

Prikazi knjiga / Review Article

Soeren Keil, *Multinational Federalism in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, Ashgate Publishing Limited: Farnham, 2013, pp. 219, ISBN-13: 978-1138246881, ISBN-10: 1138246883

The book consists of an introductory part, four chapters and conclusion followed by bibliography and index. Its main goal is to provide an explanation to the functioning of the Bosnian political system applying the theory of multinational federalism and the power-sharing approach known as consociationalism in order to explain the functioning and the performance of the Bosnian political system which is the direct result of the Dayton Peace Agreement (DPA). Methodological concerns place this book in the area of a representative case study in comparative politics whereby the application of federalism and federation in Bosnia and Herzegovina is for the purpose of confirming and understanding a larger group of similar cases.

Introductory part deals with the definition of the key terms such as democracy, democratization process, federalism, federation, nationalism, multinational state which are crucial for the proper understanding of the functioning of the post-war Bosnian political system. The special emphasize is given to the role of the federal tradition in general and to a socialist tradition of federalism in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina in particular. Author makes this part of the book quite interesting by quoting extensively both classical and contemporary sources in elaborating these concepts. Keil states that the basis for this work will be the federal bargaining theory, (pp.11-12) which implies co-operation and the will to compromise among political elites (p.14). The end of the introductory part discusses among others Ernest Gelner's, Kenneth McRoberts' and Anthony Smith's theory of nationalism using the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the context of former Yugoslavia (pp.24-28).

Second chapter evaluates various theories of multinational federalism and introduces the concepts of liberal nationalism and consociationalism. Here author heavily depends among others on the works produced by Arend Lijphart and Will

Kymlicka. Keil describes four basic principles of consociationalism: proportional representation, mutual veto, segmental autonomy and grand coalition. He provides their pro and cons and gives a brief and quick hint why it is quite difficult for consociationalism to be functional in Bosnia (pp. 35-36). He quotes Donal Horowitz and his serious criticism of the creation of homogenous sub-units and segmental isolation in the multinational federation (p. 43). Instead, Horowitz argues for the creation of multinational regions whose representatives will be elected by a preferential electoral system and accordingly will enhance and favor co-operation between different national groups (p. 43). According to the author, the main obstacles for the normal functioning of multinational federations are lack or the full absence of loyalty to the state by one or more segments of the society, the issue of territoriality and secession, policy issues related to the centralization and decentralization in the areas of education, language culture and immigration and finally the issue of symmetrical and asymmetrical decision making power distribution between the central and lower levels of governance (pp. 47-51).

Third chapter elaborates the historical development of Bosnia's federal tradition relying primarily on three main books in the field, *Bosnia- A Short History* by Noel Malcolm, *Bosnia and Herzegovina- A Tradition Betrayed* by Robert Donia and John Fine and *The History of Bosnia* by Marko Atilla Hoare (p. 54). It is a well known fact in the field of international relations that contemporary issues are very much connected to historical experience and this is even more relevant to the Balkans in general and Bosnia and Herzegovina in particular since a lot of history and historical events took place there. During the Ottoman Empire Bosnia and Herzegovina had a heterogeneous society and gradually developed from multi-religious to multiethnic and finally multinational country in the 19th century. However, full development of the Bosnian Muslims into an ethnic and national group happened in the beginning of the 20th century under the Austrian occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina when Bosnian Muslims demanded political rights and concessions, created first political parties and organizations (pp. 55-59).

Interethnic cooperation in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been the key to peace and stability. Hence, there have been continuities vis-à-vis the fact that different political regimes and authorities gradually introduced power-sharing formula throughout the Bosnian history. It can be said that this has gone through five different phases including the current arrangement of the Bosnian political system.

First, the origins of consociationalism in Bosnia and Herzegovina can be traced back to the second half of 19th century Ottoman Bosnia when the Ottoman constitutional law allowed for the creation of a multi-religious Consultative Assembly in Bosnia and Herzegovina which was based on the principles of grand coalition and minority representation as each *sandzak* was allowed to send three Muslim representatives, two Christian and one Jewish representative to this legislative body (p. 60). This idea of consociationalism was even further strengthened during the Austrian occupation. Namely, after the establishment of the first political parties in

the beginning of the 20th century¹ Bosnia and Herzegovina was granted a constitution in 1910 which marked the creation of the Bosnian Parliament elected on a proportional representation system². Comparing to the legislative assembly during the Ottoman Empire the members of this parliament were elected in relatively free, fair and competitive elections and it marks the beginning of consociational decision-making in Bosnia and Herzegovina (p. 62). