</sup> This issue becomes even more conflict-inducing when the local minority constitutes a majority at the level of the central state.<sup>189</sup> Codagnone and Vassily (2000) identify

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<sup>186</sup> Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>187</sup> In providing special participation rights to members of subgroups (minorities), these groups must be both recognized and relevant. However, recognizing political relevancy of groups is a highly contested matter and often deemed contrary to the principle of the nation-state.

<sup>188</sup> Stanovčić, V., 1992. “Problems and Options in Institutionalizing Ethnic Relations.” *International Political Science Review* 13.4. pp. 365-366.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid, p. 365-366.

this as pressing issue in Russia, where the manner in which multinational federalism has developed “...does not ensure the ‘polyethnic’ rights of non-‘titular’ nationalities” and that often as a consequence, “...some basic general federal principles are not respected in practice.”<sup>190</sup> This undesirable outcome is hence a shared echo in the literature that concerns both multi-national federations and also sub-state constitutions.

Further criticisms, again, point to the characteristics of multinational federalism that undermine democracy. For example, stable democracy often depends first, on cooperation between segmental elites and second, on the possibility that “groups and individuals have a number of cross-cutting, politically relevant affiliations,” both of which are harder to come by in systems of ethnic federalism.<sup>191</sup> In addition, ethno-centric political cultural values that arise in an ethnic federation can be “...parochial even when very large groups share them, and are not conducive to the establishment of civil society.”<sup>192</sup> The correlation between ethnic federalism and the absence of liberal democratic political culture is clearly exemplified in the case of Ethiopia. Indeed, multinational state unity continues to take priority over “civil society, political trust, power sharing, genuine participation in a multiparty democracy and the rule of law.”<sup>193</sup> However, multinational federalism continues to be adopted as a model of governance because of certain benefits it poses.

Multinational federalism proves an attractive model in many post-conflict societies. Clancy and Nagle assert that many multi-ethnic federations have been littered with conflict, such as Czechoslovakia and Nigeria, while those more relatively successful examples have still suffered from secessionist crises, such as India and Canada.<sup>194</sup> Still, they emphasize that the

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<sup>190</sup> Codagnone, C., and Vassily, F., 2000. “Equity, Exit and National Identity in a Multinational Federation: The ‘Multicultural Constitutional Patriotism’ Project in Russia.” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 26.2 p. 269.

<sup>191</sup> Stanovčić, V., 1992. “Problems and Options in Institutionalizing Ethnic Relations.” *International Political Science Review* 13.4. pp. 367.=.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid, p. 367.

<sup>193</sup> Burgess, M., 2009. “Territorial and Non-Territorial Identities: Multinational Federalism in Multinational Federation.” Paper prepared for the conference “Multinational Federalism in Perspective: A Viable Model?”, p. 17.

<sup>194</sup> Clancy, M. A. C., and John N., 2009. “Frozen Conflicts, Minority Self-Governance, Asymmetrical Autonomies—In Search of a Framework for Conflict Management and Conflict Resolution.” *6th Asia-Europe Roundtable, University of Ulster-United Nations University-International Conflict Research Institute (INCORE). Republic of Ireland.*, p. 12.

model of multinational federation in itself is not the sole causal factor for these conflicts, nor that “federalism inevitably gives rise to civil war and/or secession.”<sup>195</sup> In fact, while multinational federalism may be more complicated and costly than a unitary system, it may provide “a better framework to handle a society already damaged by conflicts.”<sup>196</sup> To return to the case example of Ethiopia, though the country hardly stands as an exemplary democracy, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia has endured for almost two decades despite its history of civil war, ethnic violence, and revolution. The new federal model has sustained political stability without international intervention or serious challenges of secession.<sup>197</sup>

### *Anomalies and Broader Conclusions*

The contextual debates over multinational federalism and its provisions only demonstrate that all states are ill-equipped in addressing special-participation and representation rights of self-conscious minority groups. Hence, I will turn the attention to two case anomalies of multinational federalism. The first is the example of Bosnia and Herzegovina, whose most striking feature is its weak central authority compared to the strength of its two constituent units. This example is salient because typically, federal-state relations are reversed “...with concerns usually expressed about the powers of an overweening central government and its encroachment upon the competences of the constituent state governments.”<sup>198</sup> This abnormal distribution of power requires the Office of the High Representative (OHR) and the Constitutional Court set up by the international community to strengthen the federal government and reign in the claims and activities of the Entities.<sup>199</sup> A second atypical historical example is the case of Estonia, the best-known example of a system wherein ethnic federalism was based in non-territorial autonomy.

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<sup>195</sup> Ibid, p. 12.

<sup>196</sup> Otive, I., , Saunders, C., Yadav, Y., and Yawngwe, C, 2002. “The Role of State Constitutions in Protecting Minority Rights under Federalism: Dialogues in Support of a Democratic Transition in Burma.” International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance., p. 6.

<sup>197</sup> Burgess, M., 2009. “Territorial and Non-Territorial Identities: Multinational Federalism in Multinational Federation.” Paper prepared for the conference “Multinational Federalism in Perspective: A Viable Model?”, p. 17.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid, p. 18.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid, p. 19.

Typically, multiregional federalism gives right to minorities who constitute a majority in a particular region. Conversely, the Cultural Autonomy Law of 1925 empowered any ethnic group numbering at least 3,000 to establish for itself a separate legal entity, regardless of geographic concentration.<sup>200</sup> Though this system was short-lived in the Estonian case, it still remains a viable option for states that have a particular problem with territorially dispersed minorities.<sup>201</sup>

The federal ideal appears to have taken on recent popularity globally in the form of multinational federations. The recent examples of Iraq (2005), developments in Nepal (2007), and Pakistan (2008) reveal the attraction of the conceptual and organizing principles of federalism.<sup>202</sup> Their comparative success or failure aside, other examples include Somalia, Sudan, Eritrea, Afghanistan, and Cyprus. Without a doubt, this model cannot be expected to resolve all contentious minority claims. In addition, the legitimacy of the ethno-federation ultimately depends on “the act of foundation and its voluntary character.”<sup>203</sup> Still, although multinational federalism may prove more appropriate for some states than others, it continues to be adopted in multiple forms, particularly in post-conflict states.

### **Asymmetric Regional Federalism – A Conceptual Clarification**

Contrary to multinational federal models, asymmetric regional federalism is a difficult case for inclusion theory. In order to fully understand it, let us first consider how federal systems turn into cases of asymmetric regional federations. There are two manners by which a federal system may become asymmetrical and both are characterised by inequality. In this case, inequality may be embedded in constitutional powers of the federated units or inequality in the extent to which the regions share power within the federal government.<sup>204</sup> As such, we can

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<sup>200</sup> Coakley, J., 1994. “Approaches to the Resolution of Ethnic Conflict: The Strategy of Non-Territorial Autonomy.” *International Political Science Review* 15.3., p. 307.

<sup>201</sup> Burgess, M., 2009. “Territorial and Non-Territorial Identities: Multinational Federalism in Multinational Federation.” Paper prepared for the conference “Multinational Federalism in Perspective: A Viable Model?”, p. 23.

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid*, p. 23.

<sup>203</sup> Juhász, J., 2005. “Ethno-federalism: Challenges and Opportunities.” *Medjunarodni problemi* 57.3. p. 259.

<sup>204</sup> O’Leary, B., 2010. “Thinking about Asymmetry and Symmetry in the Remaking of Iraq.” *Asymmetric Autonomy and the Settlement of Ethnic Conflicts*. p. 184.



define four types of federations, one symmetric and three asymmetric. In a symmetric federation, regions have both equal self-government within their domains and share powers equally within the federal government. In one type of asymmetrical federalism, regions differ in their powers of self-government, but share power equally with the federal government. In another type of asymmetrical federalism, regions have equal self-government within their domains but share power unequally within the federal government. In the third type, regions differ in their powers of self-government and also share power unequally with the federal government. Motivations for asymmetrical regional federalism may be economic, political, cultural, historical or religious in nature. As such, we can mention the Indian Constitution which recognizes only Kashmir as a subnational unit with its own subnational constitution. On the other hand, South Tyrol in Italy, has emerged into a quasi-autonomy for historical reasons, and as such represent an asymmetrical federalist case in the heart of Europe. Alternatively, Russia is an especially difficult case of regional asymmetrical federation. Russia is divided into six different subnational units – republics, oblasts, krais, autonomous oblasts, autonomous okrugs and federal cities.<sup>205</sup> Russia's Federation Constitution recognizes its 89 components as equal,<sup>206</sup> with each of its units having different statuses and powers. The factors that divide these units according to their status and the degree of power are represented in the hierarchy of these subnational units. As such, a republic possesses a legal right to formulate its own subnational constitution, whereas an oblast can only adopt a charter (*ustov*). However, these charters resemble a real constitution in many ways, so they can also be treated as subnational constitutions. On the other hand, the President of the Russian Federation can enter into special treaties with each subunit, especially in times of elections, a trait which can cause alterations in subnational constitutions to the point where they may even be granted constitutional status. Such asymmetries, not only in the case of Russia, but other regional asymmetrical federal units, clearly depict the problems that arise in such systems. One of the most contended issues is what classifies as a subnational constitution? Lastly, it is

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<sup>205</sup> Tarr, A. G., 1999. "Creating Federalism in Russia", *South Texas Law Review* 40., p. 689.

<sup>206</sup> 57 predominantly Russian oblasts and krais and 21 ethnic territories. Source: Solnick, S. L., 1995. "Federal Bargaining in Russia". *East European Constitutional Review* 5.

worth mentioning that *de facto* asymmetry based on transparent principles – in contrast to *de jure* asymmetry as prescribed in a constitution – is also pursued by federations.<sup>207</sup>

Nonetheless, the asymmetrical arrangement of a federal system can play an important part in the recognition of a national minority group and by consequence, in preventing conflict. Yet, He argues that federalism must adopt differential treatment and asymmetric policy so that the constituent units of a federation do not possess identical powers.<sup>208</sup> This line of reasoning derives from the belief that because of their social and political history, some national minorities should have special rights. Furthermore, mere equal powers “may compel those who are part of a national minority to seek a change to the status quo in a way that makes their powers more appropriate to their status,”<sup>209</sup> such as secession. In contrast, when federations are asymmetric, the increased institutional resources granted to historically slighted groups render them less likely to engage in conflict with the centre. However, there is a fine balance to be struck: “...asymmetric federalism cannot in any fashion imply erosion of the inter-territorial solidarity of the member states, which would then maintain or reinforce existing inequalities.”<sup>210</sup> It is only through the cooperative dimension of federalism that cultural and political asymmetry can become principles of a multinational democratic state as a viable alternative to the reasoning of nationalism, nationalization of states and secession.<sup>211</sup>

Unfortunately still, asymmetrical regional federalism appears more promising in theory than in practice. While national minority groups may potentially be mollified by an asymmetrical structure, regions that do not benefit from the asymmetrical arrangements may become aggrieved and seek secession themselves.<sup>212</sup> We are thus presented with the paradox in which asymmetric

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<sup>207</sup> Rao, M. G, and Nirvikar, S., 2004. “Asymmetric Federalism in India.” *UC Santa Cruz International Economics Working Paper* 04-08., p. 7.

<sup>208</sup> He, B., 2006. “The Federal Solution to Ethnic Conflicts.” *Geo. J. Int'l Aff.* 7. pp. 33-34.

<sup>209</sup> Anderson, L. M., 2010. “Toward a Resolution of the Paradox of Federalism.” *New Directions in Federalism Studies* 65. p. 135.

<sup>210</sup> Maiz, R., 1999. “Democracy, Federalism and Nationalism in Multinational States.” *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 5.3-4., p. 58.

<sup>211</sup> *Ibid*, p. 58.

<sup>212</sup> Anderson, L. M., 2010. “Toward a Resolution of the Paradox of Federalism.” *New Directions in Federalism Studies* 65. p. 135.

federalism creates the same problem it seeks to circumvent. Furthermore, many existing federal systems that have attempted to adopt an asymmetrical model suffer from structural problems. For example, Maiz asserts, “Canada, India, and Spain, to mention only three, have yet to achieve a satisfactory constitutional articulation which is acceptable to all parties in the cases of Quebec, Kashmir, Punjab, the Basque Country or Catalonia, despite the doses of constitutional asymmetry built into these cases.”<sup>213</sup> Especially in the case of India, many speculate whether asymmetrical federalism has tangibly aided minority groups, as was its stated purpose.

### **Consociational Systems – A Conceptual Clarification**

To conclude on this theoretical chapter, let us finally examine consociational systems. Consociationalism has many facets, for its components have been redefined and debated by scholars over time. A fairly succinct definition reads: “...consociational polities are non-territorial federations in which polities divided into trans-generational religious, cultural, ethnic, or ideological groupings are constituted as federations of “camps”, “sectors”, “pillars” and jointly governed by coalitions of the leaders of each.”<sup>214</sup> More specifically, consociationalism consists of four key power-sharing principles: a grand coalition government representing all of the major segments of a divided society; proportionality in representation, public employment, and expenditure; community autonomy on issues deemed to be vital; and constitutional vetoes for minorities. It can be utilized in federations, cantons, or across an entire state and in contrast to the more formal multinational federation, consociationalism can be viewed simply as a bundle of procedures and techniques employed in a state without a history of federalism.<sup>215</sup>

Lijphart offers a definition of consociationalism that elaborates on the purpose it should strive to serve. As opposed to interpreting consociationalism as a series of “serendipitously complementary policies,” he identifies as the “essential characteristic of consociational

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<sup>213</sup> Maiz, R., 1999. “Democracy, Federalism and Nationalism in Multinational States.” *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 5.3-4., pp. 31-32.

<sup>214</sup> Stanovčić, V., 1992. “Problems and Options in Institutionalizing Ethnic Relations.” *International Political Science Review* 13.4. p. 368.

<sup>215</sup> Burgess, M., 2009. “Territorial and Non-Territorial Identities: Multinational Federalism in Multinational Federation.” Paper prepared for the conference “Multinational Federalism in Perspective: A Viable Model?”, p. 23.

democracy, not so much any particular institutional arrangement as the deliberate efforts by elites to stabilize the system.”<sup>216</sup> Instead of envisioning a grand coalition, he thus adopts the term “elite cartel” in his formal definition: “Consociational democracy means government by elite cartel designed to turn a democracy with a fragmented culture into a stable democracy.”<sup>217</sup> In Lijphart’s vision, the elite cartel’s characteristics include the ability to accommodate the divergent interests and demands of the subcultures, the ability to transcend cleavages and to join in a common effort with the elites of rival subcultures, a commitment to the maintenance of the system and to the improvement of its cohesion and stability, and an understanding of the perils of political fragmentation. Of course, it is important to note that Lijphart’s conception of consociationalism has evolved over time, as he prescribes specific institutional arrangements in some of his earlier works. In summary, still, we can say that consociationalism, at its core, contains components of power sharing by an elite group of representatives whose aim is to overcome existing fragmentation in a society in order to achieve a stable democracy.

Alternatively, consociationalism may be adopted as method of conflict management, particularly in ethnically diverse societies. Stanovčić identifies the theoretical potential of consociational systems:

*While consociation may not satisfy nationalist extremists in matters of ethnic identity, it can certainly guarantee a high degree of human rights, a share in democratic government, and national wealth and cultural autonomy. But consociation requires mutual trust and the rule of acceptable laws equally applicable to all groups, conditions that are not always present in reality.*<sup>218</sup>

As consociationalism seeks to manage conflict through the recognition and protection of salient minority identities, its success depends on many factors such as “the actions and interaction of exogenous actors.”<sup>219</sup> There is a possibility that consociationalism may only entrench these

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<sup>216</sup> Lustick, I. S., 1997. “Lijphart, Lakatos, and Consociationalism.” *World Politics* 50.01., p. 94.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid, p. 94.

<sup>218</sup> Stanovčić, 369.

<sup>219</sup> Clancy, M. A. C., and John N., 2009. “Frozen Conflicts, Minority Self-Governance, Asymmetrical Autonomies—In Search of a Framework for Conflict Management and Conflict Resolution.” *6th Asia-Europe Roundtable, University of Ulster-United Nations University-International Conflict Research Institute (INCORE). Republic of Ireland.*, pp. 13-1

identities and obviate their transformation. Still, in cases where federalism has not proven an entirely adequate method for conflict management, consociational practices may prove an appropriate supplement.<sup>220</sup> Yet, the critiques of consociationalism are many.

An empirical study seeking to analyze many of Lijphart's institutional recommendations in practice provides little support for his earlier theories. For the purposes of this work, I will provide only a quick review of some of Lijphart's specific institutional recommendations that were analyzed in his study: electoral system, regime type, and decentralization of authority. First, in terms of an electoral system, Lijphart recommends closed-list proportional representation (PR) with large district magnitudes, discouraging any system with majoritarian effects. Second, he advocates a parliamentary executive instead of a presidential or a semi-presidential one, as there is greater potential for executive power sharing in a parliamentary system. Finally, he views federalism positively, for it is a mean "to give broad autonomy to individual groups and reduce the number and scope of issues that must be resolved at the central government level."<sup>221</sup> This autonomy may include non-territorial autonomy, such as the funding of different religious groups to teach primary education.

Through the form of a literature review, the study cites many scholars who counter Lijphart's predictions. Some argue that PR systems can facilitate the presence of extremist parties that seek to overthrow the regime or take rigid ideological stances far from the median voter. PR sometimes also increases the incentives for parties to pursue "centrifugal campaign strategies", courting voters whose views are extreme as opposed to moderate. And still yet, PR (together with power sharing requirements) can paralyze the government when it is confronted by difficult issues because of the need to include many parties in the governing coalition. In regard to regime type, presidentialism does not, by itself, create problems for democracy: presidentialism is just as viable as parliamentarism within the right institutional combination. In fact, the president may be the only elected official with a truly national constituency in a new democracy and may thus have stronger incentives to promote broad-based public goods. Finally, "...adopting federal arrangements...might actually increase secessionist tendencies, by

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<sup>220</sup> Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid., p. 1546.

reinforcing territorially based ethnic identities.”<sup>222</sup> Especially when ethnic groups are territorially dispersed, the federal prescription “may end up sparking or accelerating a Balkan style conflict...with groups making competing claims over the same land and seeking to redraw borders to include clusters of co-ethnics, through violent means if necessary.”<sup>223</sup>

By looking at 106 country-regimes between 1972 and 2003, the study refutes many of Lijphart’s predictions concerning the reduction of political violence by way of consociational systems. The findings can be summarized as follows:

1. PR is generally associated with higher levels of violence, in contrast to what most other studies have found;
2. Presidentialism is associated with lower levels of political violence, again in contrast to previous studies;
3. The results on federalism are inconclusive and suggest that federalism in isolation has inconsistent effects on political violence;
4. The combination of consociationalist institutions is associated with higher levels of political violence.<sup>224</sup>

The reason why this particular study was chosen for this dissertation lies in the fact that it marks a current, empirically grounded refutation of much existing consociational theory. However, this study deals specifically with Lijphart’s conception of consociationalism, which is by no means the only existing theory (though it does provide a basis for many scholars).

Alternatively, an article by Salamey also warns of the potential negative effects of consociational systems, demonstrated by the case examples of Lebanon and Iraq. In these countries, consociational democracy “has yielded corporate forms of power sharing that have been referred to as ‘corporate consociationalism.’”<sup>225</sup> Salamey explains that the sectarian elite has

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<sup>222</sup> Ibid., p. 1548-9.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid., p. 1449.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid., p. 1565.

<sup>225</sup> Salamey, I., 2009.. “Failing Consociationalism in Lebanon and Integrative Options.” *International Journal of Peace Studies.*, p. 85.

become “indispensable oligopolistic patrons to their sectarian cliental constituencies”, referred to as “ ‘political feudalism’ ” in Lebanon.<sup>226</sup> The result is a “self perpetuating capture of the state by political sectarian elite that both lacks national accountability and undermines government commitment to the public good.”<sup>227</sup> Furthermore, he describes that in both Iraq and Lebanon, consociationalism predetermines power positions among ethnic and sectarian national groups. He adds that in other ethnically and sectarian divided societies like Northern Ireland or Sudan, consociationalism has given rise to power sharing distributions and mandates that have been “fixed by unwritten national accords, pacts, or customs, making amendments difficult, sometimes impossible, and often risk-laden.”<sup>228</sup> Thus, while consociational systems appear attractive in theory, they have often yielded negative consequences in practice.

## **Conclusion**

The chapter above considered two main concepts related to the general argument of political participation of national minority groups in the context of the theory of democratization. The first part critically assessed minority representation as intertwined with political participation arguing that a state requires the presence of both to be termed highly democratic. This was done in order to lay out the basic characteristics of minority representation, but also to understand the controversies that surround the concept, which, as clearly seen, is not self-imposed with the arrival of democracy. Rather, minority representation is seen as a mean of accommodating groups that have historically been excluded from the political processes (Mansbridge, 1980, Williams, 1998). The discussion which followed concentrated more broadly on the theoretical explanations relating to accommodation of national minority rights to political participation in different democratic systems, including state and substate constitutions, asymmetric regional federalism and lastly consociational systems. Furthermore, this chapter embarked on offering answers to the underlying questions which underpin national minority representation and participation – that of effectiveness of such representation and whether effective representation, (if it occurs) is exhibited by members of those groups. A key to this argument was the discussion

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<sup>226</sup> Ibid., p. 84.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid., p. 84.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid, p. 85.

on minority constitutional executive power sharing, which was termed a durable and firm commitment on part of the majority to include different groups in the government (Bieber, 2010). However, a problem arises when countries a lack of a predominant majority. This is precisely the case in BiH which relies on representation by legal requirement, which means that group representation is embedded in state's constitution. However, the underlying problem in the case of BiH is that not all groups are included, but only territorial majorities which, according to size and numbers in a particular territory within a state, as discussed in Chapter 1, can be called minorities. This right does not span to national minorities which constitute a smaller proportion of the society. Hence, in BiH, only three constituent peoples have secured places in all state-level institutions, but the rest of the population which does not belong to these groups (including seventeen national minorities) does not have access to government structures, at least not on the state-level. Thus, considering the many complexities of the power-sharing mechanism discussed in this chapter, I now turn the attention to power-sharing complexities as the concept relates to the context of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Hence, the subsequent chapter analyzes this issue in much greater detail as it proves extremely relevant to the main topic of this dissertation.



# **CHAPTER 4: POLITICAL POSITIONING OF NATIONAL MINORITIES IN POST-DAYTON BIH: INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS VS. DOMESTIC PRACTICES**

## **Introduction**

This chapter illustrates the ways in which the fault-lines in BiH's application of the power-sharing democracy have come to existence and how they shape democratic development of the country notably in light of the right to political participation of its national minorities. The ethno-territorial cleavages that are legally enshrined in the Dayton constitution have brought about a number of divisions along ethnic, territorial, political and social lines, but considering that this dissertation focuses on political participation of national minorities within a broader field of democratic theory and minority politics, I discuss the Dayton Peace Accords at the source of discrimination which pertains to actively exercising the right to political participation by national minority groups and analyze it within the wider context of the existing legal frameworks which presently govern such rights. The principal purpose of this chapter is contextualize the current approach to the issue of political participation of national minorities in BiH, but also to posit the existing participatory mechanisms and examine whether they are scarcely used by members of national minority groups in BiH. This chapter also portrays the complexities and inadequacies of the current approach to political participation of national minorities through the prism of politicization and lack of channelling, which, it is argued, cause a situation of weak political involvement as it relates to a) understanding the very essence of political participation and its definition, b) the background against which political participation is understood and c) the link that these groups make between this right and their minority status. I therefore relate each of these issues to the main arguments outlined in Chapter I, but also use them to set the background for better understanding of quantitative data presented in Chapter VII. As such, this chapter also makes use of the results of focus groups and interviews, which compliment these issues.

## The Dayton Peace Accords: The Birth of Constitutional Discrimination

From 1945 to 1992, BiH was a part of Yugoslavia, a multinational state with a federal constitution. Throughout history, BiH was referred to as a “country of minorities”. This was mainly due to its demographic structure, which, according to the data from the census held in 1991 was the following: Muslims comprised 43.7%, Serbs 31.45%, Croats 17.3%, while 5.6% of the population considered themselves “Yugoslavs”.<sup>229</sup> Yugoslavs were mostly (although not exclusively) members of other *nations* and *nationalities* (according to the terminology used in SFRY’s Constitution)<sup>230</sup>, but entitled to equality under the Constitution. Following the events that occurred from 1991 until 1992 in Slovenia and Croatia respectively, the independence of BiH, and subsequently its international recognition resulted, as indicated previously, in the bloodiest and longest conflict in former Yugoslavia.<sup>231</sup> The mixed ethnic picture only exacerbated the situation, which was finally settled in December of 1995 when the Dayton Peace Accords were signed. The Agreement not only ended the conflict, but also laid the institutional basis for the political and economic revival of the country. Despite the geographical divisions into two sub-state units,<sup>232</sup> BiH remained a multi-ethnic state with three dominant ethnic groups in place just as before the war, and seventeen national minority groups. Currently, things are far from the pre-war state-of-art, while the sources of the current debate lie precisely in the Dayton Constitution and the power-sharing mechanism that it legally enshrined.

Ironically, the last year celebrated the twentieth anniversary of Dayton Peace Accords and consequently the Dayton Constitution. It also celebrated twenty years of peace, pseudo-democratic institutions, feeble economy and the omnipresent ethnic divisions. But, could any of

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<sup>229</sup> Woelk, J. (2004). *Federalism and Consociationalism as Tools for State Reconstruction? The Case of Bosnia and Herzegovina*. In: *Federalism, Subnational Constitutions and Minority Rights* (ed. Tarr, Alan - Williams, Robert - Marko, Josef). Praeger Publishers – Westport, CT. p. 177.

<sup>230</sup> “*Narodi*” referred to “nations”, while “*Narodnosti*” were “nationalities”. The two were separate categories, whereby the former included the constituent South Slavs (or better those who were of Croat, Serb, Macedonian, Slovenian and Montenegrin origin). Muslims also belonged to this category, although they were initially referred to as a “nationality” (*narodnost*). Other Slavic and non-Slavic ethnic groups (Roma, Jews, Bulgarians, Romanians, Albanians, etc.) belonged to the group of “nationalities”. There was also Yugoslav identification, reserved for “nationally non-committed persons”. Source: Sekulić et al., 1994. Who were the Yugoslavs? Failed Sources of a Common Identity in the Former Yugoslavia. *American Sociological Review*. Vol. 59, No. 1. p. 84.

<sup>231</sup> Previous conflicts occurred first in Slovenia (1991), and then in Croatia (1991-1992), to be followed by BiH. Conflicts in Kosovo and Macedonia occurred much later in the 1990s.

<sup>232</sup> Federation of BiH - FBiH (51% of the territory) and Republic of Srpska - RS (49%).

these factors, except, of course, peace, be truly commemorated if one is to consider that we are considering a potential EU member state? Is there really a reason to celebrate those twenty years of Dayton-created peace, since the former failed to create a fully functional BiH? The answers to these questions are probably overly intricate and subjective, moreover because the peace accords have received a variety of remarks. The pro-Daytonists argue that much has indeed been achieved, but confess that there remains a significant amount of reforms to be yet introduced. On the other hand, the con-Dayton groups are rather critical towards the agreement and argue that it created a quasi-state, one imbedded on the principles of (ethnic) majority prevalence.

And indeed, when looking at Dayton Constitution, one cannot but notice that it overemphasizes ethnicity. Firstly, the constitutional system is based on the principle of ethnic constituency or the principle of “constituent peoples”, which implies that each “constituent group” has equal rights to governing the state. Thus, the Constitution does not deal with the term “citizen”, like the liberal traditions of France or the United States described in the previous chapter, but instead divides the citizens of BiH into three “constituent groups” – Bosniaks,<sup>233</sup> Serbs and Croats. The Constitution also mentions a non-constituent group of people, plainly called “Others”. It is exactly in this paradox that the peril lies - while Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats are dominant and (homogenous) ethnic groups in BiH, “Others” represent a discriminated and excluded heterogeneous constitutional category, including BiH citizens who belong to one of the seventeen national minorities, but also citizens who refuse to strictly identify with one of the ethnic groups.<sup>234</sup> Nowhere is this constitutional inconsistency more obvious than in the case of political participation of national minorities, where such constitutionally embedded legal mechanisms of exclusion have taken many forms on all levels, from state to municipal level politics. To elaborate further, it is essential to note that such an ethnically exclusionist constitutional arrangement “...prevents, *inter alia*, persons belonging to minorities from being elected to the three-member Bosnian Presidency and delegated to the upper chamber of the

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<sup>233</sup> Not to be confused with the term “Bosnian”, which could be used (if legally applied) for all people living in BiH. Bosnian is a citizen of BiH. Although a large percentage of Bosniaks are Muslims, one should not fall victim to mere generalization as there are many other explanations why people in BiH choose to identify themselves with this ethnic group.

<sup>234</sup> Since this study deals with minority rights to political participation, the remainder of the thesis will assume the usage of the term “Others” solely in relation to national minorities.

Bosnian Parliament.”<sup>235</sup> And while this case stands as a clear-cut example of discrimination, the fact that we are examining the issue of participation in the political life of a single state brings us to yet another discriminatory practice which relates to the right of national minorities to participate in all spheres of political and public affairs, as prescribed in recent international legal instruments. Thus, in the context of political participation of national minorities in BiH one must also examine the legal side of the issue.

### **A Short Analysis of the Dayton Constitution within the International Legal Framework**

As seen in Chapter 4, the positioning of special rights to political participation of national minorities in the context of international law is a relatively new practice which appeared after the end of communism when self-aware minority groups started demanding more rights. The origins of this issue can also be connected to the evolution of the very term “political participation” since this kind of citizen behaviour started to go beyond classical forms of activism, mainly voting, political party membership and representation. On the other hand, the concept of group equality evolved into the concept of individual equality. Hence, legally entailed equality was complimented by equality in practice. What this implied were equal participation rights in all its forms. Ghai points that in the past there was a tendency to view minorities as part of the majority, while the big focus was on the creation of a single nation. Today, however, it is clear that a paradigm shift has occurred and that the foci have moved to searching for an independent socio-political role for minorities.<sup>236</sup> Hence, the principal aim has moved from mere protection to fostering minority identity through political inclusion. This, in turn, increases minority political presence and motivates them to become more politically visible. At the same time, political participation of minority groups in the public sphere, but notably so in the executive, holds both an honouring and a symbolic value,<sup>237</sup> which, in turn, strengthens minority

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<sup>235</sup> Hodžić, E. 2009. *Political Participation of National Minorities in Local Governance in Bosnia and Herzegovina: State of the Art, Prospects and Ways Forward*. Analitika, Sarajevo, 2011. p. 5.

<sup>236</sup> Ghai, Y. 2001. *Public Participation and Minorities*. London, Minority Rights Group International, p. 3.

<sup>237</sup> Hodžić, E. 2009. *Political Participation of National Minorities in Local Governance in Bosnia and Herzegovina: State of the Art, Prospects and Ways Forward*. Analitika, Sarajevo, 2011. p. 12.

participation, increases the level of minority representatives in the government and affirms minority identities.

However, when considering and examining the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina in light of protection of national minority rights to political participation, the peace-setting nature and purpose of Dayton Peace Accords, and ultimately the constitutional provisions that surface from it, it can be concluded that Dayton Constitution cannot be examined in isolation from relevant international legal documents. More precisely, the Dayton Constitution incorporates several provisions from the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), which is supreme over national laws.<sup>238</sup> The Preamble of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which encompasses BiH's constitution, is inspired by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Persons belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Language Minorities, which particularly emphasizes their right to participation in the decision-making process on all government levels. Moreover, the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, which came to power in 1995, legally binds all Council of Europe member-states<sup>239</sup> to apply it in practice. In light of this provision, BiH has a constitutional obligation (Article II, pt. 7, in relations to point 15 of the Annex and Constitution of BiH) to respect the FCNM.<sup>240</sup> This would not be problematic, and the discriminatory practices in BiH would probably not be on such a large scale, were it not for a very subjective provision of the FCNM itself. Article 3 of the Convention states that every person belonging to a national minority can choose to be (or not) treated as a minority, which opens a path for case-to-case interpretation of this provision. Thus, in the case of BiH, this condition is clearly misinterpreted, which leads us to a conclusion that the only way in which a member of a national minority group in BiH can acquire his/her right to political participation (particularly on the state level), is to declare him/herself as a member of one of the three constituent groups, which is contrary to the basic human right to the freedom of expression of ethnic/national belonging. Furthermore, this practice is also opposed to Article 3 of the FCNM which guarantees that national minorities will not be disadvantaged on the basis of ethnic or national determination.

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<sup>238</sup> Vljajčić, K. and Fetahagić, S. 2009. *(Zlo)upotreba principa garantiranih mjesta: politička participacija nacionalnih manjina BiH u lokalnim izborima 2008*. Sarajevo: Asocijacija Alumni Centra za Postdiplomske Interdisciplinarne Studije (ACIPS). p. 11.

<sup>239</sup> BiH became a member-state of CoE on April 24, 2002.

<sup>240</sup> The FCNM required a legal standing in BiH in 1995 already, but it was not ratified until 2000.

Considering the above, in 2003 the Parliamentary Assembly of BiH drafted a definition of national minority, which states that national minorities are nationals of BiH, belong to BiH's population, but do not belong to any of the three constitutive peoples; instead, they include those groups with a shared or similar ethnic background, a shared or similar tradition, customs, beliefs, language, culture and religion, history and other characteristics (Article 3, pt. I).<sup>241</sup> Part II of Article 3, additionally lists seventeen national minorities which live in BiH (or who lived in BiH in 1991, at the moment of the last census with available data). However, what this means in practice is that national minorities are still considered as "Others", and thus their right to political participation, as explained above, is greatly undermined. Therefore, despite these efforts, the discriminatory practices of the current BiH Constitution remain and prove lethal for its socio-political advancement.

In addition to State Constitution of BiH, the subnational constitutions of FBiH and RS have similarly responded to the question of political participation of national minorities. The Constitution of RS refers to the "protection of rights of ethnic groups and other minorities",<sup>242</sup> while the Constitution of FBiH refers to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities. Furthermore, the Constitution of FBiH binds every municipality to "take all actions in aim of assuring the protection of rights and freedoms..." of minority groups.<sup>243</sup> Hence, local authorities are also bound to respect the international standards in this domain. In this respect, some cantons<sup>244</sup> in FBiH, including Tuzla and Sarajevo Canton, have existing Laws on the protection of rights of persons belonging to national minorities.

### ***How BiH Became an International Outlaw? "Sejdić-Finci vs. Bosnia and Herzegovina" Case***

As noted above, the last decade saw the introduction of several new international minority rights instruments, all created with the aim of recognizing and reaffirming the legal

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<sup>241</sup> *Zakon o zaštiti prava pripadnika nacionalnih manjina*. Official Gazette BiH, no. 12/03.

<sup>242</sup> *Zakon o zaštiti pripadnika nacionalnih manjina RS* (2004).

<sup>243</sup> Section VI, Article 1 of FBiH Constitution (1994).

<sup>244</sup> Sub-state units in FBiH (but not in RS), comprising of smaller communities.

support for identity and status issues of national minorities within state constitutional and political systems. A particularly essential right which surfaced in these new documents is the explicit reference to the right of minorities to political participation, more precisely the right to decide in public “matters affecting them.”<sup>245</sup> Thus, the focus is on collective political participation.<sup>246</sup> Furthermore, the FCNM interprets this right as rather “strong” and “started implementing it in unqualified terms, translating the minority cultural identity directly into the political plane.”<sup>247</sup> Many other international legal provisions, such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and its Article 25, deal with issues of equal rights to participation in the political life of the country. To examine each of these documents in detail would be a thesis by itself, and thus before moving to the specific issue in BiH, let us just mention that on the European level, the focus is on broad political participation, and not solely on “matters affecting them” (minorities) as it is the case with FCNM or ICCPR. This means that national minorities have the right to political participation according to the general direction in which their country is moving (usually through co-decision making).

Moving away from the legal norms and examining political participation from the point of view of democratic development, one can make a general conclusion that in states with overemphasized ethnic mobility and ethnic nationalism minorities run the risk of being excluded from the political system. Being a state where ethnicity overpowers nationality and where ethnic nationalism looms large, BiH is certainly a country where the above legal documents play only a minor role. This is not to say that BiH has no laws that deal with minority protection whatsoever. Quite the contrary, the 2003 BiH Law on Minorities stipulates that persons belonging to minorities “have the right to be represented in state institutions and public service at all levels in

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<sup>245</sup> Article 2(3) of the UN Declaration on Minorities (1992); Article 15 of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM).

<sup>246</sup> It is important to note that the use of phrase “political participation” is rather ambiguous in this sense, as none of these documents consider the broader aspects of the term. In the language of political science, effective political participation is a much more comprehensive term, and as such refers to, among other things, participation (usually through membership) in non-state and semi-state bodies (chambers of commerce, labor and trade unions, boards of public broadcasting, etc.), political party membership and rights to form national minority parties, right to vote and right to be voted for, right to be elected and participation in various forms of consultations. Political participation also includes participation in the executive and judicial branches of the government, as well as in public administration. See Chapter 1 for classical discussions on political participation (Verba and Nie, 1972).

<sup>247</sup> Hodžić, E. 2011. *Political Participation of National Minorities in Local Governance in Bosnia and Herzegovina: State of the Art, Prospects and Ways Forward*. Analitika, Sarajevo. p. 6.

accordance with their share in population based on the last census.”<sup>248</sup> Furthermore, the 2001 Election Law (enacted in 2004) also deals with the issue of political participation of national minorities on local levels. More precisely, the law established the “three percent threshold principle”, which guarantees that, according to 1991 population census, at least one seat is to be reserved for members of national minorities in those municipalities in which minorities constitute up to three percent of the population. The law also confirms that at least two seats are to be allocated to national minority representatives in municipalities in which they comprise more than three percent of the population. Additionally, in 2008 an amendment to the Election Law introduced a different and more general provision that at first seems less favourable to minorities. According to the amended law, at least one seat is to be reserved for national minority members where they make up *more* than three percent of the population. However, this solution does not make the situation worse, but simply establishes a threshold beyond which the representation of minorities cannot be ignored.

Since the practice of minority representation on local levels is a relatively new trend in BiH, which began only in 2008, the legal guarantees for national minority group members in municipalities where they represent more than 3% of the population according to 1991 census, was not respected. This is a clear breach of 2008 Election Law amendment. Thus, if put simply, the laws on political participation of national minorities on local level in BiH do exist, and are fairly inclusive, but the problem is that they are not implemented. The non-implementation of these laws has several dimensions. Firstly, and as mentioned above, the 2001 Election Law came into force three years later, but much after the deadline for the registration of candidates for the 2004 local elections. Therefore, the three percent threshold relating to political participation of national minorities could not be implemented, and resulted in “non-participation”. Secondly, the 2008 Amendments to the Election Law were not respected in all municipalities<sup>249</sup> – a clear breach of legal obligations prescribed in the Election Law.

On the other hand, if examining the applicability of the Election Law to general (state level) elections, the discriminatory principles of the Dayton Constitution surface to the top. In

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<sup>248</sup> Ibid, p. 6.

<sup>249</sup> Although there are very few municipalities in BiH that satisfy this numerical threshold, even in those municipalities (Sarajevo Centar, Sarajevo Novi Grad, Bileća, Prnjavor and Trebinje) where national minorities do constitute more than 3% of the population, their seats were not reserved.



short, what this means is that the tripartite presidency of BiH<sup>250</sup> consists *only* of three constituent groups. Article 8.1. of the Election Law, which specifies the election rules for the Presidency of BiH, does not even refer to national minorities (“Others”). Furthermore, when it comes to elections to the House of Peoples of BiH Parliament, subheading B, Article 9.12 states that: “The House of Peoples of BiH Parliamentary Assembly has 15 representatives, of which two-thirds are from FBiH (five Croats and five Bosniaks) and one-third from RS (five Serbs).”<sup>251</sup> Again, this article does not refer to “Others”, thus excluding national minorities from participating in elections for higher offices. But, the Election Law of BiH is not the only source of discrimination of national minority groups that live in BiH. Under BiH's constitution only ethnic Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats can be elected members of the Presidency of BiH or of the Parliament (Articles IV and V of BiH Constitution).<sup>252</sup> Lijphart terms this type of ethnic-led political arrangements as pre-determination, which “like self-determination...refers to an internal process, but in contrast to self-determination, it means that the groups that are to share power are identified in advance.”<sup>253</sup> Thus, one can only conclude that the state of BiH severely impedes the right to political participation of its national minorities.

This status-quo remained for years. The attempts of national minority members to participate in the political life of BiH were scarce and unheard of until December 2009, almost exactly fourteen years after the signing of the Dayton Peace Accords, when Jakob Finci (a Jew) and Dervo Sejdić (a Roma) claimed that BiH Constitution was discriminatory on the base of race, religion and association with a national minority.<sup>254</sup> Both plaintiffs made reference to Protocol 12 of the ECHR, which BiH signed on April 1, 2005. Initially, these were two separate

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<sup>250</sup> The head of the state in BiH is not a single person. The Presidency consists of three directly elected representatives from each constituent group. According to Article 8.1 of the Election Law, in FBiH the electoral body can vote for either one Bosniak candidate or one Croat candidate. Voters cannot vote for both candidates. In the RS, voters can vote for one – Serb – candidate.

<sup>251</sup> Centralna izborna komisija BiH: *Izborni Zakon BiH*. <http://www.izbori.ba/Documents/documents/ZAKONI/POIZpw19032013-1-bos.pdf> (2013.03.26)

<sup>252</sup> Steiner, C. and Ademović, N. (2010). *Ustav Bosne i Hercegovine – Komentar*. Konrad Adenauer Foundation, Sarajevo. p. 563-591.

<sup>253</sup> Lijphart, A., 1995. Self-Determination versus Pre-Determination of Ethnic Minorities in Power-Sharing Systems. In: Kymlicka, W., 1995. *The Rights of Minority Cultures*. New York: Oxford University Press.

<sup>254</sup> Dervo Sejdić was unable to stand as a candidate for the presidency, while Jakob Finci was not allowed to present a candidacy for the House of Peoples of the parliamentary assembly.

cases, which were then merged into one by the European Court of Human Rights. It is interesting to note that neither Sejdić nor Finci claimed their rights before the signing of ECHR on the part of BiH, as they both believed that no legal basis for their complaints existed prior to this period.<sup>255</sup> The second (mutual) motive behind their complaint was the failure of the so called “April Package”<sup>256</sup> of constitutional reforms from 2006, which did not pass due to the fact that only two pro votes for were missing.

Thus, in December 2009 the Grand Chamber of the European Court for Human Rights ruled that BiH was guilty of violating Protocol 12 and Article 14 of the ECHR due to ethnic discrimination ingrained in its constitution. Following this ruling, BiH’s decision –makers showed some initial efforts to implement the decision. The pressure was growing on part of the CoE, which called for immediate implementation of the Court’s decision, so that national minorities can stand for high office positions in the general elections that were to take place in October 2010. The efforts behind CoE’s pressures resulted in the adoption of an action plan and a formation of a working group (within BiH’s Council of Ministers), but the plan was short lived. Numerous working group meetings did not result in any constitutional amendments by October 2010, despite severe international pressure and concrete proposals made by various actors. A major hindrance were the ruling ethnic parties, which, throughout the process, interchangeably obstructed any substantial proposals for the implementation of Court’s decision.

Six years later, and the political stalemate still persists. A lengthy chronology of events related to this case only demonstrates that the procedural labyrinth in BiH is too bureaucratic and non-transparent. Furthermore, the fact that BiH has been on the European list of “outlaws” for too long, does not change the situation when it comes to political willingness to resolve this issue. Secondly, and as strange as it may seem, the likeliness that any form of sticks will be applied against BiH for not implementing the Court’s decision is zero to none. What is certain is that government’s inactivity regarding this issue will result in BiH’s slower advancement towards its EU membership, a topic which will not be discussed under the auspices of this dissertation.

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<sup>255</sup> Hodžić, E. and Stojanović, N. (2011). *Novi – stari ustavni inženjering? Izazovi i implikacije presude evropskog suda za ljudska prava u predmetu Sejdić i Finci protiv BiH*. Analitika, Sarajevo. p. 26.

<sup>256</sup> The April Package included a whole set of new constitutional reforms. It was expected that the package would be adopted in April 2006.

## The Current Approach to the Issue of Political Participation of National Minorities in BiH

In theory, the search for rights of political participation of minorities signifies a paradigm shift, where there is a move from a discourse of protection to that of empowerment of minorities. Thus, when examining the constitutional provisions of BiH when it comes to this issue, one can conclude that this paradigm shift has not yet occurred. The ruling of the ECHR in the case of *Sejdić-Finci vs. BiH* was the first judgment in the history of this Court that questioned the constitutionality of an ECHR signatory state. Despite the initial steps that were taken on part of BiH towards the implementation of Court's ruling, and the fact that the Election Law does envision (at least on a local level) some degree of participation for national minorities, they still do not have a meaningful option to politically participate on the state level. This means that minority issues in BiH (including their right to political participation) are still treated as part of the "approach to vulnerable groups" and mainly in the context of social inclusion. Hodžić (2011) rightfully argues that:

*"The political participation of minorities is still understood by many relevant actors as related to the ethics of care and protection, financial needs and budgetary considerations, and not as a matter of co-decision making in sectors of particular relevance to minorities and in broader aspects of political life. In such a perspective, political participation of minorities is seen mostly as an ad hoc problem-solving mechanism rather than continuous dialogue that would enable persons belonging to minorities to voice their concerns and positions in decision-making and at the same time also inform the general directions of development of a society."<sup>257</sup>*

Thus, when minorities are consulted, the consultation process is *ad hoc* and confined to several issues, but mainly financial allocations to different minority organizations and associations.

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<sup>257</sup> Hodžić, E. (2011). *Political Participation of National Minorities in Local Governance in Bosnia and Herzegovina: State of the Art, Prospects and Ways Forward*. Analitika, Sarajevo, 2011. p. 48.

Despite of this, both state and local governments in BiH possess consultative mechanisms<sup>258</sup> for inclusion of national minorities in the political processes. The Council of national minorities of BiH is a special consultative body of the Parliamentary Assembly of BiH (PA BiH) formed in April 2008. Considering its consultative nature,<sup>259</sup> it issues opinions, recommendations and suggestions on all matters pertaining to national minority rights, status and interests to the Parliamentary Assembly. The Council also has the power to delegate experts to constitutional and Joint Committee on Human Rights, Child Rights, Youth, Immigration, Refugees, Asylum and Ethics of the PA BiH in instances when these bodies discuss matters related to national minorities. Lastly, the Council consists of one representative from all seventeen recognized national minority groups in BiH which are elected by a decision issued by the Joint Committee on human rights, child rights, youth, immigration, refugees, asylum and ethics of the PA BiH, which, in turn, must consult associations of national minorities or other relevant NGOs. However, it can be concluded that the role of this body is marginal, considering its purely consultative role. On the other hand, this is the only state-level body through which national minorities can be represented in the executive, which is discouraging to members of different minority groups. This is evident not only in low number of candidates for this body, but also the fact that since 2008 the members of the Council have remained mostly the same. Additionally, in 2002, a Committee for Roma was formed in the Council of Ministers of BiH. The work of both bodies is regulated by relevant laws on the protection of national minorities on state, entity and cantonal levels, as well as other relevant documents.

Alternatively, the Law on the protection of national minorities of FBiH also establishes similar consultative bodies on the entity level. The FBiH law prescribes the criteria for membership in entity level council, whereby a national minority association is allowed to appoint one Council member per one thousand minority organization member. The maximum number of representatives in FBiH Minority Council is five, with the exception of Roma who can appoint seven members.<sup>260</sup> When it comes to RS, fifteen Minority Council members are not chosen

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<sup>258</sup> The mechanism of national minority representation on state-level in BiH corresponds to consultation mechanism activity. This mechanism exists in a variety of forms and BiH practices the minority consultative councils whose members come from all national minority groups and minority representative organizations (associations). These organizations articulate and make visible minority interests in different areas, and present them to the government.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid, p. 33.

<sup>260</sup> FBiH Law on minorities, Article 17.

directly by the associations, but by the National Assembly of the Republic of Srpska. The candidates are elected from a list prepared by the Council of National Minorities of the Republic of Srpska, an NGO organization which coordinates all minority associations from RS. Albeit different, both entity levels, thus, severely politicize national minority membership in the consultative bodies, which gravely impedes and limits minority influence. Furthermore, the role of both entity councils is poorly defined and their primary function is consultative, which means that they can act only through their founding bodies.

Conversely, the mechanisms for minority inclusions on local levels are relatively more encouraging. Both entity Laws on local self-governance prescribe different inclusion tools for minority groups, including referendums, citizen assembly, citizen initiatives, citizen panels, local community meetings,<sup>261</sup> etc. Furthermore, communities, which are mandatory legally defined units in FBiH and voluntary and not legal units in RS, have the possibility of defining participatory mechanisms in more detail through their own statutes.<sup>262</sup> The wide range of participatory mechanisms on local levels in both entities clearly does not limit citizen participation. However, local statutes are deprived of detail when it comes to specific guidelines concerning national minority special rights to participation, so the general nature of these provisions clearly lacks specific focus on these groups. What is more, general matters of interest to national minorities are seldom discussed through the existing participatory channels, which further discourage them to participate in issues that are not of concern to their groups. It can thus be concluded that, aside from state and entity level participation, national minority participation originates on the local level, and is far more inclusive considering the availability of tools that are presented to such groups. Yet, there are several problems, all of which will be discussed in the remainder of this chapter.

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<sup>261</sup> In Bosnian “*mjesna zajednica*”. This concept is an inherited feature from former Yugoslavia, where it represented a traditional citizen consultative-participatory mechanism.

<sup>262</sup> Hodžić, E. (2011). *Political Participation of National Minorities in Local Governance in Bosnia and Herzegovina: State of the Art, Prospects and Ways Forward*. Analitika, Sarajevo, 2011. p. 48-55.

## **“I didn’t know” - From Over-Politization to Phlegmatic Use of Existing Participatory Mechanisms**

Although it is possible to observe the general trends and patterns of national minority political participation in post-Dayton Bosnia and Herzegovina, the peculiarities, complexities and inadequacies of the existing participatory mechanisms demonstrate two basic characteristics: over-politicization and lack of appropriate channelling or better absence of an inclusion framework which would offer specific guidelines in terms of how to use them. This results in a scenario in which, despite these tools, political participation of national minorities in BiH is almost inexistent. Unlike in modern European states where minority association membership signifies a great deal of formal political participation, this trend cannot be observed among BiH’s minority groups, where national minority association membership translates into celebration of national and religious feasts and holidays. This view was summarized up by one respondent:

*“The associations are here to help preserve our tradition, celebrate our holidays, but more than anything they uphold our religious tradition and religion in general. Maybe even language, but that is a bit harder. Even before the war we gathered to celebrate our holidays. We must stick together in order to keep the tradition and transfer it to our young.”* (Jewish female, 76 years old)

When asked about her opinion whether she sees her association as a channel for political participation she added:

*“What political participation? No way! It’s all about tradition; I don’t care about being included in the government. Even if I were younger I wouldn’t. I vote, but why would I care about the rest? It’s all politics anyway; they just keep switching positions, going in a circle. No!”*

Although this answer was the most radical, other respondents from Jewish organizations from across Bosnian cities agreed.

*“Political participation is important, of course. Voting is our civic duty, while I see other forms that you mention as dependent on individual will, meaning that you either do it or choose to stay inactive. But I don’t, in any way, see this association as a channel through which we can push for our right to political participation. In my opinion, only individuals who care and know how to do it can do it. The best way to influence something, at least for the ordinary citizen, is to vote and engage in public debates”* (Jewish male, 35 years old).

Another explains,

*“I think that national minority associations can serve as a basis for political participation, a place where nobody prohibits us do discuss our minority interests and rights and how we can further them in the context of current constitutional discrimination. However, associations are not adequate in terms of acting in our name...I mean, associations are not political agents, so we must have somebody to either represent us, an influential individual who knows politics and who is well respected, otherwise a bunch of Jews from Sarajevo cannot do it. This is not typical for us, we don’t engage in protest, we never had a history of being a violent group and this sticks with us. Yes, I would also say that associations are the safeguards of our tradition. But for ‘regular’ people, the best way is to go out and vote. A lot of people in BiH don’t vote because they think they will not change anything. If everybody voted, change would be visible. For minorities, this is the best way to participate.”* (Jewish male, 57 years old).

A 29 year old Jewish female, an active member of Naša Stranka, summarizes why her community, or the majority of its members, do not see the association as a channel to further the right to political participation:

*“I am politically active, I am also a political scientist, I understand politics. Associations, such as national minority communities (udruženja) can well serve as channels for more political engagement, especially in times of turbulence, when people’s demands are great. In my opinion, all national minorities in BiH, not just Jews, which I know well, do not use this channel appropriately. This is because there is not enough impetus from the*

*outside to further these rights and not enough knowledge among us about what it actually means to participate. Nobody is asking 'you' to be a member of a political party, but get out there, vote, change, write letters, keep informed, ask questions. Things will not happen for us on their own."*

One of the answers that differed the most from this pattern was presented by Jewish male, 41 years of age, who states:

*"I can see how my association can serve as a starting point for an individual, who wants to be politically active, but above all, this is a citizen association and it can never turn into a political group."*

An elderly Jewish male, age 68, adds:

*"The Jewish community, just its very name carries a certain value, at least here in Sarajevo. We are a symbol of benevolence, co-existence, support...during the war we didn't care who was who, but gave help to those in need because we received it. It was mostly from Israel. Back in the day nobody cared if the medicine they got was from Israel. Today, it's a big deal. So I guess, even if we wanted to mobilize politically for the sake of furthering our rights, we would be accused of pro-Israeli ideas...I am speaking of today, of course. But yes, I guess the association, if it knew how and if its leaders and members knew enough, would be able to change something politically for us Jews."*

All, but two of the thirty focus group participants from Jewish associations (93%) agree, however, that the primary goal of these organizations is to "preserve the tradition" and "keep the community together".

Not very different were the answers of the Polish minority interviewed in Banja Luka.

*"I am aware of my Polish background and all I really care about is that I keep my tradition, that my children are one day aware of their heritage, that they can at least communicate in Polish. I am not really convinced of the power of minority associations*



*when it comes to change, especially political or economic change...I really am not. What I think is best...voting, engaging in local politics, local associations, discussions, read and inform ourselves, so that we can be smarter political decisions”*

states a Polish female, 32 years of age.

*“To change minority rights under Dayton? We are all tired of this story, it simply cannot happen. I cannot run for a president, so what should I fight for? It will not happen during my lifetime. Everything in this country is over-politicized, everything”*,

says a Polish female, 56 years of age. All twenty eight Polish participants in the focus groups stated that they care about “the preservation of Polish culture and language” and that political mobilization is “simply not the business of such groups”.

What these findings lead us to conclude is that very often, minorities do not participate because they are simply unaware of different participation channels, not by their own choice, but by the inability of minority associations’ leadership to inform them of the existing platforms and participatory mechanisms.

*“Minority associations preserve tradition and this is their primary purpose. But, we keep forgetting history and how we mobilized as groups, not only as Poles, or Jews, or Roma, or Germans, but as a whole, under the auspices of our associations. It is a great way to engage in politics, to make our voices heard. I do not want to sound like I am mobilizing national minorities in a violent way, but there are so many ways in which minority voices can be heard and so many channels through we could exercise minority rights. All of this can be done through an association. Look at Roma, they do it, so it is doable...and it’s certainly not prohibited. We have more power in our hands than we think we have. However, we are not adequately informed among ourselves. Our active political engagement must start, in this order – education through reading and listening, trusting the alternative, engaging in what is out there and sticking to our minority identity as we do this. This is the only way to make minorities politically visible.”* (Polish male, 47 years old).

This lack of political mobilization under the auspices of associations spills over to the individual levels and illustrates communities which are incapable of political change just because they simply do not know how and where to participate. The motivations for this behaviour will be discussed in Chapter 7, but the general apathy that was noted during focus groups stems from the fact that associations themselves fail to inform their members of adequate participatory channels. An insignificant percentage of respondents (5%) agree that associations might represent a catalyst for change, but that other factors such as associations' non-governmental status add to powerlessness to act as significant political players. Furthermore, both Jewish and Polish national minority organizations were too focused on the cultural aspect of associations' work, without any awareness of the importance and existence of participatory tools which could enhance the status of their groups, at least on local level.

This last argument is further supported by the fact that local level bodies which are responsible for consultations with minority groups are rarely comprised of national minority members who are not political party members.<sup>263</sup> The view of a 32 year old male of Polish origin from Gradiška summarizes this view:

*“I am politically active only because I believe that change is possible if an individual engages and wants to advance its groups rights. Empowerment comes through individuals and marginalized groups, at least in today’s BiH, do not really stand a chance except if some of their members are not strongly engaged in politics. Sometimes, however, even members of national minorities who are active on the local level forget where they are coming from. There are very few us and if two of us forget that we stand for our groups, than we cannot expect much change”*

Another politically active member of the Jewish community from Banja Luka compliments this opinion:

*“The issue of national minority political participation and engagement in higher acts of politics is certainly politicized. Just the mere fact that I have to abandon my own identity, cross this important boundary, and say that I am a Serb in order to even reach a point*

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<sup>263</sup> Hodžić, E. (2011). *Political Participation of National Minorities in Local Governance in Bosnia and Herzegovina: State of the Art, Prospects and Ways Forward*. Analitika, Sarajevo, 2011. p. 40.

*where I participate in politics in order to change something for my groups, is politics. This is discriminating Bosnian politics, a fault-line of our 'pluralist' system and something that will forever drag democratic development in this country behind"* (Jewish male, 36 years old).

Hence, the belief of Jewish and Polish respondents is that the issue of national minority political participation is overly-politicized and largely dependent on individual motivations to which transcend group issues, a matter which will be discussed in much greater detail in Chapter 7.

Alternatively, in examining minority group knowledge about participatory mechanisms on local level and the role of their associations in this process, I was also interested in revealing whether *mjesna zajednica* is considered as a forum where minority participation can start. The 2011 findings presented by Hodžić<sup>264</sup> observe that in local communities in which national minorities have significant territorial concentrations, *mjesna zajednica* is seen as an instrument of communication with the local government. He also confirms that these mechanisms were occasionally used.<sup>265</sup> However, the findings of the focus groups organized for the purposes of this dissertation, both Jews and Poles from across the country did not view *mjesna zajednica* as a useful participation mechanism. Nevertheless, the reasons which these two groups cited were different. A 62 year old Jew from Sarajevo gives the opposite opinion:

*"I understand local politics; I have spent my whole life working for mjesna zajednica. I know what it entails and how people can participate. But, when it comes to power that national minorities can hope to gain through it, we are out of luck. How can a group of 15-20 members of different national minority groups in Dobrinja<sup>266</sup>, for example, hope to achieve something when we are so small in number? What to push for? A Jewish Sunday school or a synagogue because Dobrinja is the biggest neighbourhood in BiH?"*

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<sup>264</sup> The study conducted by Hodžić in 2011 is the only official work covering political participation of national minorities in BiH. No other national or international academic works on this topic exist and this is why I can only rely on this piece of information. This study, however, did not produce quantitative data and makes very limited use of qualitative findings (interviews).

<sup>265</sup> Ibid, p. 42.

<sup>266</sup> A large neighborhood in the suburban part of Sarajevo.

*Ridiculous! No public policy can be made on behalf of a single national minority group on this level. No, mjesna zajednica is not the place to do it and it does not offer useful participation tools for any member of a national minority group to exercise it effectively.*

Ten other respondents from Jewish communities across BiH also mention the issue of number. One explains:

*“There is a widespread practice not to consult minorities in any of local issues. Those who do not belong to national minority groups see us as being all the same, they do not make a difference between a Jew or an Albanian, maybe yes, a Roma, but we certainly do not exhibit physical differences in appearance. To non-minorities we might as well be a part of the majority. In my view, we are too small in number as individual groups to have our individual concerns voiced through ‘mjesna zajednica’. This channel is discriminatory for us, if you ask me.”* (Jewish male, 33 years old)

A 35 year old politically active female from Zenica adds that:

*“Numbers are problematic for all members of national minorities. They are consulted or they use consultative mechanisms to advance their rights or empower their communities, but only if they live in ‘mjesna zajednica’ that has a large minority population. I know of this situation in Sarajevo and Zenica where Roma have used these mechanisms, and in and around Prijedor where Ukrainians have used this mechanism. But overall, let’s say that this is not a standard practice.”*

Hence, Jews believed that *mjesna zajednica* is not a successful mechanism because of:

- a) General discrimination towards national minorities and the fact that “people believe that minorities should not be consulted because they are small in number”<sup>267</sup>;

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<sup>267</sup> Quotation from a Jewish male participant from Sarajevo, aged 31, during the focus group.

- b) National minority groups are often viewed as one whole, instead of as separate groups with unique cultural, religious, historical and linguistic traditions.

Alternatively, Poles share a similar opinion and argue that *mjesna zajednica* is not a good participatory tool mainly because it discriminates against the minorities in terms of taking the size of the particular minority group and addressing their needs adequately. As one Polish female participant, aged 44, from Gradiška states

*“Some ‘mjesne zajednice’ have many citizens who belong to national minorities. For example here we have many Poles and Ukrainians, but although they participate in the activities on the local level they are not viewed as groups that might have certain and different demands. Of course, ‘mjesna zajednica’ addresses the needs of the masses, but I do not see it as a channel through which we could voice minority-related matters and request policies that relate exclusively to minority rights”*

A male participant, aged 19, from the same town, offers a broader view of this opinion:

*“I think this is not entirely true for all groups, but mostly for groups that are smaller like us, Poles, or Ukrainians, Germans, Jews. If we were a larger minority maybe we would be able to see ‘mjesna zajednica’ as a place where we could argue, push, propose...this is what Roma do, but Roma are our largest minority and unfortunately not too active in this town. But for us, smaller communities ‘mjesna zajednica’ is a poor mechanism through which we can gain anything. It is not discriminatory entirely, but in a way, when you think about it, it is...”*

The problem of local community, or ‘mjesna zajednica’ as a channel through which participation of national minority groups could occur is further complicated by the fact that in smaller towns with several different minority groups, issues that are put on the agenda largely relate to the well-being of the whole community and never target single minority groups. A 52 year old Polish male from Banja Luka, who has been an active member of his ‘mjesna zajednica’ since 1992 states:

*“As a Pole, obviously a member of a national minority group, I never saw ‘mjesna zajednica’ as a channel through which I could voice my concerns or concerns of my Polish community, friends, family...even if I wanted to, I wouldn’t know how, because ‘mjesna zajednica’ never targeted issues that are of interest to us. When “Sejdić-Finci” issue occurred, we tried pushing for more political influence, tried to see whether a few young Poles who are interested in politics could really achieve anything by being more active in pressing the country to do something about state minority representation. This will to participate turned out to be futile, as ‘mjesna zajednica’ said it could not really influence state-level politics...”*

A 21 year old Polish male, also from Banja Luka interrupts to add:

*“Our political involvement, we believe, can only start on the local level, but you see from his story that there is no interest, the way through which we can achieve this is unclear. The system is unfair, not inclusive and relies too much on numbers. Then we end up asking the largest minority living in a certain town or village, how much money will be invested in a traditional Polish festival. Makes no sense...”*

Hence, in the opinion of Poles, ‘mjesna zajednica’ is not a mechanism through which political participation of national minority groups in BiH can occur. They point-out several major reasons for this:

1. ‘Mjesna zajednica’ does not adequately portray the size of the national minority. Hence, all minority groups are discriminated, except Roma, since their numbers are significant in BiH.
2. Channels through which participation occurs or should occur are “unclear” and “target local community questions of little interest to Poles”<sup>268</sup>

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<sup>268</sup> A significant number of Polish respondents (71%) referred here to building of religious objects.

<sup>268</sup> Quoted words emerged the most during focus group discussions.

3. National minority groups are often viewed as one whole and not as separate ethnic/cultural/linguistic groups. This creates a situation in which numerically larger groups are consulted on most issues, simply because they are easier to reach to.

Hence, several issues are problematic when it comes to participation on local community level. Aside from the general feeling of discrimination, which is a very subjective trait, of much importance is the overwhelming belief among Jews (all 30 participants or 100% agreed to this) that “all national minority groups are seen as one”. This leads to a situation in which national minority groups are often faced with issues that are objectively not of interest to their particular group and hence limit participation interest. As a 23 year old Polish female explains:

*“Living in a larger city as a member of national minority and seeing ‘mjesna zajednica’ as a participatory mechanism is like seeing a humanitarian organisation as a source of income. Going for meetings in which members of the community discuss Serb, Croat, Bosniak representation on the local level and knowing that you, as a member of a national minority who has no intention of changing his/her identity for the sake of representation, can’t participate in any way creates a feeling of exclusion. People ask questions ‘why should I go when I these issues don’t concern me?’ are an everyday issue, so of course, we do not see these local channels as participatory channels. It might be that we are uninformed, but again, people generally turn away from places where they feel excluded and find alternative channels, like political parties.”*

Alternatively, consultations with all minority groups occur all at the same time, without particular focus on interested groups. Hence, local community levels run into danger of excluding imperative groups and consulting those less interested one (maybe only because they form a larger group at a given local level or particular *mjesna zajednica*) This, in turn, results in the feelings of “unfairness” and belief that local community minority participatory mechanisms are “inadequate”, “politicized” and “overly general” to appropriately channel minority demands and further them to a higher level. Not least, the issue of seeing all national minorities as a single community creates a situation in which local community governments, but also higher governmental bodies, create “minority questions” which are discussed during consultations with

national minority groups and their representatives. Funding a minority association or cultural club is essential for all minority groups, but not all minorities need to be consulted if a specific focus is on budgeting, for example, a Roma club. As many respondents noted, there is a general tendency to consult minority groups on issues that concern Roma, as their social status is more disadvantaged compared to both national minority groups and BiH's constituent peoples. Another inadequacy of the system is tightly connected to minority groups' belief that their associations are places for cultural gatherings, whereby much of consultations occur on the issues of cultural programs and funding of minority cultural projects. Issues that concern political participation channels and ways to politically participate are rarely discussed by minorities with governments and vice versa. Hence, the root of this systematic scantiness lies in the existing two-way communication gap. As a consequence, national minorities claim to be uninformed about participation mechanisms, blaming the structure that is too politicized, complex and decentralized. Alternatively, governments fail to organize this information and assure its dissemination among relevant groups, thus creating a system that can rightfully be termed a "Swiss-cheese model", formed and intact, yet full of gaps that are difficult to fill. For this reason, let us learn about more successful models which will serve in picturing a more inclusive political reality for national minority groups in BiH.

## **Conclusion**

The purpose of this chapter was to contextualize political participation of national minorities in BiH, notably in light of democratization and through a discussion of political fault-lines embedded in Dayton Constitution. I have argued that following the wartime events that occurred in BiH from 1992 until 1995, the mixed ethnic picture in BiH as inherited from former Yugoslavia exacerbated peace settlement efforts and ultimately ended with the institutionalization of Dayton Peace Accords which also entails BiH's post-war Constitution that is still in place. However, due to the multi-ethnic picture, the argument made in this chapter is that Dayton Constitution overemphasizes ethnicity. Hence, the constitutional system based on ethnic constituency and the principle of "constituent peoples" in lieu of the term "citizen" represents the principal fault-line of the power-sharing mechanism instituted in Dayton and a legally enshrined basis for discriminations of groups that are considered "Others" under the



present constitutional framework. Furthermore, the argument made in this chapter is that this constitutional inconsistency is the primary culprit for the exclusion of national minorities from state-level bodies, but also a reason for their dissatisfaction with the present socio-economic order in the country, an issue which will be discussed in more detail in chapters 7 and 8. The discussion extends to include a comparison of Dayton Constitution against relevant international legal documents which cover national minority rights to political participation. The aim of the legal discussion was to posit the international legal frameworks in the context of BiH's constitutional contents and understand the interpretations used by BiH in addressing the principal topic of political participation of national minority groups. The concluding argument as it relates to this part of the chapter was that members of national minorities in BiH can be represented in state-level government only if they declare themselves as members of one of the three constitutionally recognized constituent groups. Hence, this discriminatory practice, the argument is, degrades these groups' motivation to participate in high political acts. Related to this is the proposition that this chapter makes and that regards the fact that political participation of national minority groups is misunderstood by local political actors, who extend it to minority rights related mainly to cultural rights. Some of the qualitative findings presented in this chapter illustrate that issues which concern political participation channels and ways to politically participate are rarely discussed by minorities with governments and vice versa. Hence, the final argument is that this systematic insufficiency stems from both – the governing political actors and the national minority groups themselves – which ultimately determine former's dissatisfaction and results in lower levels of political participation. But before embarking on assessing the reasons for different political behaviour of the examined groups, I now turn the attention to the historical narrative with the aim of creating the basis for understanding the current trends and transformations in Jewish and Polish political participation of BiH. Although little is known of the history of political participation of these national minorities in BiH, in the following chapter I argue that both Jews and Poles were relatively politically active groups and that their political engagement was primarily influenced by the historical period effects, from their arrival to BiH onwards.

# **CHAPTER 5: JEWS AND POLES IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA – A (HI) STORY OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION**

## **Introduction**

The chapter below presents a historical analysis of political participation patterns of Jews and Poles, the two primary case study groups in this dissertation. The purpose of this chapter is to relate historical paths of political participation of the two groups to the patterns of political activism that we observe among them today, but also examine how and to what degree did the historical ‘period effects’ (Norris, 2003) influence their political engagement. The chapter is divided into two parts, covering historical political participation of Jews and Poles respectively. The first part of the chapter assess early development of Bosnian Jews which is more concerned with their socio-economic, rather than political development, making it difficult to examine the patterns of their formal political participation prior to the arrival of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1878. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to argue that Jewish communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina refrained from any type of political engagement during this period. First Jewish organizations were formed as early as 1565, thus clearly indicating a need for public and community engagement. Later, this paved the way for more political inclusion on different levels. Thus, the first part of this chapter comprehensively investigates the historical patterns of political participation of Bosnian Jewish communities, as one of the most essential groups which significantly shaped the political history of the country, notably in the period from 1878 and the arrival of the Austro-Hungarian Empire until 1941, when a significant portion of Bosnian Jews perished in the horrors of the Holocaust. Moreover, it illustrates the fact that Jews of Bosnia and Herzegovina never conducted their own independent politics, nor formed Jewish political parties, and that their political role and participation were primarily exercised through their own political organizations, all of which were indispensable for the development of the political life in the country. The analysis is presented through an investigation of two different periods in Bosnian history – the Austro-Hungarian annexation and the independence of Yugoslavia from 1918 until 1939 – during which the Jewish community of BiH flourished and enlarged, but also practiced

the most diverse forms of political participation,<sup>269</sup> a pattern that was less observable during the communist rule, when all its political activities centred mainly around the Communist Party.

Conversely, the second part of the chapter looks at the early socio-political development of Poles who inhabited Bosnia and Herzegovina during the Austro-Hungarian rule. Unlike Jews, the Polish community which settled in BiH was more concerned with their socio-economic, rather than political development. Despite the fact that they built entire villages and established personal businesses in Bosnia, the Polish community never became fully integrated into the Bosnian society, even after the fall of the Austro-Hungarian rule. What is more, generations of Poles who were born in Bosnia remained relatively closed within their communities. The second part of the chapter thus investigates the socio-political life of the Polish community, as an essential group which shaped the history of the country, notably in the period from 1895 and the arrival of the Austro-Hungarian Empire until 1946, when a significant portion of Poles returned to their homeland. Subject to external colonization, those Poles who inhabited the Bosnian lands never fully assimilated neither socially, nor politically into the Bosnian society of that time, but despite this influenced an era of country's history.

Lastly, I wish to note that the rationale for this chapter lies in the use of the transformative paradigmatic approach explained in Chapter 2, and the corresponding ontological assumption that I take, whereby social reality is historically bound and that it has a surface, but also deeper structures (Neuman, 1997), the latter which can only be understood through understanding of historical orientations. The main purpose of this chapter is, thus, to understand the historical patterns and triggers that govern contemporary political participation motives of the two studied groups, as it is only through history that we can fully learn the motivations and behaviour of the observed communities. The chapter serves the purpose of connecting historical motivations to current ones as it is only through such an observation that one can learn what political empowerment really means to these groups and in which way it is understood.

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<sup>269</sup> As we will see, most Jewish politically oriented organizations and activities originated in these two periods.

## PART I

### Political Participation of Bosnian Jewish Communities: A Historical Perspective (1878-1941)

#### Jews of Bosnia and Herzegovina – The Early Days

As long and intricate as it is, the history of Jews who settled across the Balkan Peninsula cannot be examined as an isolated pattern of historical circumstances, but rather as a series of mutually dependent events which moulded one of the most significant national minority groups that have inhabited these areas since the Roman times. The reasons for this are manifold, but most go back to the fact that the Balkan Peninsula was long ruled by some of the most powerful empires in the European history, each one leaving a significant mark not only on the customs and socio-political development of different ethnic minority groups which inhabited this part of the world, but also shaping their long-term statuses within the local communities. The same is true of Jewish communities which settled in Bosnia and Herzegovina prior to the arrival of the Ottomans, but also those that arrived to this central Balkan region during the rule of the latter Empire, when huge waves of Jewish population fled the 1492 inquisition of non-Catholic groups from the Iberian Peninsula.

When first Jewish communities arrived to the Balkans at the dawn of the 15<sup>th</sup> century they soon discovered a few aboriginal Jews,<sup>270</sup> ~~whose descent is, by historical accounts, tied to the Roman era, when they formed their first settlements very close to the borders of today's BiH.~~<sup>271</sup> Hence, the remnants of Jewish tombs and synagogues from 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries were discovered not only in Macedonia, Dalmatia and Montenegro, but also in Osijek<sup>272</sup>, only fifty kilometres away from Bosnian north-eastern border. However, most Jewish groups at that time settled in today's Macedonia, where they remained during the Byzantine rule. Due to the

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<sup>270</sup> ~~The descent of these groups is, by historical accounts, tied to the Roman era, when they formed their first settlements very close to the borders of today's BiH. Source: Malcolm, N., 2011. *Bosna: Kratka povijest*. Sarajevo: Biblioteka Memorija. p. 206.~~

<sup>271</sup> ~~Malcolm, N., 2011. *Bosna: Kratka povijest*. Sarajevo: Biblioteka Memorija. p. 206.~~

<sup>272</sup> Today in Croatia.

significance of a long trade route that crossed these lands on its final destination in the Greek city of Salonika, old and new members of the Jewish community from across Europe settled in this area during the Roman rule. However, the biggest influx of Jews to the Balkan Peninsula came in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, when under a threat of a death sentence known as “auto de fè”, instituted by Thomas Torquemada, the grand inquisitor of the Spanish king Ferdinand and queen Isabella, thousands of Jews fled Spain in March of 1492.<sup>273</sup> ~~Forced to leave Spain, these Jews settled across the European continent. And while some of them found their refuge in France, Belgium and The Netherlands, most of them arrived to the Mediterranean countries of the Ottoman Empire, including those of the Balkans.~~ Many of these groups initially settled along main trade routes of the time, mainly in Salonika, but later moved on to Skopje, which, thanks to Jewish fruitful trade activities, soon became an important regional trade centre. Hence, those Jews who ultimately settled in Bosnia and Herzegovina arrived primarily from Salonika, Bitolj, Istanbul and Sofia. Some also penetrated from the North, more precisely from Italian cities of Padua and Venice, but also Zadar, Zagreb and Dubrovnik.<sup>274</sup> They called themselves “Sephards” or the Sephardic Jews, a name which denoted their Spanish origin, but also their religious and cultural customs.<sup>275</sup>

Although Bosnia was not situated directly on the trade route to Salonika, an important segment of that road went from Dubrovnik to Foča in Eastern Bosnia and on to Novi Pazar and Skopje. Hence, Jewish traders from Skopje and Dubrovnik had frequent dealings with Bosnian intermediaries.<sup>276</sup> However, most historians on this topic (Malcolm, 2011; Pinto, 1987; Levy,

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<sup>273</sup> Jews fled Spain under a threat of a death sentence known as ‘auto de fè’, instituted by Thomas Torquemada, the grand inquisitor of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella. Source: Pinto, A., 1987. *Jevreji Sarajeva i Bosne i Hercegovine*. Sarajevo: Veselin Masleša. p. 11.

<sup>274</sup> Levy, M., 1996. *Sefardi u Bosni. Prilog historiji Jevreja na balkanskom poluotoku*. Bosanska biblioteka. p. 11.

<sup>275</sup> A Sephard is a Jew descended from Jews who lived in the Iberian Peninsula before their expulsion in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century. For religious purposes, “Sephardim” denotes most Jews of West Asian and North African origin who commonly use a Sephardic style of liturgy. The name comes from Sephard, a Biblical location. Sephardic Jews speak Ladino, a mix of Spanish and Hebrew. In Bosnia, Ladino also adopted many local words. Ladino is still spoken by four members of the Jewish community in BiH. Source: Efendić, N., 2010. “Pogled na sefardsku romansu u Bosni i Hercegovini”. In: *Narodna umjetnost 47/2*. Sarajevo.

<sup>276</sup> Malcolm, N., 2011. *Bosna: Kratka povijest*. Sarajevo: Biblioteka Memorija. p. 207.

1996) claim that ~~in fact~~, it was the development of Sarajevo<sup>277</sup> as an important trade centre that led Jews to inhabit Bosnian territories. Moreover, it is essential to mention that *bezistan*<sup>278</sup> “Bursa” was probably crucial in attracting Jews to settle in Sarajevo, since this important trade facility was mainly in the hands of Anatolian Jews.<sup>279</sup> In the next two centuries, the Jewish community from Sarajevo developed close ties with Skopje and Salonika, specializing in cloth trade, a branch that stayed controlled by Bosnian Jews until the Holocaust of the Second World War.<sup>280</sup>

Nevertheless, when examining the patterns of political participation of Bosnian Jewish communities in BiH, I considered several situational aspects, all of which are important in a more general context of this thematic, but which are not indispensable for this dissertation and its main focus on current levels of political participation.

- In state-level politics, Bosnian Jews never established or led any political parties;
- In state-level politics, Bosnian Jews were members of different political parties. Their choice of political engagement was primarily driven by their individual (not group) beliefs and personal ideology;
- The political engagement of Bosnian Jews was always complemented by their engagement in the economic life, ~~in which they played an indispensable role.~~ This was notably so in urban areas, where they analyzed different economic trends and offered solutions for the entire community.

But, in order to thoroughly examine and understand this interesting network of relations, we must first adequately look further away into history, and offer an insight into the first forms of political participation of Jews that settled in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the Ottoman rule.

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<sup>277</sup> There is no precise data on the actual arrival of Jews to Sarajevo, but three court records from 1565 mention Jewish traders who settled in Sarajevo. Source: Levy, M., 1996. *Sefardi u Bosni. Prilog historiji Jevreja na balkanskom poluotoku*. Bosanska biblioteka. p. 11.

<sup>278</sup> Bezistan (also known as bedestan or bedesten) is a covered market built in a shape of a mosque. Such places were built during the Ottoman rule throughout the occupied territories. Bezistan represented the centre of commercial life in every city or town. Source: Vujaklja, M., 1954. *Leksikon stranih reči i izraza*. Beograd: Prosveta.

<sup>279</sup> Shaw, S. J., 1991. *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic*. London. p. 53.

<sup>280</sup> Pelletier, R., 1934. *Sarajevo et sa région: chez les Yugoslavs de la Save à l'Adriatique*. Paris. pp. 48-49.

## *The Life and Politics of Jewish Communities during the Ottoman Empire: The Origins of Jewish Political Engagement in Bosnia and Herzegovina*

Upon their arrival to Bosnia, the Jews of Sarajevo<sup>281</sup> lived in Muslim “mahalas” (a quarter),<sup>282</sup> but in 1577, after they aided the Ottomans in defeating the Habsburgs, they were given a mahala of their own. ~~However, a 17<sup>th</sup>-century account by a Jewish writer from Salonika indicates that this quarter was not granted because of Jewish assistance to the Turks, but upon their own request to Ottoman authorities. Whatever the reason, the~~ richer Jews moved into grouped houses in the central area of the city, close to the central market. Poorer families, on the other hand, moved into a special building constructed upon the orders of the city governor in 1580-1581. This house was known as *Siavuš-Pašine Daire* (or the bequest of Siavuš- Paša).<sup>283</sup> ~~The building itself comprised of forty six rooms, with a common courtyard, hence each family occupied one or two small rooms, depending on the number of people. The Jewish called this building *Il Cortijo* (the “courtyard” in Ladino), while Muslims called it “*Velika avlija*” (the great courtyard) or *čivuthana* (the house of Jews).~~

As the number of Jews grew, so did their need to organize into first associations. ~~Although there is little account on the activities of the Jewish community in Sarajevo, it is known that in~~ In 1565 they formed their first community (*Jevrejska opština* or *JO*), which soon became a central institution for all Sarajevo-based Jews. This organization represented Jews in different dealings with the Ottoman government, but also served as the central stage for Jewish social and religious life. Hence, JO community represented a platform for early forms of political engagement of Sarajevo-based Jews, serving as a strong bond between their growing populations. It should be noted, however, that this institution was not completely political.<sup>284</sup> ~~and~~

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<sup>281</sup> Jews first settled in and around Sarajevo. However, smaller Jewish communities moved in and around the city of Travnik in Central Bosnia, a developed trade center during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The arrival of Jews to other larger Bosnian towns, including Mostar, Tuzla and Bihać, occurred much later in history.

<sup>282</sup> Malcolm (2011) points out that the word “quarter” is a somewhat misleading translation of “mahala”, as these were just small subdivisions of a larger town, consisting of not more than forty houses. Also, the word “mahala” does not equal the word “ghetto” that was used for Jewish closed quarters in Christian Europe. In “mahalas” there was a complete freedom of movement, without gates or curfews. Source: Malcolm, N., 2011. *Bosna: Kratka povijest*. Sarajevo: Biblioteka Memorija. p. 209.

<sup>283</sup> Ibid, p. 209.

<sup>284</sup> Tauber, E., 2013. *Ilustrovani leksikon Judaizma: Istorija, religija i običaji*. Sarajevo: Historijski arhiv.

~~it did not, in any case, serve as a predecessor for a Jewish political party or any other political dealings that might have gone against the Ottoman (or in the future any other) regime. Another fact that points to the nature of this organization is that *Jevrejska opština* in Sarajevo had its own statute, which regulated the rights and duties of all its members and leaders. Thus, we one cannot ignore the fact that Jews started organizing into semi-political units very early. It was not until the final years of the Ottoman rule, however, that Jews had their first representatives in the Ottoman parliament in Istanbul. This was primarily due to the fact that the legal position of Jews was very similar to that of Christians, as both were subject to a set of legal codes known as *kanun-i raya*<sup>285</sup> and required special permissions to build synagogues or churches.<sup>286</sup> Yet, Jews had their own places of worship, and were able to build them by making suitable payments to the Ottomans. Thus, it can be concluded that Jewish relatively low political participation during most of the Ottoman rule was due to the fact that they lacked legal equality with Muslims. Still, no significant change occurred in Jewish community's political involvement until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. ~~However, the Ottomans were much more open towards non-Muslim groups, allowing Jews to use their own courts to judge civil suits within their community. But despite these general allowances, Jews still had to pay *haraç* (a form of a poll tax paid by non-Muslim populations; originally a land tax), and were subject to different dress rules, including a stipulation introduced in 1574 by Sultan Murat IV, which decreed that Jews were not to wear turbans, silk clothes, or anything green. This practice later changed, and allowed rabbis to wear turbans, as long as they were yellow.<sup>287</sup> In general, however, it can be said that Jews of the Ottoman Empire, more specifically those living in Bosnia, were much less discriminated against than Jews living in Christian Europe.~~~~

~~In the first decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Jewish population of Bosnia grew steadily. Not only did they They lived in Sarajevo (approximately 2000),<sup>288</sup> but now also moved to settled in~~

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<sup>285</sup> ~~Traditional code of laws applied to "raya", the non-Ottoman people (including Muslims). By 19<sup>th</sup> century the term "raya" denoted non-Muslim populations. Source: Malcolm, N., 2011. *Bosna: Kratka povijest*. Sarajevo: Biblioteka Memorija. pp. 319-320.~~

<sup>286</sup> ~~Traditional code of laws applied to "raya", the non-Ottoman people (including Muslims). By 19<sup>th</sup> century the term "raya" denoted non-Muslim populations. Source: Malcolm, N., 2011. *Bosna: Kratka povijest*. Sarajevo: Biblioteka Memorija. pp. 319-320.~~

<sup>287</sup> ~~Ibid, p. 210.~~

<sup>288</sup> ~~Ibid, p. 213.~~



Travnik and Mostar, where they established notable trade businesses.<sup>289</sup> At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, came the slow collapse of the Ottoman Empire. It was at this time, more precisely in 1877, that first Jewish representatives gained posts in the *vilayet* council,<sup>290</sup> but also in the parliament in Istanbul. However, it was not until the reforming Sultans of the 1830s until 1850s (when the Ottomans were losing their grip over the Balkans) that new civil laws granting equal rights to all religious communities were issued. Initially, these laws existed in theory rather than in practice, but were nevertheless there when the Austro-Hungarians occupied Bosnia in 1878.<sup>291</sup> It was at this time that the biggest change to the status-quo of the Bosnian Jewish community came, including their right to political participation. During this period, the levels of political engagement among Bosnian Jews increased, thus making it much more worthy of our attention than the preceding Ottoman era. These early forms of political participation serve as an example of the historical accounts which state that Ottoman governors often relied upon Jewish physicians and merchants as their own personal and diplomatic advisors.

~~Two prominent Jews were elected to the parliament—Javer eff. Baruh and Isak eff. Salom, both of whom spoke Turkish language. For some time, Baruh also served as a counsel general, and as a director of the *vilayet* printing house. After his death, his son Sumbul eff. Salamon Isaković was proclaimed his successor, and later served as the city councillor in Sarajevo for many years. Salom, on the other hand, had a notable military career, and served in the order of Tahir Paša.<sup>292</sup> During the reign of Abdul Hamid, all three of them were notable Sultan's and Vezir's advisors.<sup>293</sup> Hence, it can be said that Jews enjoyed relative trust among the Ottoman rulers. These early forms of political participation serve as an example of the historical accounts which state that Ottoman governors often relied upon Jewish physicians and merchants as their own personal and diplomatic advisors.~~

~~——— It is not very clear whether this trust and early granting of political rights to Jewish communities came from the fact that Jews were peaceful people, who supported their rulers, unlike Christian masses (notably the Orthodox), who resented the Ottomans. However, it was not~~

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<sup>289</sup> Ibid, p. 320-321.

<sup>290</sup> Vilayet is the province in the Ottoman Empire; vilayet council thus denotes a provincial council.

<sup>291</sup> Nezirović, M., 1992. *Jevrejsko-španjolska književnost u Bosni i Hercegovini*. Sarajevo: Svjetlost. pp. 35-36.

<sup>292</sup> Pinto, A., 1987. *Jevreji Sarajeva i Bosne i Hercegovine*. Sarajevo: Veselin Masleša. p. 155.

<sup>293</sup> Ibid, p. 155.

~~until the reforming Sultans of the 1830s until 1850s (when the Ottomans were losing their grip over the Balkans) that new civil laws granting equal rights to all religious communities were issued. Initially, these laws existed in theory rather than in practice, but were nevertheless there when the Austro-Hungarians occupied Bosnia in 1878. It was at this time that the biggest change to the status quo of the Bosnian Jewish community came, including their right to political participation. During this period, the levels of political engagement among Bosnian Jews increased, thus making it much more worthy of our attention than the preceding Ottoman era.~~

### **Political Life of Bosnian Jews during the Austro-Hungarian Rule: 1878-1914**

It was by the decision of the Berlin Congress held in 1878 that the Austro-Hungarian Empire gained the right to annex Bosnia and Herzegovina. With the arrival of the new Christian, and more so “western” occupying forces, the fate of Bosnian Jews altered. This change was most obvious in their political, but also social life, as this period saw an increase in Jewish population in Bosnia and Herzegovina, primarily due to the arrival of Ashkenazi Jews<sup>294</sup> from Hungary, Galicia, Poland and the Czech lands. ~~Hence, the Austro-Hungarians faced a challenge of dealing with very diverse populations which inhabited the Bosnian territories.~~ These demographic switches forced the new government to introduce several ~~changes which influenced the existing socio-political and economic reforms order of the autochthonous populace. These reforms inevitably~~which also influenced the Jewish population of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Just four years after their arrival, in 1882, the Austro-Hungarians set-up a “Sephardic Israelite Religious Community”, modelled after the Austrian *Cultusgemeinde* (religious community).<sup>295</sup> This body elected its own governing unit, while its main task was to keep a register of all Sephardic Jews in the city. ~~Furthermore, the community had a right to levy taxes on all Jews, up to the amount equivalent to twenty percent of direct state taxes.~~ On the other hand, the Ashkenazi Jews from Central Europe were organized into a separate religious

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<sup>294</sup> Ashkenazi Jews are Jews of France, Germany, and Eastern Europe and their descendants. The adjective "Ashkenazi" and corresponding nouns, Ashkenazi (singular) and Ashkenazim (plural) are derived from the Hebrew word "Ashkenaz," which is used to refer to Germany. They speak Yiddish, a mix of German and Hebrew languages. Source: Solomin, R.R.M. *Sephardic, Ashkenazic, Mizrahi Jews - Jewish Ethnic Diversity*. Available at: [http://www.myjewishlearning.com/beliefs/Theology/Who\\_is\\_a\\_Jew/Types\\_of\\_Jews/Ethnic\\_Diversity.shtml](http://www.myjewishlearning.com/beliefs/Theology/Who_is_a_Jew/Types_of_Jews/Ethnic_Diversity.shtml)

<sup>295</sup> Malcolm, N., 2011. *Bosna: Kratka povijest*. Sarajevo: Biblioteka Memorija. p. 215.

community, and were looked down upon by Sephards.<sup>296</sup> ~~Hence, these two communities led separate lives. But However,~~ the new government did not pay much attention to the divisions that occurred upon the arrival of the Ashkenazi, ~~although they were aware of the underlying differences between these two groups. Despite this, however, both Jewish communities were often registered together (all three censuses, official reports and school statistics),<sup>297</sup> and it was not until the 1910 census that the government ordered separate data on these two groups. Notwithstanding occasional trade and business connections, the divisions between the Sephardic and the Ashkenazi Jews remained until the last few years of the Austro-Hungarian rule in Bosnia.~~ They led separate religious and everyday lives, and even formed different associations. Yet, these divisions proved to be the core reason for the late political Zionist movement and the spread of Jewish national progress that occurred in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the early 1900s.<sup>298</sup>

The abrupt changes that occurred in the country had an enormous impact on all of its communities, but the negative consequences of the new regime were now slowly beginning to fade thanks to the formation of progressive social factors, a trait that was notably observable among Jews. This was primarily because the Sephardic, and later on the Ashkenazi Jews lived in urban areas.<sup>299</sup> ~~Thus, Bosnian Jewish communities, realizing the benefits of equal rights that they now gained along other groups, opened the door to a more liberal communal development. This meant more cooperation with the local population (notably Muslims and Christians), a factor which in later years significantly influenced the development of the entire country, both socially and politically.<sup>300</sup>, where civil tradition and practical knowledge about basic life needs lay at the core of their socio-political participation. Aware of the significance of the newly introduced changes, both Jewish communities became well aware of the consequences that these circumstances could have on an individual, but also the community as a whole, especially if they~~

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<sup>296</sup> Gordiejew, P. B., 1999. *Voices of Yugoslav Jewry*. Albany: State University of New York Press. p. 27.

<sup>297</sup> Kruševac, T., 1966. *Društvene promene kod bosanskih Jevreja za austrijskog vremena*. In: Spomenica—400 godina od dolaska Jevreja u BiH. Sarajevo. p. 72.

<sup>298</sup> For more information on Jewish history in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Balkans see Szabo, A., 1998. “Židovi i proces modernizacije građanskog društva u Hrvatskoj između 1873. i 1914. godine”. In: Ognjen Kraus (ed.), *Dva stoljeća povijesti i kulture Židova u Zagrebu i Hrvatsko*. Zagreb: Židovska općina Zagreb.

<sup>299</sup> Gordiejew, P. B., 1999. *Voices of Yugoslav Jewry*. Albany: State University of New York Press. p. 28.

<sup>300</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 28-29.

~~refrained from cooperating with other ethnic groups, as it was previously the case. Thus, Bosnian Jewish communities, realizing the benefits of equal rights that they now gained along other groups, opened the door to a more liberal communal development. This meant more cooperation with the local population (notably Muslims and Christians), a factor which in later years significantly influenced the development of the entire country, both socially and politically.~~

Nevertheless, it was not until 1910 that the Austro-Hungarians announced the formation of the first parliament and imposed a new constitution. In June of the same year, the so called Bosnian Diet (*Sabor*) was established. ~~The parliament included 92, 25 of whom were virilists,<sup>301</sup> who were elected directly by the tsar or chosen according to their status in the social hierarchy.<sup>302</sup> In June of the same year, the so called Bosnian Diet (*Sabor*) was established. However, this body was short lived, as after the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand in June of 1914, it never convened again. The entire election system was undemocratic. Out of 92 members, 25 of them were virilists,<sup>303</sup> who were elected directly by the tsar or chosen according to their status in the social hierarchy.<sup>304</sup> Virilists were chosen either by the government (*Zemaljska vlada*) or by professional chambers (including legal and medical chambers, but also trade and industrial organizations).~~ Just as it was the case with other groups, Jews were allowed to be elected as virilists, as well as members of the Assembly. Jews had two members – one from the clergy and one from the working class. However, Jewish members never had a chance to achieve anything that would protect the Jewish interest, as they had little opportunity to cooperate with other parties in the Assembly. Hence, Jews never took an active role in party debates. ~~Other (non virilist) members were chosen by a closed circle of people, either directly or orally in the *kurija*.~~<sup>305</sup>

Besides political and social changes, the Austro-Hungarian reign in Bosnia and Herzegovina also introduced significant economic reforms. What this meant for long-established Jewish businesses was increased economic development and closer cooperation with other

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<sup>301</sup> The word “Virilist” derives from Latin. In the Austro-Hungarian history, the word virilist denotes a member of the Assembly whose right to vote stems from his origins or status in the social hierarchy. Virilists had an individual right to vote (*votum virile*), and were different from those assembly members who had a collective right to vote (*votum curiale*). Source: Hrvatski obiteljski leksikon, 2005.

<sup>302</sup> Pinto, A., 1987. *Jevreji Sarajeva i Bosne i Hercegovine*. Sarajevo: Veselin Masleša. p. 156.

~~groups resulted in the creation of social class differentiation within the Jewish community. What this meant for long-established Jewish businesses is a different matter, but the fact is that increased economic development and closer cooperation with other groups resulted in the creation of social class differentiation within the Jewish community.~~ The basic class differences that now started appearing created a situation in which poorer Jewish families became closer to poor non-Jewish families, rather than with richer Jews. ~~This was the first time that Bosnian Jews were divided on the basis of their financial well-being.~~ However, this differentiation could not easily break the strong Jewish communal ties as a whole, both among the Sephardic and Ashkenazi groups. ~~What happened, in turn, was that these two Jewish communities became more politically active, increased the sense of national awareness and contributed to closer ties between the two Jewish groups.~~<sup>306</sup> ~~What happened, in turn, was that these two Jewish communities became more politically active, and started transforming from a religious into a national community.~~<sup>307</sup> ~~Moreover, the changes that occurred in the society as a whole increased the sense of national awareness and contributed to closer ties between two Jewish groups.~~ Now, the formerly apolitical, highly religious Jewish community that dwelled in the Ottoman Empire became politically involved for the first time in its history on Bosnian soil. This involvement was two-dimensional, occurring through the formation of different associations<sup>308</sup> and the previously mentioned national Jewish movement.

### *La Benevolencija – The Birth of Cultural and Political Actions among Bosnian Jews (1892)*

La Benevolencija was probably one of the first Jewish associations to be formed under the Austro-Hungarian rule in Bosnia and Herzegovina. ~~Its whose~~ formation signified Jewish inclusion into the social and political life of the ~~country,country.~~ Initially, La Benevolencija acted as a local, Sarajevo-based organization, and until 1908 accepted only Jewish communities

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<sup>306</sup> See Pinto (1987), Szabo (1998) and Tauber (2013).

<sup>307</sup> ~~“National community” is an expression relating to “people's community”, which refers to uniting people across social classes in order to achieve unity.~~

<sup>308</sup> These associations were not necessarily political in character, but some of their activities had political goals. An example of this is Lira, a cultural (singers’) society, which from the very beginning was very much involved in the Jewish national movement.

from Sarajevo.<sup>309</sup> The activities of La Benevolencija supported young men through their university education in cities such as Vienna, Graz and Prague. They later returned to their homeland where they worked as notable professionals, mainly doctors, lawyers and professors. It is than to no surprise that it was precisely within this social class that the new direction of political engagement was created – more liberal masses among the Jewish population in Bosnia were created, influencing the very development of this community and setting the basis for future Jewish national movement.

On the other hand, La Benevolencija undertook different activities, all of which indirectly raised the level of political awareness among young Jews, and contributed to their political engagement in later years. Besides its primarily educational goals, La Benevolencija also focused on political education of Jews.<sup>310</sup> Yet, the true transformation and influence of this association occurred much later, and reached its peak in the interwar period between 1918-1939, at the same time when other, more so political, Jewish organizations emerged.

but also symbolized the newly rising awareness about the principles of liberal citizenship<sup>311</sup>, a notion that was previously unknown among Bosnian highly religious Jewish community in the Ottoman Empire. La Benevolencija was formed on January 12, 1892 in Sarajevo, some four years after the initial arrival of the Austro-Hungarians. The first report on the formation of the society was signed on this date and complimented by a circle of highly acclaimed members of the Jewish community at that time. Since the very beginning of its formation, La Benevolencija

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<sup>309</sup> The new activities focused on integrating other groups from Sarajevo, hence a public proclamation was issued stating that “All those who wish and want to assure a good future, learn a skill or go to school, but do not have the financial means to do so, can apply to La Benevolencija. She will aid everybody in creating and assuring their existence.” Source: Pinto, A., 1987. *Jevreji Sarajeva i Bosne i Hercegovine*. Sarajevo: Veslin Masleša. p. 142.

<sup>310</sup> Ibid, p. 142.

<sup>311</sup> The term “liberal citizenship” firstly denotes the idea that each citizen belongs to a community (feeling of communal belonging). When discussing the idea of “liberal citizenship” Rawls argues that “individuals develop an allegiance to the principles of justice such that they learn to treat fellow citizens as the free and equal beings they are”. Hence, he refers to a community where all citizens can exercise their rights, including political rights. His argument extends to include shared critique of political institutions. Source: Rawls, J., 1993. *Political Liberalism*. New York: Columbia University Press. See also Mill, J.S., 1861. *Considerations on Representative Government*. London: Parker, Son, & Bourn.

sought to gain popularity even outside the Jewish realm, hence inviting other notable people from Sarajevo. This move represented a Jewish wish to become a well-integrated, respected and, above all a contributing group in the Bosnian society.

—Initially, in order to adequately respond to changing socio-political circumstances, La Benevolencija acted as a local, Sarajevo-based organization, which until 1908 accepted only Jewish communities from Sarajevo. However, the new activities focused on integrating other groups from Sarajevo, hence a public proclamation was issued stating that “All those who wish and want to assure a good future, learn a skill or go to school, but do not have the financial means to do so, can apply to La Benevolencija. She will aid everybody in creating and assuring their existence.”<sup>312</sup> The activities of this association were primarily humanitarian, concentrating on education and funding of young men (girls rarely went to school) who wished to advance in their careers and education. From the very beginning of its work, La Benevolencija supported young men through their university education in cities such as Vienna, Graz and Prague. Only a few years passed until these activities paid off, as many of these individuals returned to their homeland where they worked as notable professionals, mainly doctors, lawyers and professors. It is than to no surprise that it was precisely within this social class that the new direction of political engagement was created—more liberal masses among the Jewish population in Bosnia were created, influencing the very development of this community and setting the basis for future Jewish national movement.

—On the other hand, La Benevolencija undertook different activities, all of which indirectly raised the level of political awareness among young Jews, and contributed to their political engagement in later years. Besides its primarily educational goals, La Benevolencija also focused on the following activities:

- Publications of textbooks and books on Jewish history, literature and philosophy;
- Founding a printing company which issued translations of the most famous Jewish authors in the fields of sciences, philosophy and arts. These works now became highly available among the general public, and not only Jews;

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<sup>312</sup> Pinto, A., 1987. *Jevreji Sarajeva i Bosne i Hercegovine*. Sarajevo: Veselin Masleša. p. 142.



—Political education of Jews.<sup>313</sup>

~~Yet, during the Austro-Hungarian reign in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the work of La Benevolencija was only at its dawn. The true transformation and influence of this association occurred much later, and reached its peak in the interwar period between 1918-1939, at the same time when other, more so political, Jewish organizations emerged.~~

### ***Political Activism among Bosnian Jews during the Austro-Hungarian Rule: The Jewish National Movement and the Rise of Zionism***

During the Austro-Hungarian reign in BiH, Jewish actions were still apolitical and remained so, more or less, until the end of their rule in 1914. The Empire's officials were pleased with Jewish obedience – they stayed out of party politics and political discussions that occurred in the Bosnian Assembly, but also city and municipality councils.<sup>314</sup> It would be wrong to argue, however, that the Austro-Hungarian period was a time of complete political isolation of Bosnian Jewish communities. Quite the contrary, the birth of Jewish “national awareness” occurred during this period and affected much of the later Jewish political participation, both in terms of activism and formation of new political organizations.

~~The end of the Ottoman rule in Bosnia and Herzegovina was rejoiced by all non-Muslim communities. Nevertheless, unlike Bosnians Serbs and Muslims who forcefully resisted the changes introduced by the new occupying forces, Jewish actions were still apolitical and remained so, more or less, until the end of the Austro-Hungarian reign in 1914. The latter were pleased with Jewish obedience – they stayed out of party politics and political discussions that occurred in the Bosnian Assembly, but also city and municipality councils. It would be wrong to argue, however, that the Austro-Hungarian period was a time of complete political isolation of Bosnian Jewish communities. Quite the contrary, the birth of Jewish “national awareness”~~

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<sup>313</sup> Ibid, p. 142.

<sup>314</sup> See Szabo, A., 1998. “Židovi i proces modernizacije građanskog društva u Hrvatskoj između 1873. i 1914. godine”. In: Ognjen Kraus (ed.), *Dva stoljeća povijesti i kulture Židova u Zagrebu i Hrvatsko*. Zagreb: Židovska općina Zagreb.



~~occurred during this period and affected much of the later Jewish political participation, both in terms of activism and formation of new political organizations.~~

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Jewish communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina finally fused with Bosnian people and grew closer to Bosnian lands.<sup>315</sup> It was probably at this time that the overwhelming feeling of “national awareness” swept over the Jewish population. However, the dissatisfaction and occasional uprisings against the new regime on behalf of other ethnic communities in Bosnia certainly contributed to these new feelings among Bosnian Jews. In support of this fact we can cite the words of Vita D. Kajon who, in one of his articles, stated that “it was not until the Serb national uprising that their (Jewish) ground was indirectly shattered. Then they gained political awareness. A new, younger generation educated in Serbo-Croatian schools had an enormous impact on active Jewish engagement in domestic politics.”<sup>316</sup> Nevertheless, the political expression of Bosnian Jews slightly differed from Jewish political engagement in other parts of the Balkans.

~~While Unlike in Croatia and Serbia, Bosnian Jews were closely associated with Bosnia and its people.<sup>317</sup> After all, they have found their home in Bosnia some five hundred years ago and were accepted by the locals, regardless of their different cultural, linguistic and religious traditions and habits. Jewish communities aimed at becoming members of Croat or Serb national groups, thus giving up their national identity and keeping Judaism only as their faith, both Sephards and Ashkenazi Jews of Bosnia and Herzegovina refrained from this process. The reasons for this laid in the particular socio-political circumstances that existed in Bosnia during this time, and were due more precisely to deeply embedded ethnic and religious antagonisms. Bosnian Jews soon realized that giving up their own and accepting a different identity would be disastrous for a tightly held Jewish legacy and close ties that they preserved with other groups. On the other hand, Bosnian Jews were so closely associated with Bosnia and its people— moreover, they have found their home in Bosnia some five hundred years ago and were accepted by the locals, regardless of their different cultural, linguistic and religious traditions and habits.~~

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<sup>315</sup> See Pinto (1987) and Szabo (1998).

<sup>316</sup> Kajon, V.D., 1922. *Nova Evropa*. V. no. 9-10. July 21, 1992.

<sup>317</sup> Kruševac, T., 1966. *Društvene promene kod bosanskih Jevreja za austrijskog vremena*. In: *Spomenica - 400 godina od dolaska Jevreja u BiH*. Sarajevo. p. 95.

In spite of ~~the above~~this, the idea of Jewish national awareness started to spread its roots in Bosnia and Herzegovina precisely during this period. It was in August of 1897 that the first Zionist Congress was held in Basel, the ideas that emerged during the Congress soon became very popular among young Jewish boys, notably those who were educated in the West. The spread of Zionist ideas in Balkan countries marked the initial stage of Jewish national renaissance.<sup>318</sup> However, this new motive for political engagement among Jews was in no way violent, but aimed at “resurrecting the love and understanding for Judaism and Jews, learning, once again to respect Jewish cultural traditions and heritage, embracing traditional customs and parallel with individual development, creating a conscious and a proud Jew.”<sup>319</sup> The basic concept that lied in the core of the Zionist movement was thus, the reattachment of all Jewish communities and unification of Jews. What this meant in the Jewish reality of BiH was a gradual unification, or better cooperation, between Sephardic and Ashkenazi Jews, who prior to this period, as we know, lived entirely separate lives. With the aim of strengthening the cooperation among Balkan Jews, a Jewish student association was created in Vienna under the name of “Bar Giora – The Academic Society of Jews from Yugoslav Countries”.<sup>320</sup> The association was initially engaged with publishing reports in Serbo-Croatian and organizing regular meetings for Jewish students from Bosnia, Serbia and Croatia. Later on, “Bar Giora” established a close cooperation with high school student organizations from different Balkan provinces of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, thus raising the level of political awareness and national identification among Jewish youth to an even higher level.

At the same time, several Bosnian Jewish associations were formed across the country, but most of them still dwelled in Sarajevo. These organizations differed in character; from cultural to humanitarian and sports oriented activities, but they all, either directly or indirectly, participated in the advancement of modern Jewish national movement. As mentioned previously, one of the most engaged in this process was “Lira”, a Jewish singing society, established in 1901. Despite its predominantly cultural character, its political impact during this period of

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<sup>318</sup> [Dobrovšak, Lj., 2005. “Prvi cionistički kongres u Osijeku 1904. godine”. In: Časopis za suvremenu povijest. Vol. 37, No. 2, 479-495, 482.](#)

<sup>319</sup> Kruševac, T., 1966. *Društvene promene kod bosanskih Jevreja za austrijskog vremena*. In: Spomenica - 400 godina od dolaska Jevreja u BiH. Sarajevo. p. 95.

<sup>320</sup> *Ibid*, p. 95.

national awareness was enormous. Kruševac (1966) argues that Lira was probably the first Jewish association in Bosnia and Herzegovina that became involved in the Jewish national movement. What is more, the historical accounts tell us that “Lira” was the only Bosnian Jewish organization that kept a close contact with the World Zionist Organization, regularly receiving their brochures. ~~Moreover, “Lira” was prepaid to receive “Die Welt”, the first Zionist newspaper. However, since Sephardic Jews did not speak German, “Lira” also spread the content of “Ašofar”, a Zionist magazine issued in Judeo-Español by Bulgarian Jews.~~<sup>321</sup> Just a year after its establishment in 1902, “Lira” signed its name in the Golden Book of Jewish National Movement, thus becoming the first Jewish organization from Bosnia and Herzegovina to do that. In 1903, “Lira” organized a visit of J. Kalef, the editor of Bulgarian “Ašofar”, in the Sephardic synagogue “managing to attract the old, especially the rabbis, and engage them in the Zionist affair.”<sup>322</sup>

However, it was not until November of 1904 that the first public Zionist activity took place in Sarajevo. At that time the association called “B’ne Zion” sent a public print call in German to all Jews, emphasizing the “national awakening of all Jews and underlying the grandiose freedom movement, which, under the Zionist flag, will create a Jewish land in Palestine. At the end, the call urged all Jews to join ‘B’ne Zion’ and contribute to the success of the noble, eminently human social movement.”<sup>323</sup> The political importance of the appeal was enormous. ~~Not only did the political rebirth and awareness among Bosnian Jews flourish, but the~~<sup>The</sup> Sephardic and Ashkenazi communities were, for the very first time, united in their fight for a common goal. Nevertheless, “B’ne Zion” soon ceased its activities, and a new organization was created under the name of “*Selbstbildungsverein*”<sup>324</sup>, only to be renamed the “Jewish national society”<sup>325</sup> in 1908. This association carried its activities until the popularity of the movement faded among Bosnian Jews and got lost in the midst of World War I.

In the end, it can be concluded that Zionist ideology played an enormous role in the process of national awaking of Jewish communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Yet, its real

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<sup>321</sup> ~~Ibid, p. 95.~~

<sup>322</sup> Spomenica “Lire”, p. 18-19.

<sup>323</sup> *Narodna Židovska svijest, no. I, 25-26., 1924.* Sarajevo.

<sup>324</sup> Kruševac, T., 1966. *Društvene promene kod bosanskih Jevreja za austrijskog vremena.* In: Spomenica - 400 godina od dolaska Jevreja u BiH. Sarajevo. p. 96.

<sup>325</sup> Židovsko nacionalno društvo.

importance lies in the fact that in the midst of the Austro-Hungarian imperial reign in Bosnia, the once closed and highly religious Jewish community managed to mature politically and achieve significant levels of political participation, hence entering a new period of history with a high degree of political awareness. The Jews of Bosnia and Herzegovina thus welcomed the new Yugoslav state in 1918, but this time as highly aware and equal citizens who have just experienced a significant development of their national, but more importantly socio-political awakening.<sup>326</sup> Abandoning their traditional ~~and almost secluded~~ lifestyles, the Jewish communities were now experiencing a complete social and political metamorphosis, as they became an important urban and well represented social group. ~~This process will reach its peak in the interwar years, more precisely between 1918 and 1939, when Bosnian Jewish communities will become even more politically engaged on all levels.~~

### **The Interwar Period: The Renaissance of Jewish Political Engagement in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1918-1939)**

Significantly weakened during World War I, the Austro-Hungarian Empire collapsed in autumn of 1918. Its once conquered Balkan territories now joined into a single state, commonly known as the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (SHS). ~~Bosnia and Herzegovina became a part of this newly created state, and despite the initial anarchy which reined its territories and the frequent political manoeuvring between the three principal ethnic groups that occurred across the kingdom, the people of Bosnia remained engaged in their own political struggles. The latter were due to ethnic clashes and occurred principally among Christians (Serbs and Croats) and Muslims.~~ What this meant for the Jewish communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, was indeed more political engagement, but in no way did they engage in ethnic debates.<sup>327</sup> Yet, the level of Jewish political participation increased more than ever before in their long history in this part of the peninsula. On the other hand, the feeling of Jewish connectedness with other groups was omnipresent. ~~Not only did they actively participate in everyday socio-political life, but also supported the political ideas of the time which were mainly propagated by the three main groups.~~

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<sup>326</sup> See Pinto (1987) and Szabo (1998).

<sup>327</sup> [Pinto, A., 1987. \*Jevreji Sarajeva i Bosne i Hercegovine\*. Sarajevo: Veselin Masleša. p. 157.](#)

To illustrate, one can recall a public proclamation issued by a Jewish lawyer, Dr. Vita Alkalaj, in October of 1918, which emphasized “Jewish ardent support of Serb, Croat and Slovene aspirations”<sup>328</sup> to create a joint state.

The historical transformations that occurred in South Eastern Europe after World War I and the creation of the Kingdom of SHS did not induce ~~a great significant socio-economic and cultural changes~~ ~~change~~ for Jews of Bosnia and Herzegovina. ~~The Jewish community stayed economically vibrant, while the process of cultural, economic and social revival continued to be aligned with that of other groups.~~ However, what the Great War did induce were conspicuous social disparities, a consequence which severely hit Bosnian Jewish communities.<sup>329</sup> The already fragmented social structure of Bosnian Jews, ~~notably of those living in Sarajevo~~, turned into sharp contrasts and went far beyond the reach of closed and traditional Jewish communities. The increase of different humanitarian organizations was thus not astounding; moreover the membership was now open to other groups as well, a fact that once again reiterated the new Jewish connectedness to local communities. It was due to this social occurrence that much of Jewish political engagement in the later years of the interwar period grew, and ultimately resulted in political renaissance of Bosnian Jews.

~~After the end of World War I, the national awaking processes that instigated in the pre-war era were now over. Yet, to argue that it was only these factors that influenced the creation of certain ideological aspirations among Bosnian Jews would be a complete disapproval of several other socio-political occasions which gained momentum during this time. This was especially true of the Jewish national question. After the end of World War I, the national awaking processes that instigated in the pre-war era were now over.~~ What this meant in Bosnia and Herzegovina was a gradual spill-out from the elite-led theoretical approaches to more citizen engagement in the issue. This became not only a topic of ideological debates, but also saw a number of enthusiasts ~~and “freedom fighters”, whose members consisted mainly of among~~ Jewish youth. The young, in fact, later emerged as the primary carriers of most progressive Zionist ideas of the time and managed to carry on with their activities through youth organizations such as “Hašomer Hacaira”. ~~Although labelled as fundamentalist, the activities of this organization remained popular among those groups who did not identify with socialist~~

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<sup>328</sup> Pinto, A., 1987. *Jevreji Sarajeva i Bosne i Hercegovine*. Sarajevo: Veselin Masleša. p. 157.

<sup>329</sup> See Tauber (2013) for more detailed description of this period in Jewish history in BiH.

political ideologies that suddenly emerged in this period, and which gathered far more Bosnian Jews than the past one ever did.<sup>330</sup>

~~This organization was burdened with attributes such as fundamentalist, fanatic, surreal and hopeless. Despite of this, its activities remained popular among those groups who did not identify with socialist political ideologies that suddenly emerged in this period, and which gathered far more Bosnian Jews than the past one ever did.~~

### ***The Affirmation of Socialism among Jews in Bosnia and Herzegovina***

The affirmation of socialist ideas in Bosnia and Herzegovina commenced in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The increasing size of the proletariat and the need for an organized approach to their everyday struggles resulted in the creation of numerous labour associations, but also political parties, cultural and sports societies and press. The socialist movement<sup>331</sup> soon gained popularity among common citizenry. It was than to no wonder that Bosnian Jewish communities participated in this political movement since its very birth. which, by far, outnumbered the rich. It was than to no wonder that Bosnian Jewish communities participated in this political movement since its very birth. Moreover, several historical facts point to active Jewish political involvement during the era of the socialist movement in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

At the time of the formation of the Central Worker's Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina on August 21, 1905, the name of Mario Levi, a Jewish tailor from Sarajevo, was

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<sup>330</sup> See Pinto (1987) for more details.

<sup>331</sup> In relation to the main context of this dissertation, I will only define the concept as it relates to Yugoslavia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Ideologically, socialism is a broad concept and as such the discussion of its many definitions is irrelevant for this work. What is relevant are the effects that the birth of socialism in Yugoslavia had on its national minority groups and how it advanced their sense of the right to political participation. Upon the creation of the Kingdom of SHS, different social-democratic parties that existed during the Austro-Hungarian rule opted for their unification. This idea was well accepted by all such parties and/or associations across the newly formed country. A single party was formed in April of 1919 under the name Socialist Labour Party of Yugoslavia. It soon gained prominence in many towns and villages, especially in 1920. The movement was based on the propagation of different socio-economic ideas based on social ownership and democratic control of the means of production. Social ownership extended to include collective ownership and other forms of public collective ownership. Source: Harrington, M., 2011. *Socialism: Past and Future*. Arcade Publishing.

among eleven others who signed this important decision.<sup>332</sup> ~~Yet, the Jewish role in the propagation of socialist ideals did not end with this, but included other activities on all levels.~~ The official gazette of the social-democratic party of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which was published under the name “*Glas slobode*”,<sup>333</sup> and more particularly its edition from June 29, 1909, contained a list of its financial supporters, many of whom were Jews. ~~The Jewish involvement in this action demonstrated their particular political zeal and connectedness to the eminent propagators of socialism in Bosnia.~~ The fact that much of the money for this cause was collected in factories and among common workers, demonstrates that even the poorest Jewish families showed strong political interest and orientation during this period. What is more, the report of the Central Worker’s Assembly of BiH, which was sent to the 5<sup>th</sup> Congress held on July 9, 1911, listed some 6068 members of the worker’s union in BiH, out of which 166 were Jews. Percentage wise, this represented a significant portion of Bosnia’s population of approximately 1, 900.000, 12.000 of which were Jews.<sup>334</sup> Furthermore, considering that the workers’ movement of the time was under ruthless pressure and control by the regime, but also the fact that, until then, the Jewish communities in BiH showed blind allegiance and loyalty to the ruling parties, ~~we can with certainty~~ it can be concluded that the level of political awareness among Bosnian Jews now reached its climax.

The reasons for this gradual, yet impetuous political involvement of Bosnian Jews were manifold. ~~Now only did World War I create socio-economic hardships, but the events that triggered popular uprisings occurred so intensely that it became very difficult for anybody to simply observe these changes from aside. Common citizens suffered the gravest consequences, facing poverty, hunger and disease, but also inflation, political speculations and numerous social limitations. All of these factors exacerbated the already fragile socio-economic status of ordinary men, and it was thus to no wonder that the Russian revolution of 1917 echoed so loudly in the Yugoslav Kingdom.~~ At this time, the conditions under which the Bosnian Jewish communities dwelled across the country were in no way different than that of their compatriots. Hence, the

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<sup>332</sup> Finci, M., 1966. *U avangardi društvenog progresu*. In: *Spomenica - 400 godina od dolaska Jevreja u BiH*. Sarajevo. p. 194.

<sup>333</sup> Eng. “Voice of Freedom”.

<sup>334</sup> Finci, M., 1966. *U avangardi društvenog progresu*. In: *Spomenica - 400 godina od dolaska Jevreja u BiH*. Sarajevo. p. 194.



social revolution hit them just as powerfully, forcing them to enter the revolution through the front door. The movement echoed not just among the poor, but spread across the entire society. ~~At this time, the~~ The engagement of several prominent Jewish activists and professionals surfaced to the top. Among them was Mojsije Zon who worked in the Central Committee of the Socio-Democratic Party of BiH. In May of 1919, alongside well-known authors of that time, such as Miroslav Krleža, August Cesarc and Filip Filipović, he published an article entitled „*Through Social Revolution towards National Liberation*”.<sup>335</sup> The article was printed in 15.000 copies, and Zon was chosen as a member of the Central Council of the newly formed Socialist Worker’s Party of Yugoslavia in Belgrade.

~~However, the revolutionist movements were soon targeted against by the royal government, which, fearing the possible consequences of the national uprising, was becoming unstable.~~ In order to protect itself, the government ordered the arrests of the members of these organizations.<sup>336</sup>, ~~and Dr. Zon who was arrested in May, stayed in prison for four months, the longest of all revolutionaries.~~<sup>337</sup>—Yet, the anti-regime activities continued with an even more arduous support from Bosnian Jews. At this time, the once right-leaning supporters of Zionist and national-socialist ideas began to switch their ideology and openly critique “*Poale cion*”,<sup>338</sup> which developed a vibrant political activity, notably on municipal levels. This organization was probably the only association with certain characteristics of a political party, since in March of 1920 it actively participated in the pre-election campaign under the parole that all Jews of the Kingdom of SHS, regardless of their social class, should vote for candidates from the Jewish

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<sup>335</sup> Ibid, p. 195.

<sup>336</sup> ~~Pinto, A., 1987. *Jevreji Sarajeva i Bosne i Hercegovine*. Sarajevo: Veselin Masleša. p. 158.~~

<sup>337</sup> ~~Pinto, A., 1987. *Jevreji Sarajeva i Bosne i Hercegovine*. Sarajevo: Veselin Masleša. p. 158.~~

<sup>338</sup> The Jewish Socialist Workers' Society "Poale Cion" was established in Sarajevo on October 19, 1919. Initially, it represented a pseudo socialist hybrid organization with the elements typical for political, trade union and humanitarian associations. The members fought for a shift of capitalism into socialism, promoted ideas of class peace, solidarity and political monolithism of Jews, and the organization of a Jewish state in Palestine. They also wanted to improve the socialist and national consciousness of workers by promoting an unacceptable thesis that class opposites are unknown to the Jewish national community, and engaged themselves in the area of the social protection of its unemployed and ill members. In that way the Society set the basis for political collaboration between Jewish bourgeois classes. Acting exclusively within the Jewish national framework, this organization stayed closed for members of other groups. Their social base originated within the working class. After February 3, 1929 its activity was forbidden and since then it has not appeared in archive documents. Source: Miličić, B., 1985. *Radnička klasa Sarajeva 1919 -1941 godine*. Sarajevo. pp. 223-225 and 415.



list.<sup>339</sup> However, their attempt was unsuccessful. The Jewish members of the Socialist Workers' Party of Yugoslavia called upon all Jews to vote for members of this party, hence demonstrating a strong and persistent political will which was hard to shatter by nationalistic and religiously strained rhetoric.

The end of 1920 marked the end of a turbulent period in Yugoslavia, during which the progressive working class and youth succeeded in their attempts to create more democratic and humane social conditions. Nevertheless, the regime was not inclined to allow any further actions which would destabilize the country, a stance which became even firmer after 59 members of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (*Komunistička partija Jugoslavije* or KPJ), formerly known as the Socialist Worker's Party, refused to give an oath to the king and recognize the monarchy. ~~The period that followed was marked by a series of events across the Kingdom, and can be summarized as twenty perturbing years of regime induced tyranny during which popular working masses demobilized. However, within~~Within the Jewish communities several new politically oriented organizations were formed under the umbrella of cultural, humanitarian or sports programmes, which served as a cover for their underground activities. One of those was certainly a Sarajevo-based organization called "Matatja".

### ***"Matatja" – The Expression of Jewish Youth Workers at the Dawn of World War II***

Formed in Sarajevo in 1923, "Matatja" was a forum for young Jewish workers to address their specific needs for a vibrant and intensive social life. ~~Initially, this organization was primarily educational in character, offering numerous sports and education workshops. However, at the end of the first decade of its existence, "Matatja" numbered almost 650<sup>340</sup> members and became one of the focal points of Jewish social life in Sarajevo.~~ "Matatja" did not only attract Jews, but a number of young workers from other ethnic groups who also joined in. Thus, it was not surprising that "Matatja" started serving as an underground arena under which the KPJ managed to achieve a strong influence. Hence, "Matatja" became the carrier of the progressive thought and political action that occurred in the 1930s.

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<sup>339</sup> Ibid, pp. 223-225.

<sup>340</sup> ~~Finci, M., 1966. *U avangardi društvenog progressa*. In: *Spomenica 400 godina od dolaska Jevreja u BiH*. Sarajevo, p. 200.~~

After a well-known contravention of the partisan (communist) organization in 1936, when several members of “Matatja” were arrested (14 of them were also members of KPJ),<sup>341</sup> the general public was confused. ~~Yet, the populous masses continued to support anti-regime actions.~~ “Matatja” was at the centre of these events, despite vigilant police control of its activities.<sup>342</sup> In the fall of 1936, even before its members were accused of anti-regime actions, “Matatja” created a whole new activity calendar, more diverse than ever before, including both internal and external actions. About 120 young boys and girls participated in these workshops and lecture series held in the evenings, focusing on studying social development and Marxism. A series of public speeches by notable communist writers and activists of the time were also organized, all with the aim of increasing the political awareness and knowledge of the young Jewish working force, ~~but also other groups. Notwithstanding its publicly open activities, the police members kept a register of names of all participants during these events, while organizers were regularly called upon to report to the police. But, the work of “Matatja” continued and became even more politically charged.~~

In December of 1938, when there was still no clear political orientation among the citizens of Sarajevo, the work of “Matatja” turned, more than ever, towards political goals. It was at this time that the organizational culture board reached an independent decision to fully engage its most active members in the forthcoming elections. The work of “Matatja’s” members was to be executed together with other opposition forces that existed in Sarajevo during this time. Dr. Braco Poljokan included around thirty young workers, members of “Matatja” in the joint opposition forces. They stayed engaged until the last arrangements in the polling places.<sup>343</sup> This movement that occurred among Jewish youth had a strong influence on other members of the Bosnian Jewish community, as evidenced by the number of votes that they received during the elections. Soon after, however, the work of “Matatja” was banned by the regime and it was not until a year later that its activities resumed. Following this event, the number of members grew to over 1100 people, while the work of “Matatja” became increasingly associated with the activities of local communist party organizations and the League of Communist Youth of Yugoslavia

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<sup>341</sup> Ibid, p. 201.

<sup>342</sup> Several police units were specialized in monitoring the activities of “Matatja”. They even sat at dance balls every Sunday, while two or three agents were present during other activities. Source: Ibid, p. 201.

<sup>343</sup> [Gordiejew, P. B., 1999. \*Voices of Yugoslav Jewry\*. Albany: State University of New York Press. pp. 64-65.](#)

(Savez komunističke omladine Jugoslavije or SKOJ), until it finally ceased to exist in April of 1941.<sup>344</sup>

## Political Activism of Bosnian Jews and Their Final Fate at the Beginning of World War II

On the eve of World War II, the activities of progressive social forces went out of their usual scope; they widened and spread beyond youth organizations and other politically oriented associations. ~~The masses mobilized quickly, while different political activities ventured even in the countryside, hence increasing the number of popular supporters. Regardless of their political party membership, the new supporters surpassed the number of members in different socialist organizations, mainly because their rhetoric found its basis in the work of KPJ. An overall progressive and anti fascist orientation was now omnipresent across the country. Thus, this period marked a significant boost in youth movements that occurred not only in schools and urban centres, but also in villages across Bosnia and Herzegovina. The dispersing popularity of these activities did not circumnavigate the Jewish communities, who now joined in even larger numbers.~~

———The Jews of Bosnia and Herzegovina, now finally determined in their attempts to side with the communists and social progressivists of the time, openly participated in anti-regime activities that took place across the country.<sup>345</sup> ~~Again, The-the~~ core of the Jewish force again lay in the hands of its progressive youth. The activities undertaken by Jewish youth culminated in the period from December 1937 until December 1939, ~~when Jewish students, together with their compatriots, wrote three letters critiquing the social situation in the country induced by the regime-led politics. Consequently, on December 1, 1937 students from Bosnia and Herzegovina published their first letter in which they openly attacked the formation of the Bloc of People's Treaty (signed between the Agricultural, Democratic, Radical and Croatian Peasants' Parties). The second letter came on December 1, 1939 when students from Belgrade and Zagreb signed a letter critiquing the new unpopular working policies in the country, and demanding an adequate resolution of the Yugoslav national question, including a call for the autonomy of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The third letter, also written in 1939, came from Sarajevo and Bosnia and~~

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<sup>344</sup> Ibid, p. 65.

<sup>345</sup> Tauber, E., 2013. *Ilustrovani leksikon Judaizma: Istorija, religija i običaji*. Sarajevo: Historijski arhiv.

~~Herzegovina. The letter was signed by 497 students, 34 of whom were Jews from Sarajevo, Tuzla, Brčko, Mostar, Banja Luka, Bihać, Višegrad and Travnik.<sup>346</sup>-All of these events illustrate a clear Jewish determination to spread the ideas of freedom and equal rights for all social classes, and a final ideological decision to side with the revolutionist approaches of the progressive socialist movement in Bosnia and Herzegovina.~~

In those final years of peace, the political renaissance of Bosnian Jews reached its peak. Not only did Jews mature politically, but managed to form their own ideological determinations, siding with the progressive socialist ideas that so rapidly emerged across Yugoslavia.<sup>347</sup> However, the destiny of many Bosnian Jews changed in the last years before the beginning of World War II, when the protected regime of Prince Paul of Yugoslavia, in order to side with Germany, started discriminating against them. ~~This political occurrence marked the beginning of the “Jewish Question” in Bosnia. On October 5, 1940 two discriminatory decisions were reached –the first one prohibited Jews to handle human food, while the second regulated the application procedure for Jewish students who enrolled at universities and high schools.~~ Soon after, Bosnia and Herzegovina was occupied by pro-German "Independent Croatian State" (Nezavisna država Hrvatska or NDH), and was divided into two occupation zones. ~~To no surprise did~~ Bosnian Jews ~~find~~ found themselves, almost entirely, within the occupation zone of the Nazi Third Reich, while only a few hundred were in the region occupied by Fascist Italy. Considering the fact that anti-Jewish policies in Italy were much less stringent than in the Third Reich, some two thousand Bosnian Jews fled to the Italian occupation zone. However, the majority of them were later arrested and executed by the German forces.<sup>348</sup> Those who survived remained loyal to Partisans ~~(who were communist). Thanks to the Partisan Liberation Movement, some two thousand Jews of Bosnia and Herzegovina endured the occupation. Of the pre-war 68.000 Jews who inhabited the entire territory of Yugoslavia, only 6853 were registered in March of 1948 when the first post-war population census took place.<sup>349</sup>-All the same, Jewish political activism, along with~~

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<sup>346</sup> Pinto, A., 1987. *Jevreji Sarajeva i Bosne i Heregovine*. Sarajevo: Veselin Masleša. p. 159.

<sup>347</sup> Gordiejew, P. B., 1999. *Voices of Yugoslav Jewry*. Albany: State University of New York Press. pp. 65-66.

<sup>348</sup> Kreso, M., 1995. *Konačno rješenje jevrejskog pitanja u BiH u II svjetskom ratu*. Sefard 92: Zbornik radova. Sarajevo. pp. 185-199.

<sup>349</sup> Imamović, M., 1995. *Položaj Jevreja u Srbiji i Kraljevini Jugoslaviji*. Sefard 92: Zbornik radova. Sarajevo. pp. 65-79.

~~their cultural and traditional worlds, was swept away in the bloody atrocities of World War II. Consequently, those Jews who remained in Tito's Yugoslavia stayed loyal to and -the communist ideology, just as they were some two decades prior to their final extermination from 1941-1945.~~

## **PART II**

### **The Socio-Political Life of Polish National Minority in Bosnia and Herzegovina from 1895 until 1946**

#### **The Arrival**

Unlike the Jewish communities which settled across Bosnia and Herzegovina even before the Ottoman arrival to this central Balkan region, the arrival of Poles, alongside Germans, Austrians, Hungarians and other groups was a politically planned move on behalf of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which reined most of Central Europe and the Balkans at the dawn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Yet, the development of the socio-political life of Poles who arrived to the Bosnian lands in the final years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century cannot be examined as an isolated pattern of historical events, but rather as a series of mutually and closely related circumstances that aroused prior and subsequent to their arrival to the backyard of the vast Austro-Hungarian realm. The Polish advent to Bosnia and Herzegovina did not occur immediately upon the Austro-Hungarian arrival in 1878, but more than a decade and a half later, when the socio-political and particularly economic conditions allowed Habsburg rulers to premeditate a demographic change in its Balkan territories.

When in 1869 the destiny of Balkan countries was tailored by the highest officials of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, its Minister of foreign affairs, Gyula Andrásy and Benjámín Káallay, a leading expert on the history of South Slavs, the authorities were reluctant and wary towards the idea of occupying Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, the external and internal political circumstances forced the Habsburgs to keep Bosnia and Herzegovina under a special governing status, and the country was governed jointly by Cisleithania (Austria) and the Lands of the Crown of Saint Stephen (Hungary) through a joint Ministry of Finance. This arrangement remained until 1908, when Bosnia and Herzegovina was finally annexed, hence becoming a part of Austria-Hungary. Naturally, the socio-political and economic circumstances changed radically during this period and had a significant impact on local inhabitants, as it was precisely during this period that most of BiH's current seventeen minorities inhabited the area.

Consequently, in order to encourage immigration from Central and Eastern Europe into the Balkan territories, the Austro-Hungarian government started offering special privileges and stimulations to foreigners who wished to inhabit the rural areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina. These beneficial measures resulted in the process of “external colonization”,<sup>350</sup> which by 1905 brought some 10.000 Poles to BiH<sup>351</sup> whom settled mostly in north-western Bosnia.

### *The Arrival of Poles to Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Early Social Life*

As already described, the arrival of Poles to Bosnia and Herzegovina is inevitably connected to the Austro-Hungarian project of organized migrations. Not surprisingly, the biggest interest in this policy emerged among the poor and lower middle class peasants and servants, but also among those Poles who did not own any land in Poland.<sup>352</sup> ~~It is interesting to note that there were two culturally distinct groups of Poles who settled Bosnia at this time—the first one was a Polish-speaking, Catholic community, while the second one consisted of Ukrainian-speaking, Orthodox immigrants, known as Ruthenians. However, m~~Most of these families emigrated from Galicia,<sup>353</sup> and although they did not share the same religious and linguistic backgrounds<sup>354</sup>,

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<sup>350</sup> In the existing historiography, the motives for external colonization are interpreted differently. The official stance of the Austro-Hungarian government was that external colonization was a positive process which was introduced in order to improve the agricultural production and development of this backward region. However, it can be claimed that external colonization was a politically planned and cautious move on behalf of the government, which hoped to acquire more political support from inside the occupied lands. Hence, it is necessary to consider all other aspects of this policy. For the purposes of this dissertation, I will claim that the reasons were both economic and political.

<sup>351</sup> *Izveštaj o upravi Bosne i Hercegovine.*, 1906. Zagreb: Zajedničko ministarstvo financija. p. 9.

<sup>352</sup> Zlodi, Z., 2005. *Rusini/Ukrajinci u Hrvatskoj – Etape doseljavanja i problem imena*. Scrinia Slavonica 5. p. 408.

<sup>353</sup> Galicia or Halychyna is situated in Central Europe and currently stretches along the border between Poland and Ukraine. The center of modern-day Galicia is situated in western Ukraine. There is an overlap between Galicia and Ruthenia, a cross-border region inhabited by different nationalities, including the Rusyn or Ruthenian minority, who principally inhabited the Transcarpathian Region of southwestern Ukraine. This is why the Ruthenian (Rusyn) minority was often referred to as Polish minority (such as was the case in BiH).

Source: Markovits, A.S and Sysyn, F.E. eds., 1982. *Nationbuilding and the Politics of Nationalism: Essays on Austrian Galicia*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

<sup>354</sup> ~~It is interesting to note that there were two~~Two culturally distinct groups of Poles ~~who~~ settled Bosnia at this time – the first one was a Polish-speaking, Catholic community, while the second one consisted of Ukrainian-speaking, Orthodox immigrants, known as Ruthenians.

Bosnians simply referred to both groups as Galicians.<sup>355</sup> The biggest influx of Poles to Bosnia and Herzegovina occurred in the period from 1890 until 1898, although they continued to settle in somewhat smaller numbers up until the onset of World War I.<sup>356</sup> As mentioned previously, the new settlers found their home in the north-west of the country, and primarily formed their communities in the cities (~~at that time known as kotar~~) of Prnjavor, Derвента, Banja Luka, Bosanska Gradiška, Bosanski Novi and Prijedor.<sup>357</sup> ~~A smaller number of Poles, whose entrance to Bosnia was blocked due to an epidemic, permanently settled in Slavonia (Croatia).~~ As historical evidence tells us, the newly arrived Polish community in Bosnia settled in, but mostly around these towns, forming their own villages. ~~Several families moved to villages where there was a small percentage of Serbs, and in rare cases Croats, but still, most villages were Polish, consisting of “colonists” who formed twelve compact colonies around this area.~~<sup>358</sup>

Hence, the early social life of Polish communities who inhabited northwest Bosnia was closely connected to the land that they received from the Austro-Hungarian ~~government, government. or that they bought from Muslims and Serbs who, as previously mentioned, escaped the Habsburg rule.~~ The so called “clean” Polish villages<sup>359</sup> were formed mainly to the northeast of Banja Luka and around Vrbas and Ukrina river valleys. As noted by Maria Dombrowska,<sup>360</sup> a famous Polish writer who arrived to Bosnia in 1934 in order to write a report on the Polish minority in this country and upon the order of the Polish government, “Poles settled in some of the most fruitful soils in Yugoslavia...It is true that some Polish villages are

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<sup>355</sup> *Rusini i Ukrajinici u Republici Hrvatskoj (1991-1995)*, 1995. Zagreb: Savez Rusina i Ukrajinaca Republike Hrvatske. p. 33

<sup>356</sup> Zlodi, Z., 2005. *Rusini/Ukrajinci u Hrvatskoj – Etape doseljavanja i problem imena*. Scrinia Slavonica 5. p. 410.

<sup>357</sup> It is interesting to note that the majority of Bosnian Poles who still live in Bosnia and Herzegovina remained in these cities. Today, their biggest communities are in Banja Luka, Prnjavor and Prijedor, as well as the surrounding villages.

<sup>358</sup> ~~See works of Vranješ Šoljan, B., (2006), Zlodi (2005) and Drljača (1976).~~

<sup>359</sup> The term refers to villages that were populated exclusively by Poles. No other ethnic groups (Serbs, Croat, Muslims or other national minorities) lived in these villages. This terminology was commonly used throughout the historical documents on the Polish communities in BiH, hence my opting for it in this dissertation. See Vranješ-Šoljan (2006), Drljača (1976), Sombolevski (199-). The term was also used by Maria Dombrowska (1935) in her work that I refer to in the main text.

<sup>360</sup> Maria Dabrowska (Dombrowska) was a Polish writer and publicist. She wrote dramas, literary critiques and stories for children and youth.



situated in remote hilly areas (where even God said ‘good night’).<sup>361</sup> Yet, in the early days of Polish settlement in Bosnia, the living conditions were good. ~~Despite hard labour and some pioneer work, They~~ were able to afford their own land, a trend which continued even after the end of the Austro-Hungarian rule in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Thus, we can conclude that their social status remained, more or less unchanged even after the creation of the Kingdom of SHS, a trait which was due to their closely knit communal life and an extremely slow process of assimilation.<sup>362</sup> ~~However, as new generations emerged and the socio-political conditions in the Kingdom altered, the status and activities of this minority group inevitably changed, resulting in steady social and political involvement in a country which, by this time, they called their home.~~

~~Lastly, it is essential to note that on the eve of World War I, but also immediately after it, a large number of Bosnian Poles went through the process of so called “secondary immigration”, when they mainly moved to the United States in order to “earn money”.<sup>363</sup> However, most of these families returned to their Bosnian villages after a short period, and as Dombrowska notes “they claimed that the sojourn in the United States of America did not bring the benefits that they expected”.<sup>364</sup> The reasons for this are manifold, but one could claim that it was mostly the world economic depression that hit all the countries that contributed to their dissatisfaction and ultimately the decision to return to Bosnia. Despite this, the Polish community in Bosnia and Herzegovina was much better off than their compatriots in Poland. Moreover, Poles were treated relatively well by the new royal government of SHS, and as Dombrowska writes she “never~~

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<sup>361</sup> Drljača, D., 1976. *Marija Dombrowska o Poljacima u Bosni*. Zbornik za slavistiku Matice srpske, no. 10. p. 135.

<sup>362</sup> Park and Burgess (1924) suggest that assimilation is a process that calls for “secondary and primary group contact”, whereby the extent to which an individual or a group can participate in primary group’s activities serves as a measure of assimilation. They further emphasize that assimilation is dependent on both internal and external factors, which means that assimilation requires identification with the out-group. Similarly, Woolston (1945) argues that assimilation takes place when “an individual who enters into (social) relations absorbs social meaning from them and transmits its significance to others”. Like Park and Burgess, Woolston also emphasizes the importance of internal change, rather than only external change. Johnson (1963) further classifies assimilation as possibly ‘external assimilation’ (changes which occur in order to manifest similarities in appearance and manners) or ‘subjective assimilation’ (psychological life of the migrant). These two types of assimilation can occur at varying degrees. See bibliography for the works of Park and Burgess (1924), Woolston (1945) and Johnson (1963). Considering the fact that both Jews and Poles are autochthon minorities and that the process of their assimilation occurred during the Ottoman Empire and Austro-Hungarian reign in BiH respectively, this term is out of scope of this thesis as it does not, in any way, denote their current status in the society nor does it influence their political participation.

<sup>363</sup> ~~Ibid, p. 136.~~

<sup>364</sup> ~~Ibid, p. 137.~~

heard a sad story about the confiscation of cows, furniture and so on, something that cannot escape your ear when you go to any larger village in Poland".<sup>365</sup> Despite their acceptance and privileged treatment during the Austro-Hungarian reign, Bosnian Poles never fully realized, at least not in this period, the benefits of joint labour and cooperation with local communities. However, as new generations emerged and the socio-political conditions in the Kingdom altered, the status and activities of this minority group inevitably changed, resulting in a wider discontent, but also steady social and political involvement in a country which, by this time, they called their home.

### **Poles in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the Interwar Period (1918-1939)**

Despite the fact that they were dispersed around Central Europe, Poles who inhabited the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, as well as those who dwelled under the German and Russian empires, respectively, suffered grave losses during World War I. When in 1918 the Great War finally reached its end, the Allied leaders agreed to proclaim Poland a republic. The event occurred on 22 November of the same year, mainly with the aim of creating a sanitary corridor on the way to Soviet Russia. These events were followed with much attention, while Bosnian Poles were elated about the fact that their kin-state was finally independent. Hence, the political transformation that occurred in Poland immediately after World War I was wholeheartedly approved by Poles living in the Balkan Peninsula. Regardless of such favourable political instances for Poland, Polish communities that were scattered across the newly established Kingdom showed no interest in opting out of Yugoslavia and returning to their homeland.<sup>366</sup>

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<sup>365</sup> Vranješ Šoljan, B., 2006. *Maria Szumska Dabrowska o poljskim doseljenicima u Bosni 1935*. Zagreb, 2006. p. 961.

<sup>366</sup> While Poland faced numerous border issues, notably with its neighbours, in February of 1919 it proclaimed a war against Soviet Russia. Such political circumstances, along with the fact that Galicia, the homeland of Bosnian Poles, still remained an open question, only exacerbated the whole picture and offered no secure place for return. Still, despite their unwillingness to return, some Poles were eradicated from Bosnia, but principally those fervent supporters of the Austro-Hungarian regime in Bosnia. However, the number of Poles in Bosnia and Herzegovina increased in the subsequent period despite their forced migration and significant losses during World War I. Source: Drljača, D., 1976. *Marija Dombrovska o Poljacima u Bosni*. Zbornik za slavistiku Matice srpske, no. 10. p. 136-137.

~~Regardless of such favourable political instances for Poland, Polish communities that were scattered across the newly established Kingdom showed no interest in opting out of Yugoslavia and returning to their homeland. The reasons were, again, of political nature. While Poland faced numerous border issues, notably with its neighbours, in February of 1919 it proclaimed a somewhat adventurous war against Soviet Russia. Such political circumstances, along with the fact that Galicia, the homeland of Bosnian Poles, still remained an open question, only exacerbated the whole picture and offered no secure place for return. Still, despite their unwillingness to return, some Poles were eradicated from Bosnia, but principally those fervent supporters of the Austro-Hungarian regime in Bosnia. However, the number of Poles in Bosnia and Herzegovina increased in the subsequent period despite their forced migration and significant losses during World War I.~~

Hence, it can be said that the Great War neither alternated their geographical position nor undermined political representation of Bosnian Poles. Most of them remained concentrated in and around the city of Banja Luka, where 9582 Poles out of total 10.705 still lived.<sup>367</sup> ~~However, most of them were rural inhabitants who formed Polish colonies, among them two relatively large villages of Donji and Gornji Bakinci. The rest lived in the so-called “mixed villages”, inhabited mainly by Serbs. In the period from 1921 until 1931, when the second population census took place, the number of members of the Polish national minority in Yugoslavia increased by 3873.<sup>368</sup> Yet, despite their relatively significant numbers, the Polish national minority in Yugoslavia, including Bosnia and Herzegovina, benefited only from a few privileges that were granted to it by constitutional national minority laws of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Hence, Poles remained relatively conservative, and concentrated mainly on social and political engagements which took place within their own community<sup>369</sup>.~~

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<sup>367</sup> Sobolevski, M., 199-. *Poljska nacionalna manjina u Jugoslaviji tijekom Drugog svjetskog rata*. Zagreb: Centar za politološka istraživanja. p. 376.

<sup>368</sup> ~~In 1921, the total number of Poles living in Yugoslavia was 14.764. This number increased once more by approximately 2000 people by 1941. Source: Ibid, p. 376.~~

<sup>369</sup> See works of Dabrowska (1935), Drljača (1976), Sobolevski (199-) and Vranješ-Šoljan (2006).

## *The Political and Social Status of Poles in the Kingdom of SHS*

After the end of the Austro-Hungarian reign in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the country's inclusion into the Kingdom, all of its citizens, including Poles, were granted Yugoslav citizenship. According to 1935 data of the General Polish Consulate in Zagreb, 80 percent of Poles were citizens of Yugoslavia. The same source indicates that Polish colonists were forced to accept Yugoslav citizenship, a process which was made possible through a population census, after which Poles automatically became Yugoslavs. ~~Nevertheless, one should keep in mind the fact that Polish government of the time was not particularly inclined towards this south-Slavic state, and hence considered that such "official" reports might have contained a demanded dose of disinclination towards the country in which, despite all of the above, a large Polish minority remained. Moreover, this indoctrinated opinion could not be compared to the real life status of Poles in Bosnia and Herzegovina, since according to several historical accounts, Poles opted for Yugoslav citizenship out of purely practical reasons.~~<sup>370</sup>—The decision to claim Yugoslav citizenship significantly contributed to the improvement of their political status within a foreign country, but more importantly lessened ~~(but did not completely eliminate) the harsh~~ dictatorial dealings that were practiced on foreign citizens during the authoritarian years. ~~What is true, however, is that Yugoslav citizenship complicated the activities of different Polish actors in Yugoslavia and allowed the royal authoritarian government to easily differentiate between colonists (and not just Poles, in this case) and locals.~~

Yet, several other historical factors complicated the socio-political inclusion of Poles and negatively influenced their perception by the locals. ~~As closed a set of communities as they initially were, even the younger generations of Bosnia-born Poles showed a certain dose of reluctance towards local inhabitants, primarily Serbs. One of the major arguments that emerged among the Polish communities in the interwar period was that the colonization process was not Polish, but rather an Austro-Hungarian project, due to which Poles were negatively viewed by the locals and even considered the main culprits for the arrival of foreigners to their homeland. On the other hand,~~ Poles showed exceptional grief when it came to the "old times", and as several authors note (Kovalik, Dombrowska) "Poles who came to Bosnia and who lived there for

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<sup>370</sup> Drljača, D., 1976. *Marija Dombrowska o Poljacima u Bosni*. Zbornik za slavistiku Matice srpske, no. 10. p. 138.

several years always remembered that they were a respected group, privileged by the government and able to participate in politics”.<sup>371</sup> However, these claims demonstrate very low level of political awareness among Poles living in the Kingdom - not only did they fail to realize a drastic change in the socio-political circumstances that occurred with the fall of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and also hit the locals, but missed the chance to acknowledge the fact that they could not, under any conditions, be treated equally under the new authoritarian government, and as well as they were during the Austro-Hungarian rule. So low was the political participation and awareness of Poles, that most of them, even in the 1920s and 1930s, still mournfully remembered Austro-Hungary and Franz Joseph, without even recognizing the many liberties and freedoms that they were now able to enjoy (and more so than their compatriots in Poland) in Yugoslavia.<sup>372</sup>

But the conditions for foreign settlers worsened in 1929, when King Alexander suspended the constitution and established a centralized government. King's authoritarian government and its police forces often treated foreigners, including Poles, in ways which were borderline crimes<sup>373</sup>. ~~Even after Alexander's assassination in Marseille in 1934, Serbs remained nervous towards Poles, Hungarians and Italians, seeing them as a potential threat to the regime. It was immediately after the King's assassination that village police was put on call, and as honorary Counsel Artur Burda, a denoted Pole who spent his life in Banja Luka, noted “even Serbian civilians, living close by foreign villages are armed”.<sup>374</sup> Hence, besides official investigations, incarcerations, revisions and weapon searching, internal tensions were not uncommon and included different assaults, from personal attacks to house searching. The basis for such open hatred probably came from the fact that all three foreign communities had closely knit ties with their homeland, but many other external political factors that shattered Yugoslavia during this time certainly played a role in raising the level of mistrust among common people.~~

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<sup>371</sup> Ibid, p. 138.

<sup>372</sup> Vranješ-Šoljan, B., 2006. *Maria Szumska Dabrowska o poljskim doseljenicima u Bosni 1935*. Zagreb, 2006. p. 962.

<sup>373</sup> Ibid, p. 963.

<sup>374</sup> ~~Drljača, D., 1976. *Marija Dombrowska o Poljacima u Bosni*. Zbornik za slavistiku Matice srpske, no. 10. p. 139.~~

~~The inner tensions among the locals exacerbated during the 1930s, and the differences between Poles and locals now surfaced. Not only was this situation complicated by the fact that the Polish community still remained almost exclusively isolated from the local population, but also that Poles refused to make a difference between common locals and the government, claiming that all signs of intolerance came from Yugoslavs and Yugoslavia. Dombrowska states that Polish peasants in Bosnia believed that government's treatment of foreign settlers rested on inherited Serbian trait to prosecute people, while common Serbs hated them because they were jealous: "A Polish peasant believes that he is the driver of agricultural development among Serbs, shouting his opinion wherever he goes."<sup>375</sup> Moreover, Poles claimed that before their arrival "Bosnians only knew how to grow corn and take care of the cattle. It was only when Poles came that they learned how to grow cereals and use the plough...Serbs were jealous of the expanding Polish villages and of the fact that Poles were able to buy land."<sup>376</sup> However, it is clear that these claims were very superficial and originated in a clear misunderstanding of local cultures and national mentalities in Yugoslavia. Again, the problem lied in the fact that Poles were an isolated community which poorly cooperated with the locals. Dombrowska also noted that these were probably isolated cases, since she encountered many positive signs of cooperation on both sides. Furthermore, Poles were relatively close to German catholic community, mostly because of the same religious origin and the fact that they themselves were very religious. Yet, they remained relatively politically inactive and uninformed.~~

~~—————~~ Not surprisingly, most These new conditions made Poles idealized Poland and as they believed that their home country could help them with even the most basic issues, such as the right to use the forest land that was granted to them by Austro-Hungarians.<sup>377</sup> Dombrowska states that "Their distant land looks like paradise, without crisis and problems, which they, on the other hand, have to fight wherever they go."<sup>378</sup> This claim demonstrates that Poles did not understand the political relations between Poland and Yugoslavia at that time, since many of

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<sup>375</sup> ~~Ibid, p. 139.~~

<sup>376</sup> ~~Ibid, p. 139.~~

<sup>377</sup> Vranješ-Šoljan, B., 2006. *Maria Szumska Dabrowska o poljskim doseljenicima u Bosni 1935*. Zagreb, 2006. p. 963.

<sup>378</sup> Vranješ-Šoljan, B., 2006. *Maria Szumska Dabrowska o poljskim doseljenicima u Bosni 1935*. Zagreb, 2006. p. 963. ~~Ibid, p. 963.~~

them believed that the better Poland behaved towards Yugoslavia, the better will Yugoslavia treat its Poles. In the eyes of Poles, Poland was a superpower, a fact that, in their opinion, Yugoslavia refused to acknowledge. Nevertheless, the Polish community in Bosnia and Herzegovina remained a vibrant one, and regardless of the fact that they were becoming assimilated and spoke the local language, they still preserved their own tradition. The biggest problem for Poles in Bosnia throughout this period was an almost complete absence of Polish intelligentsia<sup>379</sup>, a factor that significantly undermined their political involvement in Yugoslav, and consequently all inter-state matters between Poland and their host nation.

The raising national awareness of Bosnian Poles and their ever closer connectedness to their fatherland abruptly ended on 1 September 1939, when German Nazi forces attacked a Polish harbour city of Gdansk. It was at this time, at the dawn of the Second World War, that the political awareness of Bosnian Poles increased. This emerging political engagement, although induced from the outside and spurred by events in their homeland, later significantly influenced the course of their ideological orientation and political behaviour in Bosnia and Herzegovina, notably during the wartime period from 1941 until 1945.<sup>380</sup>

### **The Social and Political Life of Polish Communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina during World War II (1939-1945)**

The early days of World War II found Bosnian Poles in the process of recruiting young volunteers who were to fight on the Polish front and defend their motherland. Nevertheless, following the German attack, the country capitulated after only thirty five days, leaving the Polish youth in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The political circumstances in Poland were now rapidly alternating, and by mid-September of 1939 the whole country was encircled by adversary forces. ~~Only Romania, which shared a small, yet a significant border crossing with Poland, was neutral towards its status, a circumstance which allowed approximately 10.000 Polish soldiers to transfer to Western Europe.~~ At that time, around 3000 Polish soldiers wanted to cross the territory of the

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<sup>379</sup> Lis, T. J., 2016. *Iz Bosni u Poljsku*. Bolesławiecki Ośrodek Kultury – Międzynarodowe Centrum Ceramiki, p. 64-65.

<sup>380</sup> Balta, I., 2001. Kolonizacija istočne Hrvatske u Drugom svjetskom ratu. In: *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, 33/2001, no. 2.



Kingdom of Yugoslavia, a process which was aided by the Polish national minority from this region. A huge amount of essential food and clothing, as well as money was collected by Poles from Banja Luka, but also from mixed Polish-Serb villages.<sup>381</sup> At this point, an obvious and newly emerging cooperation of Polish minorities with local inhabitants, notably Serbs, significantly marked the course of Polish inclusion into the political and military operations in the period that was to follow.<sup>382</sup>

Towards the end of the 1930s, several factors, all of which were of social and political nature, caused some notable changes within the Polish minority in Bosnia and Herzegovina. ~~On one hand, the altering agricultural conditions and lack of arable land in the areas which they inhabited, forced a number of Polish families to sell their property and move to Croatia, more precisely to Slavonia. The political forces, however, were much more potent.~~ When in April 1941, in the so called April War, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia capitulated; the stirring territorial changes did not permit for further tight spiritual and personal connectedness of the Polish national minority in Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>383</sup> The Bosnian territory that was initially inhabited by Poles now became a part of the Independent Croatian State (NDH), jointly created by the Third Reich and the Kingdom of Italy.

This newly created state primarily encompassed Bosnia and Herzegovina, but also a large part of Croatia; hence its territory was inhabited by some 6.5 million people.<sup>384</sup> As for national minorities, notably Poles, the situation was considerably different. Within the new state, Poles were considered a small national minority,<sup>385</sup> and were thus referred to as “others”, a group which consisted of approximately 50.000 different minority group members of diverse ethnic backgrounds.<sup>386</sup> ~~On the other hand, the treatment of different minority groups varied. While Jews~~

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<sup>381</sup> Ibid, p. 77-78.

<sup>382</sup> Ibid, p. 78.

<sup>383</sup> Sobolevski, M., 199-. *Poljska nacionalna manjina u Jugoslaviji tijekom Drugog svjetskog rata*. Zagreb: Centar za politološka istraživanja. p. 379.

<sup>384</sup> Most of them were Croats and Bosnian Muslims, whom the Croatian authorities referred to as “Croats of Islamic religion.”Source: Ibid, p. 379.

<sup>385</sup> According to Sobolevski, there were between 18.000 and 19.000 Poles.

<sup>386</sup> The largest minority group were Germans (180.000), followed by Hungarians (75.000), Slovaks (65.000), Jews (40.000) and Slovenians (30.000). Source: Ibid, p. 379.



~~and Roma received cruel treatment, which was natural considering the creators of NDH, other predominantly Catholic minorities enjoyed a somewhat privileged conduct.~~ However, little historical evidence exists on the ways in which the Polish national minority was treated; yet, considering their religious background, the Croatian authorities hoped to receive their significant support.<sup>387</sup> The political circumstances in these turbulent times left little space for voluntary siding, which resulted in individual and collective calls for cooperation on behalf of NDH's leaders. There was an omnipresent attempt to include Poles in the "ustasha"<sup>388</sup> movement or as members of the army. The hidden political goal was to force the Polish minority to behave tolerantly towards the government and approve of its dealings. Related to this was a political attempt on behalf of NDH to draw a significant number of Poles to the "ustasha" movement very early on, more precisely in summer of 1941.<sup>389</sup> But it was this event that spurred a wave of discontent among the Polish minority and influenced the course of their political and ideological orientation in the period that followed.

### ***The Polish Discontent and the Birth of Communist Ideology***

When in July of 1941, Viktor Gutić, a renowned ustasha activist, and his deputy of Polish descent, Felix Niedzielski, visited central Bosnia, the Bosnian Polish community was put on a loyalty test. During his sojourn in Prnjavor, Gutić attempted to turn the Polish community against Serbs, with whom Poles lived in the mixed villages. What is more, Gutić offered Poles all confiscated Serbian property, including their land and houses.<sup>390</sup> Nevertheless, this political attempt was not approved by Bosnian Poles for two primary reasons. Firstly, despite the initial maltreatment by the royal government and occasional civilian clashes in the villages, common Poles and Serbs cooperated well, and to a point where they continued to reside in mixed

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<sup>387</sup> Lis, T. J., 2016. *Iz Bosni u Poljsku*. Bolesławiecki Ośrodek Kultury – Międzynarodowe Centrum Ceramiki. p. 77.

<sup>388</sup> A Croatian Revolutionary Movement (Ustaša – Hrvatski revolucionarni pokret) was a Croatian fascist organization which was active before and during World War II. The ideology of the movement was a combination of Fascism and ultraconservatism. Dedicated to gaining Croatian independence from Yugoslavia, the Ustaše modeled themselves after Italian Fascists and founded terrorist training centers in Italy and Hungary. Fiercely nationalistic, the Ustaše were also fanatically Catholic.

<sup>389</sup> *Ibid*, p. 77-78.

<sup>390</sup> *Ibid*, p. 75

villages.<sup>391</sup> On the other hand, being a very religious community, Poles refused the perfidy, calling it immoral and anti-Catholic.

Besides Polish refusal to turn against the domestic populace, the general popular uprising against fascists and their supporter forces were relatively weak and rather slow. In this part of Central Bosnia, the Communist Party of Yugoslavia counted only a small number of members who were loosely organized around the party's centre core. Besides its fragile organization, KPJ also failed to include a large minority population in its activities, also circumnavigating the Polish community, which has initially demonstrated loyalty to Serbs, but kept relatively neutral when it came to belligerent activities of the local communist forces.<sup>392</sup> Polish neutrality was especially reinforced by an official of the Polish honorary consulate in Banja Luka, which remained open even after Poland capitulated in autumn of 1939.<sup>393</sup> On the other hand, the organization of a radical Serb group known as "chetniks" and its ideology seriously discouraged Poles from siding with any national or religious group. Hence, it can be claimed that these three factors severely undermined Polish participation in the war, at least in its early days.

When in winter of 1941, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Krajina Battalion<sup>394</sup> of the People's Liberation Front cleared Banja Luka and its surroundings from radical Croatian forces, many Polish villages (including mixed ones)<sup>395</sup> were liberated. However, the communist forces did not use the opportunity to massively gather Polish support and include Poles in their lines, except for a few of them. But, peace did not keep for long. In spring of 1942, this area was re-occupied by chetnik and ustashi forces, and it was at this time that the majority of Polish villages were taken by chetniks, who, just like the ustashi in the previous year, tried to gain their ultimate support.<sup>396</sup>

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<sup>391</sup> Sobolevski, M., 199-. *Poljska nacionalna manjina u Jugoslaviji tijekom Drugog svjetskog rata*. Zagreb: Centar za politološka istraživanja. p. 381.

<sup>392</sup> Lis, T. J., 2016. *Iz Bosni u Poljsku*. Bolesławiecki Ośrodek Kultury – Międzynarodowe Centrum Ceramiki. p. 77-78.

<sup>393</sup> Ibid, p. 381.

<sup>394</sup> Treći krajiški narodnooslobodilački partizanski odred or NOP odred (bos.). Source: Lis, T. J., 2016. *Iz Bosni u Poljsku*. Bolesławiecki Ośrodek Kultury – Międzynarodowe Centrum Ceramiki. p. 76.

<sup>395</sup> These villages were Gumjera, Kokori, Novi Martinac and Stari Martinac. Source: Sobolevski, M., 199-. *Poljska nacionalna manjina u Jugoslaviji tijekom Drugog svjetskog rata*. Zagreb: Centar za politološka istraživanja. p. 382.

<sup>396</sup> Lis, T. J., 2016. *Iz Bosni u Poljsku*. Bolesławiecki Ośrodek Kultury – Międzynarodowe Centrum Ceramiki. p. 78.

However, the ideology switch did not occur mainly because of religious beliefs and the deeply imbedded neutrality of Bosnian Poles, except among the very few who “naively believed that by siding with them (chetniks), they would safeguard the Polish national minority from ethnic cleansing and massive terror.”<sup>397</sup> Despite such unfavourable developing and the air of general ideological bewilderment among Bosnian Poles, things took a different turn in December of 1942, when Yugoslav partisan forces<sup>398</sup> liberated the whole of Central Bosnia, including all Polish villages. It was at this time that dozens of Poles joined the Partisan forces. The ideological battle was finally on the Yugoslav side, a switch that significantly marked the later wartime political orientation of Bosnian Poles.<sup>399</sup>

~~The situation became even more favourable in winter of 1943, when on January 16 the Yugoslav forces freed the area around the city of Prnjavor, another important Polish concentration point. A new Partisan unit was formed in the city, but despite the reinforcement, this area, including many Polish villages, was re-occupied by chetniks and the ustashi. The situation changed again in July of 1943, when Prnjavor was finally freed. Regardless of these frequent changes, the ideological switch among Poles did not occur once the Partisan forces were out; quite the contrary to their previous uncertainties, Poles remained loyal to Yugoslav communists and were especially active in the liberation of the city of Prnjavor. One of the most active collaborators was precisely a Pole, Ignac Kunecki, who, thanks to his frequent informing about the enemy positions, played an enormous role in the course of the battle.~~

At the same time, the political awareness of Polish youth surfaced. The reason behind this active participation was, again, the war, but also the fact that Poles were now highly respected in the Partisan lines.<sup>400</sup> Massive numbers of young Poles joined the People’s Liberation Front, both as active soldiers and as members of different anti-fascist organizations. Surprisingly, Polish women were also active, and despite their traditional and highly religious upbringing, they massively joined the Partisans and organizations such as the Women’s Anti-Fascist Front, the

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<sup>397</sup> Ibid, p. 382.

<sup>398</sup> More precisely Prva proleterska brigada Narodnooslobodilačke vojske (NOV).

<sup>399</sup> Đokić, D., 2003. Yugoslavism, Histories of a Failed Idea 1918–1992. In: Bougarel, X., *Bosnians Muslims and Yugoslav idea*. London. p. 104-106.

<sup>400</sup> Sobolevski, M., 199-. *Poljska nacionalna manjina u Jugoslaviji tijekom Drugog svjetskog rata*. Zagreb: Centar za politološka istraživanja. p. 373.

Union of the Communist Youth of Yugoslavia and the United Union of the Anti-Fascist Youth of Bosnia and Herzegovina (USAO BiH). Through political participation and activism, many Poles now entered the governing bodies of these organizations.<sup>401</sup>

Yet, neither the Communist Party of Yugoslavia nor the leading liberation front institutions engaged in activities that would allow for a more substantial inclusion of national minorities in their lines. This was particularly strengthened by the fact that all proclamations and programme documents were directed solely towards the domestic population, notably Serbs, Muslims and Croats.<sup>402</sup> In fact, very few documents addressed the members of different national minorities, and even in cases in which they did the future of minority groups remained uncertain. This is why the Communist Party District Committee of Central Bosnia criticized party's weak political engagement with national minorities. Hence, in August of 1943, the District Committee proclaimed that:

*Galicians, Ruthenians, Czechs and Poles are still passive towards our struggle, which is a result of their fear of the occupying forces and chetniks, but also our insufficient work with them. We decided to organize conferences with their more visible members and through them start penetrating into their villages.*<sup>403</sup>

However, as Sobolevski (199-) ~~rightfully~~ notes, this report shows a clear misunderstanding and disinterest in addressing the members of national minorities in the right way, as it completely disregards their ethnic names, geographic and cultural origin. As mentioned at the beginning of this work, Bosnians referred to Poles as Galicians, but used this name also for the members of the Ukrainian national minority (Ruthenians). Nonetheless, the District Committee report from November 11, 1943 referred specifically to the Polish national minority, claiming that:

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<sup>401</sup> Ibid, p. 383.

<sup>402</sup> Izveštaj Okružnog komiteta Komunističke partije za Centralnu Bosnu., 26 August, 1943.

<sup>403</sup> Izveštaj Okružnog komiteta Komunističke partije za Centralnu Bosnu., 26 August, 1943.

*The youth of national minority groups is reserved, but well inclined. (Poles have shown tendencies to establish their own Polish brigade). At our last meeting we decided that one of us will go there, acquaint with the organization, strengthen the brotherhood line, break the enemy influences, and mobilize – all through competition.*<sup>404</sup>

Ultimately, and thanks to the involvement on both sides, but mainly dedicated political and military workers, the Polish battalion was created in April of 1944. The formation of the battalion was preceded by the establishment of the Political Representation of Poles, headed by a Polish school teacher, Jan Kumoš. Finally, on May 7, 1944, the Polish battalion was formed in the village of Martinci, counting some two hundred members.<sup>405</sup> By and large, this political move symbolized a final ideological orientation of Bosnian Poles, but more importantly marked the beginning of their political participation and inclusion into the military and political structures of the People's Liberation Movement of Yugoslavia (NOP).<sup>406</sup>

Naturally, the formation of the Polish battalion influenced the orientation of Poles from other parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina, but also Croatia. Their ideological path was now clear, a point which finalized their long-present political indecision and eliminated an omnipresent fear of the occupying forces.<sup>407</sup> ~~Hence, Poles from Slavonia, but also those who previously joined the German forces or were liberated from concentration camps, soon became part of the growing People's Liberation Front.~~ The effects of the Polish ideological and military switch was notably significant for those Poles who were forcefully mobilized by Germans, or who found themselves imprisoned in their concentration camps for different reasons. These Poles massively escaped from German forces (and even concentration camps) at the end of the war, and joined NOP throughout Yugoslavia. Those who remained loyal to Germans were imprisoned by Partisans in

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<sup>404</sup> Izvještaj Okružnog komiteta Komunističke partije za Centralnu Bosnu, 11 November, 1943.

<sup>405</sup> The battalion was a part of the 14<sup>th</sup> Central Bosnia brigade.

<sup>406</sup> Narodnooslobodilački pokret (NOP) - People's Liberation Front.

<sup>407</sup> [Lis, T. J., 2016. Iz Bosni u Poljsku. Bolesławiecki Ośrodek Kultury – Międzynarodowe Centrum Ceramiki. p. 78-79.](#)

the final days of the war. Hence, some 9425 Poles were captured, but all returned to Poland by 1949.<sup>408</sup>

At the end of World War II, it became increasingly clear that the ideological shift that occurred among Bosnian Poles was of purely security nature. Not only did Poles gain political support from the predominant domestic forces, but this siding was probably one of the safest ways to remain closely knit and relatively protected from the fascist and notably German forces, which massively killed Poles throughout Central Europe.<sup>409</sup> On the other hand, the after-war period was the first time in history that saw Bosnian Poles not as foreign, but as Yugoslav citizens. In other words, they were not there because of promised goods, such as was the case during the Austro-Hungarian reign, nor were they considered second-class citizens in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Standing as Yugoslavs, Poles were now a recognized national minority group. A large number, some 15.000 of them, still inhabited their villages in Central Bosnia, but it was not long before they politically organized once more in their final attempt to leave their host country and return to their motherland.<sup>410</sup>

### **The Repatriation of the Polish National Minority in 1946**

After the end of World War II, the treatment of Yugoslav national minority groups depended on several political factors. ~~Not only did the Communist Party of Yugoslavia have to deal with the national question, but politically strategic issues which regarded the future orientation of the government, particularly the national structure of the new Yugoslav state, was now a preoccupying matter.~~ Yet, the official government position on the status of the Polish national minority was pressing in several regards; not only did the communists have to deal with a closely knit and relatively exclusionist group, but the enormous role that Poles, notably those from Bosnia and Herzegovina, played during the war could not be ignored alongside the fact that

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<sup>408</sup> Sobolevski, M., 199-. *Poljska nacionalna manjina u Jugoslaviji tijekom Drugog svjetskog rata*. Zagreb: Centar za politološka istraživanja. p. 385.

<sup>409</sup> [Lis, T. J., 2016. \*Iz Bosni u Poljsku\*. Bolesławiecki Ośrodek Kultury – Międzynarodowe Centrum Ceramiki. p. 79.](#)

<sup>410</sup> [Ibid. p. 80.](#)

Poland was now also a communist state and a friendly ally. Therefore, it can be concluded that, unlike other national minority groups that arrived to this area during the Austro-Hungarian rule, Poles were among the least problematic minorities<sup>411</sup> that the government had to deal with.<sup>412</sup> Despite their peaceful conduct, but also the fact that the communist government provided schools, cultural activities and allowed for participation in the government pending party membership for all minorities immediately after the end of the war, Poles initiated a series of negotiations in order to organize a collective return to Poland. Their plan was realized during the course of 1946, just one year after the end of World War II.

Unsurprisingly, the Polish request for repatriation<sup>413</sup> became a state issue, and as such was resolved by state's highest authorities. The official diplomatic relations between Yugoslavia and Poland<sup>414</sup> were secured even before the end of the war, and on July 1, 1945, Poles organized a conference with the purpose of requesting that they were returned to Poland. The communist Yugoslav government granted them immediate and ultimate support. Considering the fact that the majority of Poles in Yugoslavia lived primarily in Bosnia and Herzegovina, it was not surprising that their demand went straight into the hands of Rodoljub Čolaković, the President of the government of Bosnia and Herzegovina. He promised his support and even made the Yugoslav president Josip Broz Tito aware of Polish intentions. Despite this, Polish representatives, led by Jan Komuš and Jan Urban, addressed their request to the embassy of the Republic of Poland in Belgrade, where they, naturally, received an immediate approval.<sup>415</sup> The latter move was an obvious sign of Polish rising national awareness, but also their increased

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<sup>411</sup> [Ibid, p. 81.](#)

<sup>412</sup> Since 1918, four national minorities have proven troublesome for the Yugoslav governments – Albanians, Hungarians, Germans and Italians. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albanians and Hungarians have probably been the most troubling, as they expressed their national feelings and their lack of respect for the Yugoslavs the most. [Source: Jončić, K., 1962. \*Nacionalne manjina u Jugoslaviji. Savremena administracija.\*](#)

<sup>413</sup> Repatriation is a process of returning a person or a group of persons to their places of origin. This process is not a process of forced, but voluntary migration. The forced return of a person to a country where he or she would fear persecution is known as refoulement. According to Merriam-Webster's dictionary, "to repatriate" means to restore or return to the country of origin, allegiance, or citizenship. Source: Merriam-Webster Dictionary.

<sup>414</sup> Diplomatic relations were established between the governments of Democratic Federal Yugoslavia (DFJ) and the Interim Government of the Republic of Poland. Yugoslavia recognized the temporary Polish government on March 30, 1945 and on May 5 the same year, the official representations of both countries were proclaimed embassies.

<sup>415</sup> [Lis, T. J., 2016. \*Iz Bosni u Poljsku. Bolesławiecki Ośrodek Kultury – Międzynarodowe Centrum Ceramiki.\* p. 82.](#)

political consciousness, as they were now visibly aware of big power politics and obviously had good knowledge of Yugoslav-Polish relations of the time.<sup>416</sup> That this is true, was also proven by their next move – upon receiving state support from Yugoslavia, which was still their homeland, they went to Poland in order to settle the finest matters of their return. After a series of meetings with the Polish President and the ministers for foreign and internal affairs, a visit to Lower Silesia marked their final destiny, as this part of Poland, more particularly the city of Boleslawiec, was chosen as their last settlement point.

But, things were not as easy as they seemed. The first problems occurred when the Yugoslav government refused to amend their acquired assets, including homes and land property, as well as cattle that Poles were leaving behind. What is more, Yugoslavia requested that Poland pay for all the cattle and other livestock that they took with them to Poland. At this point Poles demonstrated that they were not so politically isolated and quiet; their letter to Josip Broz specifically made five clear points:

*1. we have to pay for the houses and land that was granted to us in Poland, while we are leaving our properties in Yugoslavia without any compensation; 2. We are now exporting cattle and other domestic animals to Poland, for which Poland would have to pay, while those of us who are interested in regaining these animals would have to buy back our possessions; 3. We sacrificed a lot during the war, our best sons gave their lives for freedom. At the same time we offered great financial support to the People's Liberation Army and mobilized new forces in passive areas; 4. The occupying forces, especially chetniks, robbed and burned our homes, and killed many of us. This was because we were known for compact participation against the enemy; 5. Even today, Polish settlements in Bosnia are exposed to chetnik-led terror, while almost half of the population left their homes with little money, and hungry, naked and barefoot found their refuge in cities or villages of Slavonia, hoping to be saved.<sup>417</sup>*

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<sup>416</sup> [Ibid, p. 82.](#)

<sup>417</sup> Kamberović, H., n.d., *Iseljavanje Poljaka iz Bosne i Hercegovine 1946. Godine*. Sarajevo: Institut za historiju. p. 2.



Reaching the highest state official, the *Protocol on the Repatriation of Poles from Yugoslavia* was signed between the two governments on January 2, 1946. The Protocol regulated the repatriation matter, and as an act of highest state priority, it was signed at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Belgrade, ~~on behalf of Vladimir Velebit, deputy minister of foreign affairs of Yugoslavia, and Polish ambassador Jan Karol Wende.~~ The document stated that “some 25.000 Poles, whose ancestors inhabited the surroundings of Banja Luka and Prnjavor sixty years ago during the Austro-Hungarian Empire, will leave this area in the next six months.”<sup>418</sup>

The whole repatriation process began in March of 1946. The Bosnian city of Prnjavor, a once large centre of Polish national minority, became the heart of repatriation activities. The Yugoslav-Polish committee, with its headquarters situated precisely in Prnjavor, made sure that the wishes of all Poles were respected, and that they really desired to return to Poland. Hence, by the end of 1946 some 15.301 Poles from Yugoslavia returned to Poland. Most of them were from Central Bosnia (14.088), while some 4000 Poles remained in Bosnia, notably those who were in mixed marriages and who assimilated with the autochthon, primarily Croatian, population.<sup>419</sup> The seven months of repatriation saw a voluntary departure of some 3000 Polish families.<sup>420</sup> The whole process finally ended with the last convoy departing on December 2, 1946, marking the final point in Polish repatriation. This was the first case of an organized collective migration of a single national minority from Bosnia and Herzegovina (Yugoslavia) after the end of World War II, and an act that left grave demographic consequences on Bosnia and Herzegovina. From a demographic point of view, Bosnia acquired an ethnic and cultural loss, while the psychological consequences for those who left or remained, marked their future socio-political status in Yugoslavia even after its disband in 1991.

### **~~Why Six Decades of Polish Socio-Political Exclusion in Bosnia and Herzegovina?~~**

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<sup>418</sup> Vranješ-Šoljan, B., 2006. *Maria Szumska Dabrowska o poljskim doseljenicima u Bosni 1935*. Zagreb, 2006. p. 964.

<sup>419</sup> Sobolevski, M., 199-. *Poljska nacionalna manjina u Jugoslaviji tijekom Drugog svjetskog rata*. Zagreb: Centar za politološka istraživanja. p. 387 .

<sup>420</sup> Vranješ-Šoljan, B., 2006. *Maria Szumska Dabrowska o poljskim doseljenicima u Bosni 1935*. Zagreb, 2006. p. 964.

A peculiar group to investigate, the Polish national minority in Bosnia and Herzegovina is one of the most interesting minority populations that have inhabited these areas since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Considering their particular historical presence in the Balkan Peninsula, one cannot but wonder what factors have insinuated Polish socio-political behaviour which ultimately finalized with a collective return to their land of origin. Yet, one thing is certain and that is that both socially and politically, Poles have remained on the margins of the society, and except on a few historically significant occasions, they were the most isolated and compact national minority group up to day.

While the status of Polish “colonizers” during the Austro-Hungarian reign is pretty clear, indicating their socio-political status in the higher hierarchy and focusing on the fact that they primarily inhabited these areas because of favouring political and economic conditions, but also personal interest, their role in the early days of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, notably after the formation of an independent Yugoslav state, is what is worth of further analysis. Hence, when studying the socio-political status of the Polish national minority in Bosnia and Herzegovina after the fall of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, it is essential to make note of two socio-political factors that have undoubtedly influenced the course of their historical development – their closely knit and very religious community and Yugoslav treatment of this group, particularly in the interwar and post-war periods.

Initially, and as mentioned earlier, the Polish inhabitants were a closely bound and a very religious group since their arrival. Hence, the presence and the role of the Catholic Church were of an immense importance for these communities. Although Polish Catholic Church was known for its disciple activities, organized religious missionary never reached Bosnian Poles. Thus, Poles from Bosnia and Herzegovina, but also Yugoslavia as a whole, developed rather independently in the religious sense. This does not mean that they aborted traditional Catholic habits, and adopted a modified version of Catholicism that would be influenced by domestic conditions, but rather the fact that their spiritual development depended on intra-group relations, notably their tight religious upbringing, which spread from family to family and generation to generation. Consequently, the priest remained the highest authority, and as such represented the only factor which could influence Polish socio-political engagement. Yet, the problem was that at that time, there were no Polish priests in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In this constellation of events, it was to no wonder that the Polish national minority turned to Croatian priests, who in

turn, largely influenced their political orientation in the interwar period. It was precisely during this time, between 1936 and 1938, that Poles became torn in between the pro-Croatian, but Catholic political orientation on one side, and the rising anti-religious communist ideology. The latter fought to organize all groups, including national minorities, into a common force that would fight the European fascist forces and radical domestic groups, notably chetniks and ustashi. For them, the Polish national minority was a rewarding group among whose members it was easy to gain supporters fast — on one hand, many Poles were still torn in between the Catholic tradition and (hence) Croatian influences, while the desire to be recognized was a right which they hoped to acquire from communists. Therefore, these prevailing social and political factors further contributed to confusion and alienation of Poles, a trend which continued until the early 1940s when most of them joined communist lines.

But, the intractable minority question created serious problems for the KPJ, notably in the interwar period.<sup>421</sup> As trained Marxists, Yugoslav communists were wary of “national questions”, notably if they came from smaller or isolated minority groups, such as Poles. On the other hand, as a member of the Soviet-controlled international communist movement, the KPJ had to be aware of Soviet plans to deteriorate the Entente Powers and one of the ways to do so was to encourage dissident national movements, notably in Eastern Europe. These foreign policy issues in the turbulent interwar period resulted in a hesitant political treatment of national minorities on behalf of communists, which focused on two most pressing minority issues — equal treatment and self-determination.<sup>422</sup> The former was particularly interesting for Poles, and probably acted as a political crossroad in the process of joining the communist frontline. In the long run, the KPJ alienated the minority groups from itself, a fact which became visible during the war. Although Poles participated in the war and fought on the side of Partisans, the fact that Polish support for the communists occurred only in order to protect their group (hence, based on interest) only highlighted the reality that Poles never reconciled their position in Yugoslavia.

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<sup>421</sup> This was mainly because communists were still looking for new members and searching for supporters among minority groups, hoping to recruit their members by promising many rights. This will change for the worse after World War II, when minority rights were rarely practiced, although they did exist on paper.

<sup>422</sup> The right to self-determination was not particularly interesting to Poles, because of two reasons: their community was rather small in comparison to other national minority groups, such as Albanians, and they had a kin state to which they could return. They aspired for social stability, rather than demanded territory, which, on historical premises, was also impossible.

~~The verity is that Poles called for collective repatriation immediately after the end of World War II, which only revealed that they were not very attracted to Communist revolutionary ideals. What is more, Poles viewed KPJ as a continuation of nationalist Yugoslav movement, thus fearing for their well-being even in a friendly, communist state. Hence, the question of loyalty persisted among Poles who settled in Yugoslavia in 1895. It was precisely this issue of fidelity and trust (or better fear for their well-being), that alienated Poles for six decades. Even the slightest traces of their socio-political engagement can be connected to the matter of interest and security. The rapidly alternating socio-political circumstances of these times only exacerbated Polish concerns. On one hand, they fought assimilation with Yugoslavs (particularly, Serbs), while on the other they embraced Croatian religious leaders, alongside communism. These concerns remained very characteristic of this minority group, and what is more, stayed so until present day among those Poles who did not repatriate, but continued to dwell primarily in Central Bosnia.~~

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter I examined the historical patterns of political participation of Jews and Poles from Bosnia and Herzegovina, from their arrival during the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian reign, respectively. I embarked upon this historical analysis in order to lay out the basis for understanding the current trends in their political behaviour. A key to my examination of the historical 'period effects' which, although slowly and gradually, have shaped the political behaviour of Jews and Poles in BiH is an understanding of triggers which have played a key role in furthering their consciousness about the importance of political participation for their communities and consequently their empowerment. Hence, this chapter forms the principal basis for answering the question of whether the factors that triggered Jewish and Polish political activism throughout history have remained the same or whether they have changed. Furthermore, this analysis took account of the underlying historical conditions which shaped these groups' political participation, which is the missing link in literature on political participation of national minority groups, both in relations to democratization and its connection to groups' understanding the importance that political engagement has in the process. Consequently, in the next chapter I will show whether and how the historical trigger factors for political participation influence Jewish and Polish political participation rates in post-Dayton context today and how political

participation is understood in terms of influence it has on democratic development of the country and empowerment of the small national minority groups. Furthermore, the historical observations made in this chapter extend to the next in a way that they underpin the understanding of the type of participants that these groups represent today. In other words, the present chapter forms the basis for explaining the type of participant variable that was tested among older and younger generations of Jews and Poles in Bosnia and Herzegovina today.

# CHAPTER 6: EXAMINING FORMAL POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF JEWS AND POLES IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA: WHAT TYPES OF PARTICIPANTS?

## Introduction

The primary aim of this chapter is to explore the levels of formal political participation of Jews and Poles in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as to answer the question of what type of participants they represent. The chapter is presented in such a way as to build up an understanding of why some members of these communities are choose to participate actively while other engage only in voting practice or abstain from politics all together. As discussed in chapter 1, political participation today crosses the lines of mere voting or political party membership. To adequately examine the entire phenomenon of political participation, one must also acknowledge the existence of such forms of formal political engagement that do not involve institutional presence in politics, but include other acts, mostly of expressive and verbal, but also cognitive nature. Assessing the latter types of political involvement is notably essential in non-stable and multi-ethnic societies, in which social and personal integrities play a significant role in the level of political participation that an individual exhibits. Hence, we can talk about an array of indictors that go beyond standard political involvement in political communication, institutional participation and mere electoral contribution. Within this continuum, citizens have different requirements. Hence the nature of their influence is also important. This is outlined using four different criteria: whether the act communicates a message about an individual's political preference, the potential degree of conflict, the effort put into the activity and the degree of cooperation with other people involved in the action<sup>423</sup>. Accordingly, four different types of questions were formulated in order to test whether Jews and Poles, as representative national minorities in BiH, engage in politics through political acts of institutional and non-institutional channels (party membership, participation in electoral campaigns, political favouring through financing), expressive and verbal acts (oral expression, communication with political actors

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<sup>423</sup> Dalton, R.J., 1988. *Citizen Politics in Western Democracies. Public Opinion and Political Parties in the United States, Great Britain, Western Germany, and France.*

opinion forming in small groups), cognitive (consuming political information through media channels) and electoral (general voting). Methodologically, the aim of these categorizations was to provoke factual individual reports about participants' real level of political participation and unite the collected data to form a general picture about the overall level of political participation among Jews and Poles in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Not least, the point is to classify these groups' members according to their level of political participation into active (high level of engagement), communicators (middle level of participation) and consumers (low level of activism). Lastly, the aim was to gather data on electoral involvement, which was observed separately because it contributes the least to higher forms of political participation (institutional involvement, expressive/verbal), since in BiH voting is perceived as "civic duty" and not really understood in terms of political participation. Thus, the study presented in this chapter was partly developed in reference to already established measures of political participation outlined in works of N. Nue, S. Verba and L. Milbrath. For the purposes of this work, as specified in Chapter 1, some categories outlined in their works were not used since they do not apply to the general political post-war context in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The survey used for the purposes of this study was adapted to a smaller sample than it was the case for researches completed by these authors. Sampling procedure was carried out in Jewish and Polish communities, asking random participants aged 18-90 to participate in the study. The participants were examined using the survey method. As for data analysis, regular statistical analysis of results will be presented in percentages from highest to lowest. All results were analyzed by SPSS statistical programme. The next step in the process was to introduce the selected participants to a questionnaire that consisted of twenty nine questions aimed at examining their level of conventional political engagement. Eleven questions asked the participants to rate their answers on a scale from 1 to 5. There was one open-end question, whereby participants had to write their age. Ten questions were yes/no questions and seven offered a choice of answers where the respondents were asked to circle only one option. All questions were mandatory. The questions that aimed directly at looking at the level of participation included those listed in Table 2 (Chapter 2). The questions shown were also divided according to the level of political participation (high, middle, low and only voting). They are presented in Table 4.

#	Type of political participation (activity)	Corresponding levels of political participation
1	Political party membership	<b>HIGH</b>
2	Supporting social/political movement, political party, politician beyond voting, such as providing financial support	
3	Participating in an electoral campaign	
4	Contacting a political authority for help in order to solve a political/economic problem	<b>MIDDLE</b>
5	Communicating with members of political parties	
6	Comfortable writing a letter to government representatives arguing my opinion	
7	Informed about politics through media	<b>LOW</b>
8	<b>Voting</b>	

**Figure 3**  
**Types of Political Activities Classified according to Level of Engagement, Complexity and Energy Invested**

The classification of participation levels into hierarchically organized units (high, middle, low) allows for a very detailed analysis of political involvement. The criteria for the hierarchical organization of modes of political participation is by no means accidental, but is determined according to the amount of time, energy and resources spent for engaging in the activity<sup>424</sup>. Hence, low levels of political participation imply that an individual does not significantly contribute, in terms of time, energy and resources, to politics. Of course, this approach is relative, but it has been used by numerous political participation scholars<sup>425</sup> and as such has proven significant in determining the types of participants or the level of politicization within a single group, but also country, region or city. I took into account mostly British scholars (Perry, Moyser, Days) who differentiate between four to six categories of people according to their involvement in politics. As a result, both Jews and Poles were classified into three groups (active, middle, low), while their electoral practices, although considered as low engagement, were examined separately and presented in separate sections, due to the specific understanding of

<sup>424</sup> Kluienko, E., 2007. Political Participation: Theory, Methodology, and Measurement with the Help of the Guttman One-Dimension Continuity Scale. In: Golovakha, Yevhen. (ed). *Ukrainian Sociological Review 2004-2005*. Kiev: Institute of Sociology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. p. 146.

<sup>425</sup> See Chapter 2.



voting practices and its meaning in the Bosnian society as a whole, including its national minority groups.

The sections that follow will be divided into two parts in order to show separate results for Jews and Poles respectively. These parts will systematically and comprehensively present the results and correlations which are relevant for this study. As the attempt of this investigation is to form a broader and comprehensive picture of these groups' political participation, analysis of quantitative data alone cannot stand alone as it does not allow for a deeper understanding of the context. Hence, this chapter makes use of qualitative data acquired during focus groups and interviews to compliment the quantitative findings.

## **PART I**

### **Conventional Political Engagement of Jews in Bosnia and Herzegovina - The Results**

#### **Predictors of Participation Levels**

##### *Types of Participants*

The measurement of political participation and the corresponding indicators that I used in my research questionnaires correspond to questions used in classical political participation studies, namely those by Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) but also Verba, Nie and Kim (1978 & 1979). Although slight variations were made, considering the specific groups in a post-conflict

state, the general factors which I used for grouping participants into active, middle active and passive participants included only conventional modes of political participation, all explained in Chapter 2. The empirical analysis on the type of participants that emerged out of this study is based on quantitative data. The method of the study was survey sample data. As previously explained, one of the aims of the survey was to discover whether the two groups that are studied in this work are either highly active, middle active or passive participants. Since the survey was not exclusive in terms of questions, meaning that all respondents had to answer each query, general observations were made as to what types of activities the participants of the studied groups prefer, and into what group they generally fall, considering all types and levels of political participation<sup>426</sup>.

According to data obtained, respondents were grouped into highly active (21%), middle active (92%) and low active (51%). The most popular mode of political engagement among the high active participants was political party membership (9%), followed by participation in electoral campaigns (8%). The least favoured activity that was considered under highly active category was the offer of financial assistance to political movements (4%). The most interesting trends can be observed among the middle active participants or communicators. When it comes to middle active participants, several interesting observations can be made. Firstly, the communicators among the Jewish population would feel most comfortable in engaging in written contact (writing a letter to government officials) with politicians (48%). This mode of political participation is followed by communication with political party members (33%), while the least favourable form of engagement represents actual direct written contact (writing a letter to government officials to solve a personal or group social or economic issue). Interestingly, the most favoured political participation act in this group relates to the perception of engaging in an activity, but the question, purposefully, examines not the physical act of writing to political officials<sup>427</sup>, but the willingness. Hence, the 48% which *would* engage in this activity does not necessarily imply that the respondents have done so. The most passive participants or consumers,

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<sup>426</sup> The assumption was that participants who engage in the highest forms of political participation are more inclined to engage in lesser forms (e.g. a person who is a member of a political party also learns about politics through media channels).

<sup>427</sup> Questions “I have contacted a political authority to solve a social” and “I have contacted a political authority to solve an economic problem” both address a physical act of engaging oneself in communicating with politicians through various means.

for which only one predictor was examined (keeping informed about politics through different media channels<sup>428</sup>) represent 51% of the total number of participants. Lastly, 78% of Jews are regular voters. In addition to the previous, it can be noted that highly active participants were also the ones who have already contacted political authorities to solve a social or an economic problem.

Additionally, a low positive significant correlation ( $r = 0.20$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) exists between financially supporting a political movement and contacting authorities to solve a social problem. Alternatively, a low positive significant correlation ( $r = 0.22$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), slightly higher than the previous, exists between financial support and writing to government official in order to address an economic issue. Respondents who have participated in electoral campaigns, thus considered highly active, have also engaged in contacting political officials in order to resolve social or economic problems. Low positive significant correlations were recorded between participation in electoral campaigns and writing to address social issues ( $r = 0.39$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and economic issues ( $r = 0.38$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). When it comes to communicators, two moderate positive significant correlations exist between communicating with members of political parties and appealing to authorities to solve social problems ( $r = 0.42$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and resolving economic issues ( $r = 0.45$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Lastly, a high positive significant correlation exists between contacting authorities to resolve a social problem and doing the same to address an economic problem ( $r = 0.81$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Hence, it can be said that participants who engage in contact with authorities do not differentiate the reasons for communication, but are inclined to address issues that are pressing in a current time and circumstances. In conclusion, it can be said that most Jews are “political communicators”, meaning that they prefer to engage in expressive and/or verbal means of participation. As an active member of the Jewish community from Tuzla (male, 51 years old) explains:

*“Jews in Bosnia and Herzegovina view political participation as an important feature of democratic governance, but unfortunately not as a tool that they can adequately employ to advance their rights. This is clearly due to our constitutional status of “others”. Jews in BiH believe that political participation will never bring about their full empowerment, but understand that there are less ‘engaging’ types of political activities and this is why*

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<sup>428</sup> Television, newspapers and radio.

*they still use other, less active, means of political participation. This type of engagement has brought about response from governing structures. But, if “Sejdić-Finci” is ever implemented, I am sure that many of us would turn towards more active means of participation.”*

Another active member of the Jewish Community from Banja Luka (male, 63 years old) adds:

*“Your results tell us that political participation of Jews in BiH is much related to our minority status. We are constitutionally discriminated against, which makes people angry, so they think along the lines of ‘why would I join a majority party, when it is actually those parties and their leaders that are responsible for changes that are not coming?’ And so, we have a situation in which political participation is an individual act, much dependent on the minority status. Historically, we Jews have been engaging in politics, we are aware of the democratic value of it, but more related to us is the issue of power that we can hope to gain through more active means of political participation. We do not ask for much, we do not want our own party, but we do believe that we can help this society flourish. We have been and are a part of Bosnian society, although we are Jews, but we need a bit more than we have in terms of rights to help the country move forward. We are considered to be a ‘quiet’ group, but this, I believe, would change if we were to be constitutionally recognized”*

These results presented above and complimented with participant’s responses are not surprising for two reasons:

1. Constitutionally, Jews belong to the category of “others” and as such they are not the “constituent” groups who have a full right to political participation. For these reasons a large majority of Jewish respondents (91%) does not belong to a political party<sup>429</sup>, as they believe cannot have real political influence even through such means of participation. Hence, most of their time and energy is oriented towards communication.

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<sup>429</sup> Since the number of Jews who are members of political parties was so small, I was able to enquire about the orientation of these parties. All respondents who are party members belong to center-to-left political parties, which are currently considered major opposition parties. All of the respondents who are political party members are from Sarajevo.

2. Historically, Jews were always strong political communicators and have often represented a “mediator” group between the majorities. Alternatively, most issues of concern to Jews have remained of social and economic nature, thus the results only confirm what the historical narrative concluded about this group in BiH.

### ***Types of Participants by Behaviour - Expressive/Verbal and Cognitive***

Since “communicators” is the category that pertains to the largest number of Jews, and since the behaviour of “communicators” is characterized by expressive and verbal traits, I will offer a brief analysis of several questions that were asked in order to test the types of behaviour that the respondents exhibit, but that do not necessarily fall under the predictors for the level of political participation. Hence, the aim of these questions was to get an answer to whether the respondents, and if so how, choose to communicate with friends, non-politician strangers and politicians. The questions presented to the respondents for these purposes were:

1. I talk about political issues and discuss them.
2. I feel comfortable expressing my personal views about social networks to which I belong around strangers.
3. I attempt to persuade people that my political opinions are correct.
4. I feel comfortable vocalizing my views to politicians.

The first question denotes a behaviour that requires the least effort in terms of time and energy from an individual and as such was presented first in this group of queries. A significant number of Jews (63%) said that they either agree (43%) or strongly agree (20%) with this statement ( $M=3.34$ ,  $SD=1.40$ ). The following statement, which still does not require significant effort in terms of time and energy involved, but is ranked higher due to the fact that an individual attempts to properly vocalize his/her views around people that he/she does not know, shows that 38% of Jews engage in this act ( $M=1.60$ ,  $SD=0.49$ ). This was a “yes/no” question, so it is important to report that 62% answered “no”. Alternatively, 25% of Jews attempt to persuade people about the correctness of their views, with 21% agreeing with the statement and only 4%

strongly agreeing ( $M=2.27$ ,  $SD=1.30$ ). The activity presented in the third question requires much more time and energy, as we are considering the act of persuasion. Lastly, the fourth question, which requires the most time and energy since an individual must first reach a political figure (time) and then express his/her views (energy), is an act of political participation in which 44% of Jews engage ( $M=1.54$ ,  $SD=0.50$ ). This was also a “yes/no” question, meaning that 56% of Jews do not communicate in this way. Here, it can be noted that as the act gets more complicated in terms of time and energy invested, the less people are inclined to engage in such behaviour. There is a deviation from this trend when it comes to third and fourth question. The answer to this might lie in the general perception of Jews in BiH, whereby they feel more comfortable and hopeful to achieve a mean by directly contacting politicians, than to direct their energy towards a large majority who views them negatively in light of political decisions made by their kin-state.

On the other hand, cognitive behaviour, since it pertains to judgment, evaluation and knowledge, was tested through examining respondents’ judgment of the political system in BiH in the last four years, confidence in the decisions made by politicians, the level of using media to learn about politics and the level of general knowledge about current events in BiH’s politics. The questions that were presented to the participants were the following<sup>430</sup>:

1. I watch TV, listen to radio or read newspapers to be informed about politics.
2. Level of information about the current events in Bosnian politics (whether the participant is informed, partially informed, uninformed or indifferent)
3. The political system has functioned well over the last four years.
4. I have confidence in the decisions made by government officials.
5. Politicians are attentive to people’s needs.

The first question, as analyzed previously, was answered positively by 51% of Jewish respondents. Related to this is the second question which asked the respondents to choose whether they are very informed, partially informed, not very informed or indifferent about current political events in the country. 25% of Jews report that they are very informed, while a

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<sup>430</sup> Not arranged in a specific order.

large 50% report that they are partially informed. Only 14% are not informed and 10% are indifferent, which demonstrates that Jews are generally well informed through media channels about politics in BiH. When it comes to the third question, a staggering 97% of Jews reported that the political system in BiH has not functioned well in the last four years, which directly explains why 97% of them also report to have no confidence in the decisions made by government officials. Hence, it can be concluded that Jews are well informed about the political decisions made by government officials to the point where they can make judgments about the functioning of the whole political apparatus and the level of trust which they exhibit towards elected officials. Lastly, although pure cognitive involvement in politics denotes the lowest level of political participation, it is still significant because it forms individual perceptions about politics and in case of post-conflict, multi-ethnic countries might help in explaining why individuals, especially those belonging to national minority groups, might choose (or not) to become involved in higher political participation acts. Alternatively, some interesting results emerged for the external efficacy indicator, which was tested through the respondent's opinion towards the statement that "politicians are attentive to people's needs". An overwhelming 97% of Jewish respondents answered "no" to this statement, hence the theoretical supposition outlined in classical studies and mentioned in Chapter 2 which argues that this opinion is typical of passive participants, can be said not to hold true for this particular group, as all three types of participants answered negatively to this question. Not surprisingly, the three positive answers came from participants that were identified as high active (all three engaged in all high active acts of political participation). It can be said that the general dissatisfaction with the present-day political and economic systems justifies this result. Consequently, these results also uphold the current literature which discusses the relationship between political participation rates and individual satisfaction with the political and economic system. Hence, the claim that dissatisfaction drives political participation (Riesman and Glazer, 1965) is confirmed.

### **General Predictors for the Category of "Voters"**

#### *Age*

As outlined in Chapter 2, age was considered a relevant predictor for examining the level and trigger factors for political engagement. This predictor was especially relevant for confirming the

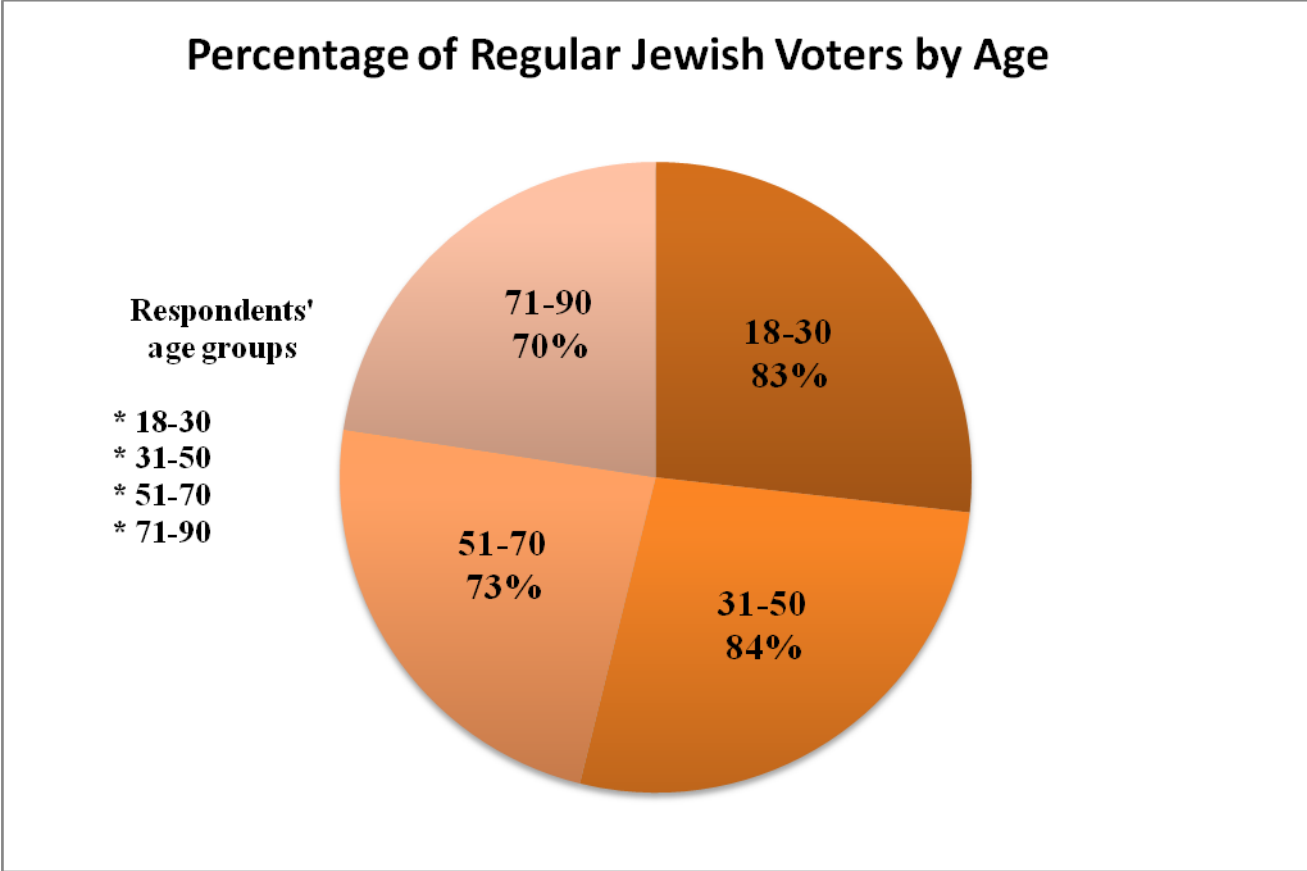
existing theoretical suppositions that younger participants are less likely to vote, while older participants are more inclined to do so. This predictor is important for the “voters” category of participants. The following age groups were present among the Jewish examinees:

#	Age	Reponses	%
1	18-30		12%
2	31-50		31%
3	51-70		37%
4	71-90		20%
	<b>Total</b>		<b>100%</b>

**Figure 4**  
**Age groups of Jewish participants**

Out of 12 participants from the youngest age group (18-30), 10 of them or 83% either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “I take part in elections by voting”. Very similar results were received by the second age group (31-50), where out of 31 participants 26 or 84% agreed or strongly agreed that they vote in elections. Contrary to the initial assumption, the older groups were less likely to engage in voting practices. However, the percentage of voters was still high; respondents from the third age group (51-70) which also had the highest number of participants (37 of them), have 73% of regular voters, while the oldest participants (71-90) which were represented by 20 people have an incidence of 70% voters (14 individuals). Generally, it can be concluded that middle-aged Jews are inclined to vote more than older generations, while their voting behaviour is very close to the youngest group of participants. However, the differences in numbers between the most active and least active voters are not very high. They amount to only 14%.





**Figure 5**  
**Percentage of Regular Jewish Voters by Age**

***Education***

The primary hypothesis when it comes to participants' education was that the more educated the respondent, the more likely he/she is to belong to the active type of participants or at least voters. While the level of political participation was evenly spread<sup>431</sup> among all Jewish participants, the first supposition cannot be confirmed or rejected. However, when it comes to the "voters" category, we can observe that Jews who are more educated (have higher education degrees) are more inclined to vote than those less educated (secondary school)<sup>432</sup>. Hence, this

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<sup>431</sup> This means that according to level of education, all participants, regardless of education, showed some degree of political participation.

<sup>432</sup> No participants had only elementary education degrees.

predictor, just like age, is very relevant for the “voters” group. The following are the results of the question “what type of education have you completed?”

#	Education degree	Responses	%
1	Elementary school		0%
2	Secondary school		43%
3	Bachelor’s degree		46%
4	Master’s degree		9%
5	Doctoral degree		2%
	<b>Total</b>		<b>100%</b>

**Figure 6**  
**Education level of Jewish participants**

Out of 43% of respondents who have completed secondary education, 29 of them (67%) either agreed or strongly agreed that they vote. Alternatively, out of 57 of respondents with some type of university degree<sup>433</sup>, 49 of them or 86% vote. All respondents with an advanced degree (MA or PhD) in these categories reported that they “strongly agree” with the above statement, an incidence of a staggering 100%. Hence, the hypothesis that the higher the education levels of participants, the higher their voting instance is confirmed. Differentiating between the levels of education of university educated participants this hypothesis is approved even further.

### **Discussion: New Trends and Group Characteristics in Jewish Formal Political Engagement in Post-Dayton Bosnia and Herzegovina**

Analyzing the results above, we can conclude that Jews in BiH do not live in a vacuum, but are significantly involved in different forms of political participation without pressure or involvement of other actors (e.g. kin-state). Furthermore, conventional political engagement implies that the undertaken actions are usually individual. Citizens react to political events and

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<sup>433</sup> Respondents with BA, MA and PhD degrees were, at the end, grouped into one category, as the number of those holding master or doctoral degree was very small.

socio-economic circumstances in order to accomplish what they desire; hence, these actions<sup>434</sup> are not permanent, but rather individualized and episodic. Despite this, the trigger factors behind such political involvement differ among members of the same group. The results of this study reveal three observable trends among Jews that took part in the research. Illustrated through third chapter's historical narrative, it is clear that Jews in BiH have had a long history of formal political engagement via different Jewish associations. However, further survey questions revealed that the current trends in their political participation are somewhat more complex, as their participation generally falls within one of the following three observable categories: *a) communication represents the main participation mode and is carried out by individuals who are triggered by social and economic problems, b) Jewish political activism is spurred by the ineffectiveness of the government to resolve groups' problems and c) low levels of political party membership and engagement in political party support activities are due to the omnipresent disbelief in the political system.* Naturally, all three types of participation are products of different political reasons, but also involve different generations of participants. Therefore, a close look into each type is necessary in order to better understand these participatory behaviours and grasp the reasons behind specific types of political behaviour among members of this minority group.

### ***Political Participation of Jews in BiH: What are the Trigger Factors?***

Jewish formal political participation follows one of the three observable trends, the first one being individual action (communication) under the auspices of Jewish associations (*Jevrejska opština*)<sup>435</sup>. What is characteristic of this type of engagement is the fact that it is practiced by members of Jewish communities across the country, but only in cases in which they are directly threatened by problems that affect only their group. The results shown above demonstrate that Jews communicate with political authorities mostly for reasons of socio-economic nature that concern their group. An active member of the Jewish community in Tuzla (male, 62 years old) explains this trend:

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<sup>434</sup> See acts of political participation in Figure 3.

<sup>435</sup> All respondents from this group are members of a Jewish association in their hometown.

*“Jewish community is our house and when we are there we have a feeling of a roof over our heads. We take care of our own problems, but many of our members across BiH, not just in Tuzla, are older, weak and have little financial sources to support themselves. This is when we go out of our home and communicate with governments to ask for support, to turn the attention to our status, to make ourselves visible and hence (I hope) more influential. But, participation, both active and passive, is individual. I have personal reasons to communicate because I am deeply troubled by some current issues. I have communicated with many political representatives warning of environmental pollution which affects everybody, not just Jews, of course. I know some of our Youth Club members warned against the issue of stray dogs. These are issues of social nature that affect all of us. When it comes to Jews, I talked to politicians, alongside several members from Sarajevo, Banja Luka and Mostar, to resolve ‘Sejdić-Finci’ issue.”*

Another participant (female, aged 63, from Sarajevo) further explains this trend:

*“Jews are locals. We are locals, we care about the same issues as locals, but sometimes also ‘raise our voice’ to attract attention to issues that concern us. When one of our very active members and one of our leaders was physically attacked we were loud to voice our opinion about this all over media, we were loud to divert attention to potential issue of anti-Semitism which is on the rise on the Internet in BiH, but also among young who are uninformed and subject to ready-made opinions that is available to them on the streets. So yes, we care about local issues, but make sure we use our voice to warn against issues that press us as Jews, exclusively.”*

Aside from issues of socio-economic nature, 80% of participants of the same group indicated that they are not optimistic about the future of the political system, while 78% declared that they do not believe in the better future of the economic system. Hence, this group of participants is directly driven by factors that concern their own political status and economic situation which concerns all citizens. The unfavourable political status of Jews under the constitution can be

claimed to be one of the principal, although not the only factor, that influences their opinion. One participant explains (male, 84 years old):

*“Ethnic-self declaration is an individual right, yet in Bosnia and Herzegovina it is something that is prescribed to you by birth. You don’t get to choose, you are told who you are and so placed in a ‘herd’, just like all other sheep of the same colour. Jews in this country belong to a herd called “others”; we are not constituents and have no political participation rights on state-level. This is what makes me angry and even worse makes me pessimistic about the future of my grandchildren who are growing up as Jews in this country.”*

Another member of the Jewish Community in Banja Luka adds (female, 63 years old):

*“Jewish political status in BiH – what to tell you? We are discriminated. This is clear-cut political discrimination, something that is unheard of in democratic countries. Jews in neighbouring countries, apart from Croatia, are citizens of that country and not some “categories” as they like to call us. It makes it sound like we all are a burden, a social ‘category’, somebody you give pennies to. In a way, we are like the lowest Indian caste - Jews, but also all “others” are without any rights to be represented and to participate in state-level politics. Yet, we are from Bosnia and Herzegovina. If it were not sad, it would be funny. This is why this country will never go forward.”*

Alternatively, poor economic conditions in relation to constituent groups are also a worry, although Jews do enjoy full economic freedoms. Lastly, it should be noted that Jewish respondents were mainly comprised of people aged fifty or above (57%) all of whom are active members of the Jewish association in their city, but not members of any other political or social organization.

The second group that is interesting to examine is comprised of individuals between 18 and 30 years of age who generally fall under the category of participants who engage in the highest forms of political participation. Although this group of respondents was the smallest one (only 12 participants), 76% of them stated that they have engaged in political acts outside of the

Jewish associations, or better other political or social institutions. Hence, it can be concluded that this group prefers to be active outside of Jewish associations. The respondents (12 of them) cite “general dissatisfaction with the political situation in the country” (100%) and “general dissatisfaction with the economic situation in the country” (82%). A quote from an interview with a 21 year old Jewish female from Sarajevo clearly explains these trends:

*“I do not want to leave the country. When I see that my people do not have any political rights, have their hands tied to their backs and are satisfied with what they have, I get angry. This is why I have decided to join a political party. My party has already succeeded in giving “others” voice on the cantonal level. I hope Tuzla will follow. I am just so angered by my parents’ generation who tell me to leave BiH and find a better life. We will not have a better life if we do not ask for it. This is a continuous effort and not something that will or can and should happen overnight. That would not be normal. Yes, I am dissatisfied with the political situation in my country, but if belonging to a political party can change this and can help my community, why not join. This is the only way we can participate, anyway.”*

Overall, this group was not particularly concerned with the status of Jews, nor where they interested in contacting political authorities for socio-economic reasons (only 5% of respondents from this group engaged in these activities). A young Jewish man from Banja Luka, who just turned 18 and joined a political party in order to influence local policies, as he claims, explains:

*“I don’t want to hear stories about ‘how good it was in Yugoslavia’ anymore. This is our past, and I feel like we must turn to the present in order to change the situation. For me, belonging to a political party has several meanings: it gives me a voice that nobody would hear otherwise, it gives me power to influence policy processes, it gives me the right to complain if I do not succeed. People who sit at home and complain do not have such a right, because they don’t even try. As for my Jewish status, I view political participation as something individual and although I agree that all “others” should have this right collectively, I must say that if political party engagement is the way to influence policies and politics as a member of a national minority, than be it.”*

Hence, in comparison to the first group, this one is considered highly active, with an insignificant number of them being also the communicators. The trigger factors for political participation for the younger generation, hence, are more concerned with reaction to socio-economic issues through direct or indirect involvement in majority parties. The reasons for this could lie in the fact that younger generations have higher hopes for the political and economic improvements in the country (68%) and that they realize that a change can occur only if the highest forms of political participation are exercised. A focus group participant from Tuzla (28 years old) summarizes this:

*“I hope to be able to participate freely in politics one day. I hope to be able to say that as Bosnian, I am representing Bosnians...not Bosniaks, not Serbs, not Croats, but all Bosnians. Currently, my only way is to engage through majority parties. Change will come slowly; we have already succeeded with “Sejdić-Finci” although this was a long process. They will and must find a solution to implement this decision. We, all “others”, not just Jews, must press for this and the way to do it is through participating in politics in whichever way we can.”*

The trends and transformations in conventional political participation of Jews in post-Dayton Bosnia and Herzegovina obviously do not follow a specific pattern, but rather occur as a by-product of socio-political and economic inequalities resulting both from discriminating constitutional provisions and a large political apparatus which impoverishes the country. Hence, we cannot talk about different waves of mobilization which is often the case in countries with a longer history of democratic consolidation, but about different characteristics of participation among participatory groups. Conventional political engagement is perceptibly quite popular among Jews of all ages living in BiH, especially actions that include communication with government officials and electoral practices. Still, Bosnian Jews clearly observe politics as an act that goes way beyond voting or discussion and realize that there are more direct ways of influencing a society in which constitutional mechanisms for minority engagement are virtually non-existent.

Analyzing Jewish formal political participation in the post-Dayton era reveals certain continuations, but also divergences from the pre-Dayton period. Despite the absence of data pertaining to political participation before the signing of the Dayton Accords, Bosnian Jews played an influential role in the political development of Bosnia and Herzegovina through both formal and informal participation (see Chapter 6). Their involvement in political life transcended their minority status, thus furthering their own interests as a minority group, and hence today Bosnian Jews continue to have a significant political presence in the socio-political life of BiH, although not through direct channels. What is important to conclude is that this research has proved that we are not considering an isolated minority group whose political engagement is provoked only by group-related issues, but rather a group which is closely connected to the whole society and which aims to influence the injustices caused by politically unpopular moves. Most importantly, and as mentioned earlier, the case study of Jewish political participation in BiH confirms the findings of Riesman and Glazer (1965) which states that in unstable and repressive societies political oppression and/or dissatisfaction is the driving factor for political engagement.

## **PART II**

### **Conventional Political Engagement of Poles in Bosnia and Herzegovina - The Results**



### *Types of Participants*

The measurement and indicators of political participation used for determining the participation types among Bosnian Jews was equally applied to the Polish minority. The data obtained demonstrates several striking differences between these two minority groups, notably in terms of the level of political participation. Subsequently, the results demonstrate that 60% of Polish respondents are highly active, while only 39% are consumers or low active participants. Furthermore, 56% of Poles would contact a politician through a letter, while 44% state that they have already communicated with a member of political party. However, only 27% would communicate with government officials in order to resolve a social or an economic problem, which leaves us to speculate about other reasons for which Poles contact politicians, as the numbers above clearly demonstrate a much stronger will to communicate and a pattern of an already established communication with politically important figures.

When it comes to high active participants, the most popular act of political engagement was political party membership, and although a figure of 25% is not particularly high, it is much higher when compared to a 9% rate recorded among Jews. Participation in an electoral campaign comes next to political membership, with a rate of 19%, while the least favoured mode was financial support of a political party, with only 16% of Poles engaging in this activity. In relation to the first two activities, it can be concluded that not all Poles who are members of political parties actively engage in the actual work of the party. In other words, they are not there for reasons of increasing their group's visibility through political participation, but other motives prevail. Alternatively, just as among the Jewish population, the most attention-grabbing trends appear among the middle active participants. The communicators among the Polish group, just like Jewish population, feel most comfortable when contacting politicians through a letter, followed by communication with political party members. The rate for both activities is slightly higher for Poles than for Jews. Similarly, Poles do not seem to be overly engaged in direct contact with politicians (writing a letter to solve a personal or group social or political problem). Hence, the same conclusion can be made for this group – 56% of Poles *would* engage in written contact with politicians, but only 27% have already done so, the results which demonstrate that there is willingness, but that other factors influence the motives. This, in turn, results in most Poles actually not engaging in direct communication with political officials. Interestingly

enough, Poles have much lower tendency to only consume politics in comparison to Jews, with 39% of participants relying on different media channels to be informed about politics. Finally, 78% of Poles are regular voters, which represents an exactly the same number as the rate recorded among Jews.

Not least, several important correlations were noted for the predictors of political participation behaviour outlined above. Consequently, highly active participants were most likely to engage in contacting politicians in order to solve a personal or group problem of social or economic nature. A moderate positive significant correlation ( $r=0.58$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) exists between financial support of political movements and contacting authorities to solve a social problem. Similarly, a moderate positive significant correlation ( $r=0.55$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), although insignificantly lower than the previous, was recorded between financially supporting political movements and writing to political figures to resolve an economic issue. Respondents who engaged in electoral campaigns are also likely to have contacted politicians for social or economic reasons. As a result, moderate positive significant correlations were recorded between this predictor and writing to address social problems ( $r = 0.55$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and economic issues ( $r = 0.57$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Similar results appeared for the highly active participants who engage in financial support of political movements. A moderate positive significant correlation ( $r=0.52$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) was found for this predictor and communication with members of political parties (“I have communicated with members of political parties”). Alternatively, participants who have engaged in electoral campaigns also communicated with members of political parties ( $r=0.53$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). A surprisingly high positive significant correlation ( $r=0.85$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) was recorded between participating in an electoral campaign and financially supporting a political movement. When it comes to moderately active Poles, two high positive significant correlations exist between communication with members of political parties and engagement in contact with political officials in order to solve a social problem ( $r=0.67$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and economic issue ( $r=0.65$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Considering almost identical results, it can be noted that Poles, just as Jews, do not discriminate between social and economic reasons for contact, but communicate with politicians almost equally about these sets of problems, depending on the circumstances and the given time and space.

Lastly, it can be noted that most Poles can be categorized as “political communicators” who prefer to engage in expressive and/or verbal acts characteristic of political participation. An

active member of a Polish association from Gradiška (female, 29 years old) comments on this finding:

*“I am surprised that our results show that we are communicators. I probably live in a community that is more active. I am not surprised, however, by the fact that today we are more active than before. We have matured through history. As a group, a tightly knit group, I see that more of our members, especially those who are just now reconnecting to their Polish roots, see political participation as a way to finally further our status. When I say status I mean more political power and more socio-economic equality. This is why I am not surprised with the results. It just shows, just as through history, that certain historical periods have significantly influenced our awareness of what it means to participate. Today, BiH is a democracy, and as citizens of BiH we must find a way to influence politics, for which ever reasons.”*

Another young female (aged 27) from Prijedor says that:

*“Political participation is the basis of every successful democracy. As a group, I think we have come to realize that only through active and increased political activism we can change things for our group and for the whole society. Historically, we have not contributed much, we were, so to say, very ‘in-group’ oriented. We have made significant progress in terms of the way we perceive political participation as an act of democratic culture and as an act of both group and individual empowerment. Currently, this is what matters to us.”*

A fact that cannot be disregarded and that is mirrored in both quantitative and qualitative data is that a significant proportion of Poles who engage in highly active political acts through various means. These results are somewhat surprising when considering historical political position of Poles, as well as their present categorization as “others” under the Dayton Constitution:

1. Although having a marginal constitutional status, 25% of Poles from Bosnia and Herzegovina are members of political parties. Despite the fact that they do not hold important political positions (if any positions at all)<sup>436</sup>, they still engage in high political acts. Since most Poles in BiH live in Republic of Srpska, the assumption is that they most probably choose to become members of Serb-dominated parties, as central political options are scarcely available in this entity.
2. Historically, Poles were never strong communicators and have never represented a group that had significant political presence. They always sided with different main political protagonists, but were never a major political minority group. Hence, the results of this research have revealed that the historical narrative in the case of Poles is slowly changing and that a higher number of young to middle-aged Poles are becoming politically conscious.

### *Types of Participants by Behaviour - Expressive/Verbal and Cognitive*

Considering the fact that Poles are categorized as “political communicators” and since this behaviour is characterized by expressive and verbal acts, the same set of questions that was considered for the Jewish population under this sub-title will be analyzed for Poles. The aim remains the same, which signifies that these questions targeted Polish engagement in verbal discussions about politics with various actors, from family members and friends, to strangers and politicians. The research revealed that 73% of Poles engage in the activity requiring the least energy and time consuming activity – general discussion of political issues. More specifically, 39% of Poles strongly agreed with this statement, while 32% of them agreed with it (M=3.84, SD=1.29). The following statement, which still does not require major efforts in terms of time and energy, demonstrates that 58% of Poles do not have a problem with expressing their views to strangers about social networks to which they belong (M=1.42, SD= .49). Alternatively 42% of them answered “no” to this question. The third query which related to attempts to persuade people about the correctness of an individual’s political opinion revealed that 35% of Poles try to

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<sup>436</sup> I have not inquired about this for personal discretion reasons and the fact that this is not relevant for the study in question.

persuade other people about the correctness of their views, with 19% agreeing strongly and 16% agreeing ( $M=2.60$ ,  $SD=1.58$ ). The last question “I feel comfortable vocalizing my views to politicians”, which requires the most time and energy, is an act of political participation in which only 29% of Poles engage ( $M=1.71$ ,  $SD= .45$ ). This was also a “yes/no” question, meaning that 71% of Poles do not feel comfortable with engaging in this activity. Hence, just like in the case of Jews, Poles engage less in more complicated and time/energy consuming modes of political participation.

In concluding this section, I will also concentrate on Poles’ cognitive political behaviour, which pertains to judgment of BiH’s political system in the last four years, as well as confidence in political decisions and usage of media not only for information, but learning about politics and current events on domestic political scene. The first question, which related to usage of three different media channels to be informed about politics, revealed that 39% of Poles engage in this activity, which is significantly lower than Jewish respondents. The second question, which is directly related to the first tried to reveal the level of awareness about current events in Bosnian politics. 28% of Poles report that they are very informed; while a large 42% report that they are partially informed. 22% of Polish respondents were indifferent and only 8% were indifferent towards domestic political events. These results greatly coincide with the fact that 60% of Poles are highly active in politics, meaning that it is not surprising to see that most Poles are at least partially informed about national politics. When it comes to the third question, an overwhelming 91% of Poles report that they do not believe that the political system has functioned well over the last four years. Alternatively, 83% of them say that they do not have confidence in the decisions made by government officials. Again, question three explains the results presented in question four. Lastly, these results yet again prove that individual perceptions about politics can help explain individual and group involvement in different political participation activities. Even higher results (93%) emerged for the external efficacy indicator, tested through the respondent’s opinion towards the statement that “politicians are attentive to people’s needs”. Hence, just as it was the case with Jewish respondents, it can be said that the general dissatisfaction with present-day political and economic systems justifies this result. Lastly and related to the last statement, the theoretical assumption that passive participants are more inclined to think that politicians account for people’s needs is rejected also in the case of Poles from BiH, as the results demonstrate an equal spread of “no” answers across all three groups of respondents (high, mid

and low). However, Riesman and Glazer’s study (1965) which relates dissatisfaction/oppression to political participation is confirmed, just as it was in the case of Jews.

### **Age and Education as General Predictors for the Category of “Voters” among Poles**

#### *Age*

Age was also considered a relevant predictor for examining the level and trigger factors for political engagement among Bosnian Poles. Its relevance, was once again, especially important for the previously mentioned supposition that in comparison to middle-aged and retired population, young participants are less inclined towards voting. Hence, this predictor remains relevant also for the category of “voters”. The following age groups were present among Polish examinees:

#	Age	Reponses	%
1	18-30		22%
2	31-50		35%
3	51-70		31%
4	71-90		12%
	<b>Total</b>		<b>100%</b>

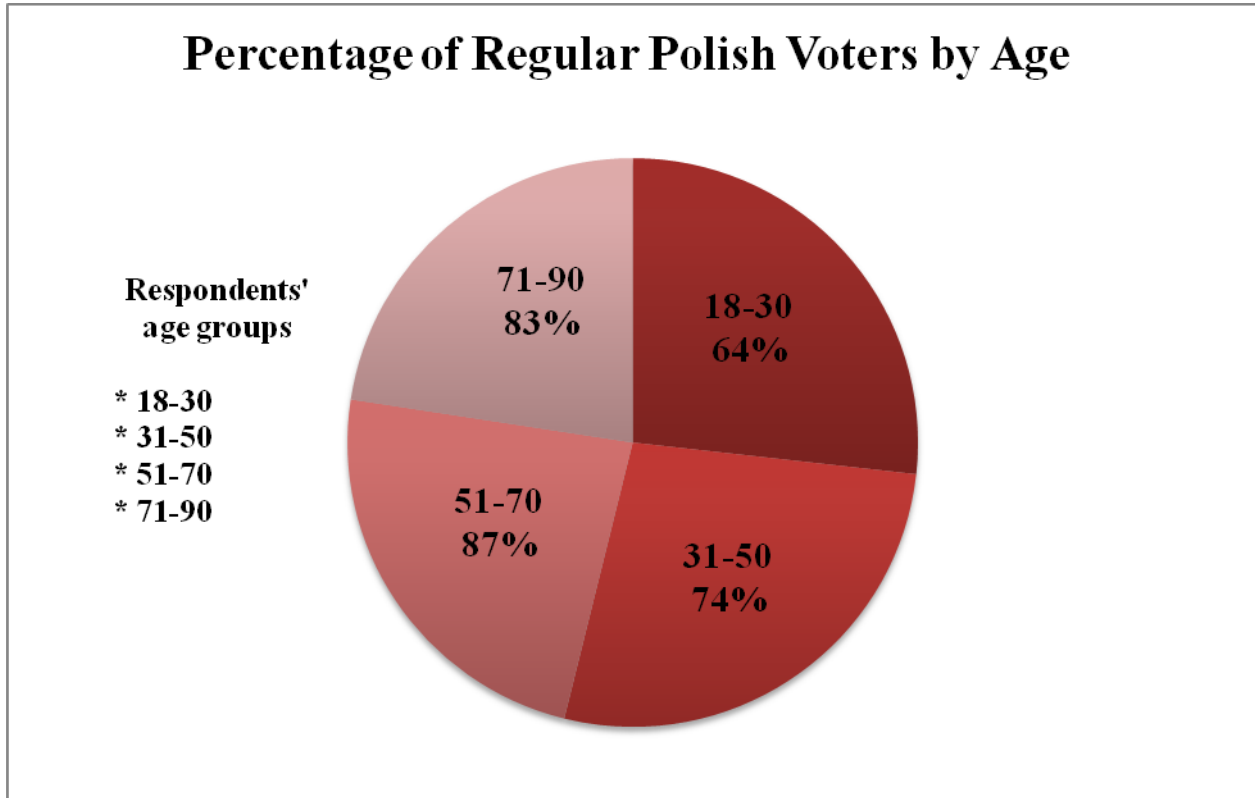
**Figure 7**  
**Age groups of Polish participants**

Out of 22 participants from the youngest age group (18-30), 14 of them or 64% either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “I take part in elections by voting”. A higher rate of voters was recorded among the respondents of the second age group (31-50), where out of 35 participants 25 or 74% vote in elections. Yet higher was the rate among the participants aged 51-70 where out of 31 respondents, 27 or 87% of them vote. A slightly lower rate of voters was recorded for the last group of participants aged 71-90, where out of 12 participants 83% vote. Considering the difference in numbers of participants between the last two groups, and the fact that the oldest group of participants had 10 respondents who strongly agree with the statement on their voting practices, the theoretical assumptions of classical studies<sup>437</sup> are confirmed for the group of Bosnian Poles. This means that older generations of Poles are more likely to engage in

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<sup>437</sup> See Chapter 2.

voting practices. Not least, it can be concluded that middle-aged to older Poles are more inclined to vote and that their commitment to voting is generally very similar (only 4% difference between these two age groups). The differences in numbers between the most active and least active voters amount to 23% for this group, compared to 14% rate among Jews.



**Figure 8**

**Percentage of Regular Polish Voters by Age**

***Education***

The primary hypothesis when it comes to participants' education that was used for Bosnian Jews remained the same for Polish examinees; hence, the supposition that the higher the education level of an individual, the more he/she will belong to the category of active participants or at least voters. Considering the results of the survey, and related to the category of "voters", we can conclude that, just as among Jews, Poles who are more educated (have higher education degrees) are more inclined to vote than those less educated (elementary school). The following are the results of the question "what type of education have you completed?":

#	Education degree	Responses	%
1	Elementary school		9%
2	Secondary school		37%
3	Bachelor's degree		34%
4	Master's degree		13%
5	Doctoral degree		7%
	<b>Total</b>		<b>100%</b>

**Figure 9**  
**Education level of Polish participants**

Out of 9% of respondents who completed elementary education, 67% either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “I take part in elections by voting”. Participants with secondary school degrees, 37 of them (70%) either agreed or strongly agreed. On the other hand, out of 54 respondents with some type of university degree, 46 of them or 85% vote. The same practice among holders of master or doctoral degrees that was noted among Jewish participants, also holds true for Poles – all but three participants with master degrees (9 out of 13) strongly agree, while a stunning 100% of respondents with doctoral degrees agreed with the statement. Thus, the hypothesis that the higher the education levels of participants, the higher their voting instance is also confirmed in the case of Poles. Differentiating between the levels of education of university educated participants this hypothesis is approved even further, just as it was the case with the Jewish population.

**Discussion: Transformations and Group Characteristics of Formal Political Participation of Poles in Post-Dayton Bosnia and Herzegovina**

In an attempt to conceptualize and frame a debate on formal political participation of Poles within broader post-Dayton political reality in BiH, several general, but also more specific conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, Poles represent a very active community, which is surprising considering their very low level of involvement in Yugoslav politics, but also during previous regimes. Interestingly, despite a very strong connection with their kin-state, their political participation is not at least influenced by events in their distant homeland, but is rather tied to Bosnia and Herzegovina itself. Data gathered both through focus groups and questionnaires



proved that it is more the individuals, albeit his/her close ties with the community that influence the political processes. Hence, the nature of political engagement actions that Poles employ are individualized, non-permanent reactions to *current* socio-economic circumstances. This means that Poles do not have a continuum in political participation, but rather that their involvement depends on the time and space in which problems concerning their own group become actualized. Thus, it can be claimed that formal political participation of Poles in BiH is sporadic.

However, the reasons or better trigger factors behind this group's political activism cannot be generalized on group level, as it is, once again, the individual that decides. The results of this work reveal two observable trends among Poles that participated in the research. Despite the fact that the historical narrative proves otherwise, Polish political participation today transcends former trigger-factors for formal political participation and it can be said that their political activism has become both more complex and inter-linked with other groups. Both trends are new and typical of today's Polish minority group. The first trend can be observed as a sole act of communication, which represents the most significant mode of political participation which is closely interlinked with more complex (high) political acts. The second trend shows a relatively significant number of Poles in political parties and support activities, which reveals that they engage in politics precisely because of dissatisfaction with the present political and economic system. Naturally, on individual level, both communication and highly engaging acts of political activism occur for different political reasons, but in general both middle and high political actions engage different generations, just as it was the case with Jews. I will, therefore, give some attention to this trend, all with the purpose of explaining the reasons behind more specific acts of political behaviour of Polish minority in BiH.

### ***Political Participation of Poles in BiH: What Motives Them?***

Unlike Jewish formal political participation which often occurs under the auspices of Jewish associations, this trend was not at all observable among members of the Polish community.

Alternatively, the first discernible trend among Poles who were both members and non-members of Polish associations across BiH, reveal that Poles prefer to get involved in politics for personal reasons, meaning that they are motivated by factors that transcend group issues. A male participant from a village near Prijedor, aged 34, explains his motivations to engage in formal politics:

*“I joined a political party when I was 25. I realized that political engagement would bring me personal benefits, that I would probably be able to find employment much faster and that I would be able to influence certain decisions. I also realized that for my village and my community I would be a source of hope, somebody who would fight for their well-being. Despite of my general involvement in local politics, I chose to stay outside of state-level politics. As a member of a national minority I am aware of the fact that I cannot participate in ‘higher politics’. This is fine. I think politics is more important on local level, so that change is visible to each member of the community.”*

A female focus group participant, aged 44, from Banja Luka, adds:

*“My involvement in politics is twofold – I engage for personal reasons that I will not talk about, but also to advance the well-being of all citizens in my city. Participation in local politics was the only available option and at first I engaged in one of the ruling parties here in Republic of Srpska. I was never discriminated for being Polish, but it was easier for me to say that I am Serb, because my mother is a Serb and my father is Polish. So, I say that I am Serb of Polish origin. I know this is not easy for other members of my (Polish) community. I did this, as I said, for personal reasons, but my main aim was to influence projects and decisions that involved socio-economic issues, especially those related to access to health care in small villages in Krajina, national minority associations funding and infrastructure projects related to rural development. This is where I see myself as being able to make a difference.*

Of course, the results shown in the first part of this section demonstrate that Poles communicate with political authorities in order to address socio-economic issues, but only 27%

do so. The other 71%<sup>438</sup> do not engage for these reasons, but more personal ones. Although I did not inquire into such individual motives for political involvement, especially those who are highly active, three interesting answers among this group of Polish participants emerged during focus groups: a) engagement in order to change things for better, not just for the minority group, but the whole country, b) engagement to improve minority statuses across BiH and c) engagement to advance cultural rights of Poles. Related to the status the first finding, a few interesting conclusions emerge also from the focus groups. A female participant from Gradiška, aged 36, summarizes this observation shortly:

*“It would be stupid to fight only for Polish rights. Of course, for me, as a Pole, this is important, but if the rights of Roma, Jews, Albanians, Ukrainians, etc. are not taken care of, the rights of Poles are also endangered. We are all “others” under the present Constitution and to advance the rights of one group implies advancing the rights of others. This especially relates to our right to political participation on all levels.”*

Another male participant from Prnjavor, aged 41, adds:

*“What is important for us Poles, if we are to talk about our political engagement is only and **only** a positive outcome of the “Sejdić-Finci” case. Why? Because this case represents a precedent for all minority groups. If we all cared enough, and by ‘we’ I mean all national minority groups, we would be able to come up with different proposals on how to implement the Court’s decision. However, I think that the problem lies in the fact that we do not see further than our own backyard, we do not understand, as groups, not as individuals, the importance of political participation and this is why there has been a complete stalemate for years.”*

Eleven other respondents from all focus groups offered similar views on why they engage in politics. All of them realize that Poles are a small minority, which means that the influence they can assert on the decision-making processes is minimal. What is more important, however, is the fact that Poles who participated in this research view themselves as members of a wider group,

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<sup>438</sup> Two respondents were neutral and said that they neither agree nor disagree.

the “others”, hence their motivation to participate is highly influenced by “discriminatory constitutional provisions”, “socio-economic status of second-class citizens” and “generally bad social, political and economic standing of all national minorities in BiH”<sup>439</sup>. Interestingly, only one reason cited by Polish participants is strictly tied to this group. A male participant from Prijedor, aged 46, explains this trend:

*“I am highly engaged in politics. As a member of the Polish community in BiH, I must say that I am mostly concerned with issues that regard the religious rights of Poles in the Republic of Srpska. We can practice Catholicism freely, but acts of religious hatred do happen sometimes. This is what I concentrate on in my political work. Also, we are mostly a rural community and you understand and know the difficult position of our farmers and villagers. What is pressing me the most is the fact that most of our Polish youth is ready to leave the country if things do not change for better. So, this is why I think we need to concentrate more on Polish issues in RS.”*

Another female participant, aged 61, also from Prijedor adds shortly:

*“This is not to say that other groups do not matter. However, we are a close community and we care for each other. This is what we grew up with and this is what they teach us in schools and churches. Communal engagement is more important than trying to resolve issues of high politics. Locally, we can change things for Poles...on the state level...well, that will be difficult.”*

These views suggest that although most Poles from BiH realize that the advancement of all minorities’ rights is essential also for Polish political empowerment, there are individuals who may not always recognize the opportunity that general advancement of political rights of persons belonging to national minority groups represents for their group. However, these views were isolated and mentioned exclusively by less educated and highly religious participants who came mostly from rural areas.

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<sup>439</sup> Quoted phrases emerged out of focus groups. They were mentioned five or more times by different participants.

Generally, however, the above results demonstrate that today, unlike in the past, Poles are more oriented towards the well-being of the regions and territories in which they live and the advancement of general national minority rights to political engagement, than individual Polish issues. These triggers complement the findings that 71% of Poles state that they are not optimistic about the future of the domestic political system. A 37 year old female participant from Gradiška, who claims to be highly politically active, explains:

*“This is not surprising. Of course we are concerned about the general well being of our community, but if the situation is bad for everybody, regardless of their ethnic belonging, this means that it is bad for us too. The situation in our town and in the country is generally very bad, many people, especially in rural areas, live on the margins of poverty, so to care about only Polish issues, our churches, festivals, associations, youth would be selfish and snobbish, to say the least.”*

Yet, the general dissatisfaction rate is still higher among Jews than Poles (29% of them are more optimistic), and this is more probably due to trends a) and b) outlined above. In relations to this, it is also interesting to note that out of 56 respondents in the focus group, 32 of them mentioned that if “things do not get better in the country, they can always go to Poland”. Hence, unlike Jews, Poles are presented with an alternative that might, at least in part, explain why they feel optimistic in general; the reasoning is the following – I will try and I am optimistic, but if things fall short of results, I have other equally optimistic options<sup>440</sup>. And although, just as all other national minority groups in BiH, Poles are a constitutionally marginalized group, their principal reasons for (non) activism do not principally relate to political isolation, but rather issues of socio-economic nature. Lastly, it should be noted that Polish participants mainly fell into the age group from 31 to 70, not all of whom were active members of Polish associations in their cities or towns, but also members of other political or social organizations.

Yet, just like in the case of Jews, a second group among Polish respondents that emerged and that should not be disregarded comprised of individuals between 18 to 30 years of age. Nevertheless, unlike Jewish respondents of this age, they do not seem to engage in the highest forms of political participation. This group was not significantly small as it had 22 participants.

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<sup>440</sup> This was the explanation that was given by 30 respondents.

However, only 8 of them stated that they have or would engage in political acts classified as high activism. A male and female participant from Prnjavor, both aged 19, explain their views:

*“In this country, young do not succeed in politics. So, we think that the young must concentrate on going to school, getting a decent job and starting a family. We both tried the youth club of this one party, but that was just ridiculous. You cannot influence anything and even if you become a candidate for the elections nobody will vote for you.”*

*“We should just leave the country and go to Poland, we all speak Polish anyway and have relatives there”, adds a 22 year old young man also from Prnjavor.*

These views, in part, explain the trends observed among the first group, but also generally reflect youth apathy towards political engagement observed in post-Cold War CEE states.<sup>441</sup> Furthermore, all 22 participants in this group were members of Polish associations, meaning that they were more closely linked to their community. One of the reasons for this is that all of these participants were from rural and predominantly Polish villages, hence the feelings of closeness and inability to engage in higher political acts originate from these instances. Two participants from predominantly Polish villages near Gradiška, a male and a female, both aged 27 make mention of this relationship:

*“Poles are a small, but very connected community. We grew up on very strict religious traditions and our Polish origin was very much manifested during our childhood. I am not surprised that the results show this. You see, we both grew up in our villages during the war, we could not go anywhere, so we naturally grew closer together”.*

*“During these days, we very close to the church, we learned Polish, so in case we had a chance to leave the country, we would at least speak Polish. If we were not here during the war, maybe the situation would have been different in terms of how we view and understand political participants.”*

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<sup>441</sup> See Wattenberg, M (2002). *Where have all the Voters Gone?* London: Harvard University Press.

Alternatively, it is important to note that 10% of the participants from this group stated that they have confidence in the decisions made by government officials. Considering that 17% of all respondents from this group agreed with this statement, this is a total of 58%, a number that cannot be disregarded. This, again, might coincide with the above mentioned reasons, but also the fact that this group was among the least educated (mostly high school degrees or students). Thus, it can be concluded that this group prefers to be active as part of group organizations, and that the trigger factors in their case lie in group-activism that is closely related to popular political trends that emerge within their associations and broader communities. This group also has the lowest electoral engagement rate, where 64% of participants regularly engage in voting.

Hence, it can be concluded that the trends in formal political participation of Poles in present-day Bosnia and Herzegovina obviously do not follow a specific pattern, but occur as products of different socio-political economic and personal reasons, which are not only tied to minority marginalization and inequalities resulting from discriminating constitutional provisions, but also group-specific reasons and individual motivations. Conventional political engagement appears to be rather popular among middle-aged Poles living in BiH, especially those actions that include political party membership, communication with government officials and electoral practices. Consequently, just as it was the case with Jews, the findings of Riesman and Glazer (1965) are also confirmed through the case study of Poles. Bosnian Poles, just like Jews, evidently choose to observe politics as an act that goes way beyond voting or discussion and realize that there are more direct ways of influencing the majority-led political system and decision-making groups, despite the fact that channels for such engagement are stringently confined and inadequate. Not considering this, it can be concluded that Poles are not an isolated minority group that acts in a vacuum of its own citizen-led groups and associations, but an increasingly important political actor that originates from the national minority-realm in a majority-dominated state.

## **Conclusion**

The main aim of this chapter was to examine the determinants of formal political participation of Jews and Poles in Bosnia and Herzegovina, to reach an understanding of the reasons behind their choices and how they compare to each other. The first part of the chapter examined current patterns of political participation among the Jewish community in BiH and also reported on the

type of participants. In the following section, political engagement in post-Dayton reality of the Polish minority in BiH was examined. In both sections I employed descriptive statistics and qualitative data to build up on the knowledge on the individual level of participation of Jews and Poles. Both qualitative and quantitative findings suggest that there are essential differences in the patterns of political participation of these two groups, while the type of participants variable is similar for both groups. In particular, there is a cross-generational absence of significant involvement in political acts that are considered high active.

Building on from this finding, the results showed that the older generations of Jews and Poles exhibit completely different behaviours. Conversely, older members of Jewish communities from BiH are predominantly active members in of Jewish associations, meaning that they participate in associations events, but more importantly use the associations as a channel to further their political, social and economic goals. This group of older Jews prefers to engage in politics for group reasons, whereby issues that pertain to the group (Jews) transcend individual interests, while the factors that trigger political participation are rest with great dissatisfaction with the current political (80% are unoptimistic) and economic (78% are unoptimistic) systems. On the other hand, older generations of Poles present a completely different picture. They are not active members of Polish associations and are motivated to participate by factors that transcend group interests. The research has shown that Poles engage in politics for three different reasons: a) to change things for better not just for the minority group, but the whole country, to improve minority statuses and to advance cultural rights of Poles. Alternatively, this chapter also examines the trends present among Jewish and Polish youth. Young Jews, if they choose to engage in politics, do so outside the Jewish associations. In short, unlike the older generations, they do not see associations as channels for furthering their or their group's political, social and/or economic goals. This group of respondents represented the highly active group. Quite strikingly, younger Poles were low active political participants, but, unlike younger Jews, they were very active in their organizations. They were among the least educated participants who prefer to be active within Polish associations.

In addition to these results, it is important to reiterate that neither of the groups can be termed as disengaged in politics. However, they are not highly engaged either. Consequently, both are considered to be "political communicators", with a slightly higher rate of such participants among Bosnian Poles. Both groups also exhibit very high levels of engagement



when it comes to voting practices. The findings further reveal that the principal reasons for the absence of highly active forms of political participation among these groups rests in the alienation from the political system and the ability to induce change, which, again stems from the constitutional limits. The results presented in this chapter represent the basis for the concluding discussion on the current trends and transformations that might be observed in the future, a discussion of which follows in the last chapter of this dissertation.

## **CHAPTER 7: CONCLUDING REMARKS - BROADER IMPLICATIONS OF JEWISH AND POLISH FORMAL POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN POST-DAYTON BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA**

This experimental and exploratory thesis has investigated the complexities of the right to conventional political participation of national minority groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina through the case study of two representative and influential minority groups by using the post-Dayton political realities and constitutional provisions as a framework for investigating the level and trigger factors of their political engagement. It has done so against the background that the Dayton Constitution and its subsequent amendments relating to participation rights of the constitutional category of “others” have failed the members of national minority groups. As a result, these groups are disinterested in engaging in active modes of political participation, the reasons for which primarily lie in their constitutional marginalization, but also weak individual triggers, fears and feelings of isolation, all of which are spurred by constitutionally prescribed political exclusion. The thesis has argued that one of the main obstacles to greater political participation of national minority groups in BiH is embedded in the fact that both international and local actors engaged in post-Dayton political processes in BiH rely too heavily or almost exclusively, on a wrong interpretation of the term “minority”, whereby the concept is applied against the territorial presence of the three *constituent groups* with full constitutional rights to political participation on all levels and through all forms. Hence, this notion has been used as starting point in this thesis, which proposes a move away from the concept of territorial minorities when considering formal political participation of national minority groups. This heavy reliance on addressing minority political participation in BiH has resulted in an empty literature and research gap within the field of national minority studies in a state which is precisely a “country of minorities”. Consequently, there are no major global studies of political participation of any national minorities in BiH or the region.

I have, on several occasions in this thesis, argued that in less established democracies, many national minorities feel isolated or excluded from the political system, this feeling translating not into “complete disengagement from politics but rather a critical attitude towards

institutional politics”.<sup>442</sup> This is precisely what the empirical research in this work has proved. There is a cross-generational absence of significant involvement in political acts that are considered high active, but interestingly neither of the groups is completely disengaged, but is considered to fall under the category of “political communicators”, with a slightly higher rate of such participants among Bosnian Poles. Alternatively, both groups significantly engage in voting practices, but both also escape formal high level participation. This research has revealed that the reasons for the latter lie in alienation from the political system, notably in influential state-level organs, and the inability to induce change, a trend blamed on constitutional limits set for members of national minority groups. On the other hand, these factors can be termed as principal triggers for national minority formal political participation. Aside from geo-territorial traits related to urban vs. rural groups, individual motivations which are deeply imbedded in these feelings of isolation, are also indispensable.

However, when compared to the limited research conducted on political participation in newly established, post-communist countries, formal political participation of Jews in BiH marks a stark contrast. Studies of newer democracies have found low levels of participation in formal forms of political involvement across all age groups.<sup>443</sup> Research conducted on youth political participation in Poland and Romania, for example, concludes that youth population’s exit from formal political participation is not coupled with informal involvement: “...legacies of communism and the rapid nature of post-communist political and socioeconomic transformation continue to negatively influence youth political participation in Poland and Romania.”<sup>444</sup> It is not within the scope of this study to speculate on why formal political participation of Bosnian Jewish youth, for example, is higher than that of youth in other post-communist countries, but it is interesting to note that the younger generation of Bosnian Jews has actively engaged in the highest means of political expression outside of Jewish associations. And although they do believe that national minority associations are there to preserve the tradition and keep the community together, they realize that the potential for any type of political activism cannot

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<sup>442</sup> Lamprianou, I., 2013. Contemporary Political Participation Research: A Critical Assessment. In *Democracy in Transition*. Springer Berlin Heidelberg. pp. 28-29.

<sup>443</sup> Robertson, F. M., 2009. *A Study of Youth Political Participation in Poland and Romania* (Doctoral dissertation, UCL (University College London). p.177.

<sup>444</sup> Ibid, p. 3.

originate from these institutions, but through involvement in majority parties.<sup>445</sup> This is a trend that was observed among Jewish youth in BiH in the past, notably in the interwar and post-World War II period.<sup>446</sup> Not least, Polish youth, although significantly less involved in formal political participation than Jewish youth, does not demonstrate extremely low levels of participation or any strong movement away from such engagement either. Rather, the reasons which emerged for such trends among Polish youth lie in geo-territorial isolation and the fact that the largest number of younger respondents in this group lived in rural areas with low or no access to formal political channels, aside from electoral engagement.

Alternatively, what this research has discovered is a decline in active involvement in minority group associations among younger generations of Poles, but also Jews in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This stands as an interesting occurrence in light of existing literature that discusses networks of association and political participation. Social ties through networks of association, both formal and informal, have been seen to produce greater civic participation and engagement through a variety of factors, including enhancement of democratic virtues, development of individual-level resources, and community attachment.<sup>447</sup> Some scholars even contend “associational experiences may have a greater impact on cooperative activities than traditional, individualized political participation.”<sup>448</sup> While formal political participation of the older generations of Bosnian Jews and Poles upholds this body of research, younger generations have obviously remained politically active without necessarily being active (aside from just membership) in their group’s associations. As I noted previously, the aim of this thesis was not to measure the specific impact of this causal mechanism. However, it is worth reiterating that younger generations of Bosnian Jews, and especially Poles, substantially engage in formal political participation in a manner that was atypical during any of the previous political systems that existed in Bosnian history.

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<sup>445</sup> See Chapter 5 for more details.

<sup>446</sup> See Chapter 6 for more details.

<sup>447</sup> Kwak, N., Shah, D. V., & Holbert, R. L., 2004. Connecting, Trusting, and Participating: The Direct and Interactive Effects of Social Associations. *Political Research Quarterly*, 57(4). pp. 643-4.

<sup>448</sup> *Ibid.*, 643.

Although, political participation rates and demands of self-aware national minority groups have been linked to different waves of citizen mobilization, here referring to other, more informal practices of political engagement, which is often the case in countries with a longer history of democratic consolidation, the trends in political behaviour of national minorities considered in this work do not reveal such practices. Hence, it can be concluded that in BiH, formal political engagement of national minority groups, at least in the current statistical showings, demonstrate only different characteristics of participation among participatory groups. Considering that both groups are considered middle active “political communicators” and active “voters”, mobilization is not a trend that will emerge out of these behaviours, at least not in the short to medium run. This is because mobilization requires much more energy and time involved in more complex and demanding acts of formal political participation. Due to the scope of this research, I am aware that informal practices must also be considered in order to assume broader conclusions about the outcome of future minority mobilizations, thus I will only note that formal political participation as observed among Jews and Poles in post-Dayton BiH does not carry a significant mobilization trend in the near future. However, the patterns of behaviour identified in this study can certainly be used as a starting point for future research in that *a) they proved effective in examining the level and trigger factors for general formal political participation and b) feed future political and historical empirical research on Jewish and Polish political behaviour*. Hence, the trends observed here can be useful for examining other national minority groups in BiH and the region,<sup>449</sup> but also deem to contribute to observing informal political practices of these groups through the use of several indicators outlined in this study. Methodologically, the Six Position Model, thus, stands as a viable empirical model for studying national minority groups both in BiH and in the region.

But, what can the consideration of two groups’ political participation levels tell us about the ties between groups’ historical circumstances, individual motives, current trigger factors and participation? First, consider the relevance of one of the most pressing questions in minority studies: Do high levels of political engagement imply a change in state’s political set-up? A positive answer to this query is certainly of much worry to majority leaders, especially when considering a fragmented state where two or more groups are already present in the pre-

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<sup>449</sup> Provided that “old” minorities are considered and that they share common historical and socio-political trends with the two groups observed here. However, this is indeed the case with all national minorities that inhabit the countries of former Yugoslavia.

determined power-sharing model (Lijphart, 1995) where a threat to the existing state apparatus would signify an alarm to the groups in power. Translate this scenario to post-Dayton reality of BiH<sup>450</sup> and one will come across a growing pressure from self-aware groups whose political participation is far from superficial and insignificant. To dig deeper into this problematic, I reveal results that are not insignificant, but contrary to popular belief, national minorities in BiH, at least so the groups considered in this study, do show significant political involvement. Although engaged in quite “quiet” methods, these groups do not shy away. As a 23 year old Pole from a village near Gradiška said:

*“I don’t feel that we are marginalized. I never felt like I was isolated from the political life of my country. Of course, yes, I cannot run for president, but presidents in this country are only puppets, symbolical representations of their grand groups. Political change comes from within. So, in my opinion, a quiet group achieves much more than well-versed politicians... it starts from the bottom, from workers, peasants, students... History teaches us that major changes occurred with the incentive of groups that are considered “weak”. I am surprised by the fact that many young people in my town are now discovering their Polish origin. And what happens – they become proud, they visit Poland, they start learning Polish, they become self-aware and push for their rights. So, a lurking Polish activist might just be somewhere here. You have to look at the changing identities, and national minorities in this country are becoming increasingly self-aware. I know quite a few Hungarians and Ukrainians, the same is going on in their families – as grandparents die, the young become so self-aware...”<sup>451</sup>*

Much of political participation narrative is indeed concerned with identity and historical evidence. As I was nearing the end of my writing process, I non-intentionally ended-up performing national minority songs at the MinorityFest held in Sarajevo in December of 2015. I approached not Jews and Poles, this time, but representatives of a few other groups. It was striking how, in an informal and non-strictly politically oriented conversation, the theme of political participation emerged in some form or other. So, just as the case of Jews and Poles

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<sup>450</sup> E.g. Sejdić-Finci case.

<sup>451</sup> Notes from the focus group with members of the Polish Association “Mak” from Gradiška.

demonstrate, no national minority group is completely immune to constitutional limitations and importance of change that comes from within. Just as theoretical works considered in this study suggest<sup>452</sup>, groups that are tightly-knit into formal associations tend to represent the core platform for national minority awareness about the importance of exercising different forms of political participation. Yet, young minority group members in BiH appear to separate minority association membership from political participation. So, in answering the query from the beginning of this work, I can conclude that national minority groups in BiH are becoming increasingly politically self-conscious, are organized into strong communities, with an ardent support of kin-states and relatively active youth, all trends which imply that the current political system in BiH will have to accommodate these groups. Furthermore, the hypothesis that “Jews and Poles are not active participants in Bosnia and Herzegovina’s political life” that was tested in this study is hereby dismissed.

A closely related normative question concerning political participation rights and relating to regional examples of such practices<sup>453</sup>, the likeliness for the formation of minority political parties in BiH, was the next question I posed. Although both case studies confirm Riesman’s and Glazer’s (1965) statement that dissatisfaction and oppression motivate participants to engage in politics, the research results from both groups quite clearly illustrate the fact that political party membership, as the highest form of political activism, remains an unpopular mode of political engagement among minority groups. The focus group research with members of Jewish and Polish respondents suggest that the core reasons for such low national minority engagement in political parties are:

1. Existing political parties are majority-oriented;
2. Political party membership does not translate into national minority representation;
3. Members of national minorities cannot run for higher offices even if they are members of a political party;

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<sup>452</sup> See works of Putnam (1993) and Foley and Edwards (1996).

<sup>453</sup> See Chapter 6, Part II.

4. Ideological streamlines are too ethnically narrow and call for a complete abandoning of minority ethnic identity<sup>454</sup>;
5. Consultation of national minorities in political processes, in case in which they are party members, is symbolic and formally weak.

Hence, the results of this research suggest that constitutional inadequacies in form of adequately applied laws and weak consultation mechanisms lie at the core of low political party engagement among members of national minorities in BiH. So, the reasons are not religious, not inexistent legal principles, not strict minority adherence to their cultural practices and not even the engagement of the kin-state, but major institutional absence of minority group inclusion norms or diversity-oriented policies. Not least, my interviews with those national minority members who do engage in political parties and disregard the five “norms” for disengagement outlined above reveal factors that prompt their active behaviour: duty (a sense of having to change something for their group), indignation towards phlegmatic engagement of the minority community and morality (all of them citing civic duty and defence of minority rights as their primary moral reason for such activism). Hence, in answering my main question I had to account for two groups - those who do not engage in political parties and those who do. Why? The reasons for this are twofold: first, this approach reveals that the studied national minority groups in BiH are *self-motivated*, or better stimulated only by individual reasons and thus opt not to participate because they, as individuals do not benefit, while others are *community-oriented* and are inclined to abandon their individual beliefs in favour of the group. Any of these factors can provide the impetus for moral political action, but the probability for the formation of minority political party is considered low. Again, there are a few reasons for this, all of which emerge directly out of my research and some of which were trends that I observed during focus groups and interviews:

1. Self-motivated individuals show no interest in minority political party formation because the reasons for their political activism are always spurred by individual problems. Hence, they engage sporadically.

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<sup>454</sup> E.g.: A Jew must declare him/her self as a Bosniak, Serb or Croat in order to run for higher offices.



2. Community-oriented individuals show no interest in minority political party formation because: such parties would have low membership, would lack core ideology due to differing ideological orientations, would lean towards fragmentation of national minority groups, would have sporadic territorial representation (exist in distant parts of the country, as national minority groups in BiH are scattered around the whole country with no predominant minority-inhabited regions).<sup>455</sup>

Thus, the differing trigger mechanisms for the formation of minority political parties are weak and the implication of such political behaviour is that Bosnia and Herzegovina, unlike its neighbouring states, is unlikely to experience the emergence of national minority political parties. The level of their engagement, as demonstrated through the case study of Jews and Poles, is still not high and combined with geo-territorial, ideological and motivational factors, this type of political change in BiH can be dismissed.

More specifically, what is the relevance of these findings for understanding political participation of national minority groups? In an attempt to answer this question, I chose to provide an explanation to the query of whether both groups exhibit the same behaviour. The aim of this approach was to single out or equally so, dismiss, factors that prove irrelevant, or that show a complete presence or absence across both groups. My attempt was, thus, to further or narrow down the traditional indicators used in studies of Verba, Nie and Kim (1979) that offered a starting point for my research. Of all the explanations offered for relative absence of high modes of political activism, there was one astonishing reaction: lack of opportunity and choice. A staggering 98% of all focus group participants said that they never had the opportunity to join a party that would offer a platform for minority inclusion, while the choice of political parties was limited to majority-led and often radical or scandal-prone party with non-existent minority inclusion/issue agendas. So, it was again, the trigger factors mentioned above that influenced these decisions – individual-oriented group vs. community oriented group. Surprisingly, the latter agreed that most parties are majority-led and radical, ethnically divided and oriented towards issues of “vital national interest” of the constituent groups. Therefore, both groups exhibit similar behaviour, but this trend can be said to be tied with the current political set up and weak legal frameworks within the field. Hence, it is the situational variables tied to orientations

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<sup>455</sup> Both observations emerged during individual interviews and focus groups.

and scope of the existing majority parties, as well as their lack of concern towards the issue of minority inclusion that severely limit high political participation of national minority groups in BiH. Consequently, it would be useful for future studies of similar nature to modify or even omit examining high acts political participation in political contexts where such modes of participation are low not because of a complete absence of interest, but because of institutional insufficiencies to implement and allow for such minority political participation and inclusion.

The political participation theory outlined in this work, thus, only intends to form a micro-foundation for a modified approach to examining political participation of national minority groups which are small in number and live in an ethnically fragmented state. The examination of historical triggers which contributed to group's (dis)engagement are as equally essential as using traditional indicators for studying political engagement. Thus, the combination of history, modified approach to traditional measures of formal political participation, as well as no exclusive reliance on a single methodology is what I encourage scholars of similar interest to apply. In doing so, we need more information on the very processes that occur in a particular state, as in many cases studying national minority political participation in post-communist states, we must avoid the supposition of entirely western concepts on traditionally authoritarian and non-western societies. The same is true of studying such groups in other more distant cultures and spaces. We need to know more about the role played by national minority associations and the power that lies within these formal minority institutions, and while this study offers such perspectives on two national minority groups living in BiH, the same is advised in other studies. The historical expectations and patterns of participation, traditional ideals, ethnic cultures in relations to ideologies and connections to the kin-state (where applicable) all form a platform for this new approach to examining, but also measuring political participation.

As I constructed my research framework, in many instances I thought of the ethical perspective that is so deeply imbedded in all individuals with whom I conducted my interviews and focus groups. The feeling of group closeness was very typical for both groups, but it appeared that Jews were less prone to this feeling, and although the feeling of "Jewish bond" was not entirely absent, they proved very morally salient; for them, the well-being of all citizens in BiH was very important, and as outlined on several occasions in this dissertation, there is also a

notable bond<sup>456</sup> between Jews and the constituents. The same was not, however, so true of the Polish group, mainly because my respondents live in closely-knit rural areas and are not constantly exposed to majority groups in terms of sharing the same problems or even contacts. So, moral salience can also be one of the factors to account for in the processes of examining political participation behaviour of specific groups.

Finally, what does the study of political participation of national minority groups in a post-conflict country really contribute to the discipline? The study of political behaviour and its most essential formal modes that are applicable in a post-conflict, multi-ethnic state, notably in the form that was used in my research, show an alternative way of viewing political behaviour through a specific prism that uses a combination of traditional approaches to examining political participation to framing it for a post-conflict state and applying it to a specific context of small national minority groups. What is more, the historical narrative plays the key in determining the modes that were used to study present-day behaviours, but also to draw a line between trigger factors that existed then and now. This bond between history and political participation is a new approach offered for future studies of national minority or other minority political behaviours, not only in the area of conventional, but also informal and seemingly more popular forms of engagement in today's world. In fact, this approach raises interesting questions in terms of ethnic and cultural ties and their connectedness to already applied methods of approaching political participation. Not least, this work provides important policy conclusions for the study of national minority political participation, but I will outline only a few in order to avoid a policy-oriented narrative that might turn this work into a policy-option constructing and analysis platform. The critical factors that emerged out of this work were the connection of historically-embedded elements and individual orientations (individual versus community orientation). Although the traditional methods of examining political participation of Jews and Poles, in my case, were extremely beneficial and prove useful for studying other groups, the historical narrative combined with individual orientations and trigger factors for participation are key options which need further incorporation into the classical political participation frameworks. Some of the policy questions that remain open are how can they be developed as indicators? How can they be incorporated into traditional measures of political participation? Are they equally useful for

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<sup>456</sup> These bonds include economic and political bonds, cultural influences, notably in music and applied arts, as well as personal bonds, such as social connectedness through close friendships, relationships and marriages.

studying non-conventional participation, as a newly popular method of citizen engagement? Can existing classifications/categorization systems be reversed to incorporate these two elements? If so, how? What causes these elements to emerge as relevant factors in a post-war society? Answering these questions will carry implications for works on political participation, minority and cultural studies, political psychology and public policies that surround the issue of political participation of national minorities. This work, thus, provides a link to applied work that concerns the fundamental right to political participation of all groups, and concludes that, despite the fact that Bosnia and Herzegovina's national minorities are marginalized, it, just as many states of the post-communist world in Eastern Europe did in the aftermath of the Cold War, faces an increased pressure from self-aware minority groups which seek their right to collective political participation.

# APPENDICES

# **Appendix A: Questionnaire on Political Participation of Jews and Poles (in local language as originally distributed)**

## **PRISTANAK NA UČESTOVANJE U ISTRAŽIVAČKOM PROJEKTU**

### **Formalno političko učestvovanje Jevreja i Poljaka u Bosni i Hercegovini**

Pozvani ste učestvovati u istraživačkom projektu koji vodi magistrica Maja Savić-Bojanić, doktorska kandidatkinja na Fakultetu političkih nauka Univerziteta u Buckinghamu. Podaci skupljeni tokom ovog projekta koristit će se prije svega kao temelj trenutnog istraživanja formalnog političkog učešća Jevreja i Poljaka u BiH. Istraživanje se provodi u svrhu izrade doktorske disertacije pod radnim naslovom „Formalno političko učešće Jevreja i Poljaka u BiH“. Osim toga podaci prikupljeni tokom ovog istraživanja mogu biti predstavljeni u stručnim člancima, prezentacijama na konferencijama, ili u budućem radu. Vi možete učestvovati u ovom projektu ako ste član neke od udruženja ovih manjinskih grupa u BiH ili se izjašnjavate kao Jevrej ili Poljak.

### **SVRHA PROJEKTA**

Glavni cilj ovog istraživanja je da analizira nivo političkog učešća Jevreja i Poljaka u BiH, kao i razloge za njihovo političko uključenje u BiH. Želim saznati zašto učestvujete ili ne učestvujete u nekim od glavnih oblika političke participacije, odnosno koji su Vaši motivi za to, kao i doći do određenih korelacija između Vaših godina, spola, nivoa obrazovanja i ekonomskog stanja i nivoa i razloga za političko učešće.

### **PROCEDURE**

Ako budete htjeli učestvovati u ovom projektu, zamolit ću Vas da odvojite 10-tak mintu vremena i ispunite upitnik koji je priložen. Svi odgovori su anonimni.

### **MOGUĆI RIZICI I NEUGODNOSTI**

Projekt ne predstavlja nikakav zdravstveni niti moralni rizik.

#### **P1. Vaš spol:**

- Muški
- Ženski

**P2. Vaše godine:** \_\_\_\_\_ (upišite odgovor na praznu liniju).

**P3. Vaš nivo obrazovanja:**

- Osnovna škola
- Gimnazija ili stručna srednja škola
- Fakultet
- Magistarski studij
- Doktorski studij

**P4. Da li ste trenutno zaposleni**

- Da
- Ne
- Penzioner/-ka sam

**P5. Ako ste na prethodno pitanje odgovorili sa da, koje je Vaše zanimanje:**  
\_\_\_\_\_ (upišite odgovor u prazan prostor)

**Molim Vas da na sljedeća pitanja odgovorite tako što ćete zaokružiti broj koji najbliže označava Vaše trenutno mišljenje/ponašanje. Broj 5 znači da se u potpunosti slažete sa navedenom tvrdnjom, dok broj 1 označava potpuno neslaganje.**

**P6. Glasam na izborima:**

1. Uopšte se ne slažem                      2. Ne slažem se                      3. Ne znam                      4. Slažem se  
5. U potpunosti se slažem

**P7. Da bih se informisao/-la o politici čitam novine:**

1. Uopšte se ne slažem                      2. Ne slažem se                      3. Ne znam                      4. Slažem se  
5. U potpunosti se slažem

**P8. Da bih se informisao/-la o politici gledam TV:**

1. Uopšte se ne slažem                      2. Ne slažem se                      3. Ne znam                      4. Slažem se  
5. U potpunosti se slažem  
2.

**P9. Da bih se informisao/-la o politici slušam radio:**

1. Uopšte se ne slažem                      2. Ne slažem se                      3. Ne znam                      4. Slažem se  
5. U potpunosti se  
slažem

**P10. Pričam o dešavanjima u politici ili diskutujem o politici sa drugim ljudima:**

1. Uopšte se ne slažem                      2. Ne slažem se                      3. Ne znam                      4. Slažem se  
5. U potpunosti se slažem

**P11. Pokušavam uvjeriti prijatelje i/ili druge ljude da su moja politička uvjerenja ispravna:**

1. Uopšte se ne slažem                      2. Ne slažem se                      3. Ne znam                      4. Slažem se  
5. U potpunosti se slažem

**P12. Tražio/-la sam pomoć od političara kako bih riješio/-la probleme u našem društvu koji me muče:**

1. Uopšte se ne slažem                      2. Ne slažem se                      3. Ne znam                      4. Slažem se  
5. U potpunosti se slažem

**P13. Tražio/-la sam pomoć od političara kako bih riješio/-la ekonomske probleme u našem društvu koji me muče:**

1. Uopšte se ne slažem                      2. Ne slažem se                      3. Ne znam                      4. Slažem se  
5. U potpunosti se slažem



**P14. Razgovarao/-la sam sa članovima političkih stranaka ili pokreta o politici:**

2. Uopšte se ne slažem                      2. Ne slažem se                      3. Ne znam                      4. Slažem se  
5. U potpunosti se slažem

**P15: Finansijski sam podržao/-la određeni društveni/politički pokret, političku stranku, političara ili političkog predstavnika:**

1. Uopšte se ne slažem                      2. Ne slažem se                      3. Ne znam                      4. Slažem se  
5. U potpunosti se slažem

**P16: Kroz učestvovanje u političkoj kampanji podržao/-la određeni društveni/politički pokret, političku stranku, političara ili političkog predstavnika:**

1. Uopšte se ne slažem                      2. Ne slažem se                      3. Ne znam                      4. Slažem se  
5. U potpunosti se slažem

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**Molim Vas da odgovorite sa DA ili NE na sljedeća pitanja:**

**P17: Aktivan sam član društvene/političke organizacije ili stranke:**

- Da  
 Ne

**P18: Ako se ne bih slažio sa odlukom Vlade, bio/-la bih spreman/-na napisati pismo u kojem izražavam svoje mišljenje predstavniku Vlade:**

- Da  
 Ne

**P19: Kada se družim sa ljudima koje ne poznajem, spreman/-na sam izraziti svoje mišljenje o društvenim mrežama kojima pripadam:**

- Da  
 Ne

**P20: Jasno izražavam svoju i zabrinutost moje zajednice političarima:**

- Da
- Ne

**P21: Imam povjerenje u odluke koje donose političari i/ili drugi vladini službenici:**

- Da
- Ne

**P22: Vjerujem da je trenutni politički poredak u BiH dobro funkcionisao u zadnj četiri godine:**

- Da
- Ne

**P23: Optimista sam kada je riječ o budućnosti politike u BiH:**

- Da
- Ne

**P24: Vjerujem da je unutrašnji ekonomski sistem funkcionisao dobro u zadnje četiri godine:**

- Da
- Ne

**P25: Optimista sam kada je riječ o budućnosti ekonomskog napretka BiH:**

- Da
- Ne

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**Molim Vas da izaberete opciju koja Vam je najbliža**

**P26:**

- Veoma sam informisan/-na o trenutnim dešavanjima u BH politici
- Djelimično sam informisan/-na o trenutnim dešavanjima u BH politici
- Nisam dobro informisan/-na o trenutnim dešavanjima u BH politici
- Ne zainteresovan/-a sam za trenutna dešavanja u BH politici

**P27:**

- U potpunosti razumijem način na koji funkcionišu BH političke i pravne institucije
- Djelimično razumijem način na koji funkcionišu BH političke i pravne institucije
- Ne razumijem način na koji funkcionišu BH političke i pravne institucije
- 

**P28: Molim Vas da izaberete odgovor koji na najbolji način prikazuje Vaše ekonomsko stanje u zadnje četiri godine**

- Nisam imao/-la dovoljno novca da podržim sebe i svoju porodicu
- Imao/-la sam jedva dovoljno novca da podržim sebe i svoju porodicu
- Imao/-la sam više novca nego što mi je bilo potrebno

**P29: Molim Vas da predvidite svoje buduće ekonomsko stanje:**

- Imat ću manje novca za sebe i svoju porodicu
- Imat ću jednaku količinu novca za sebe i svoju porodicu
- Imat ću više novca za sebe i svoju porodicu

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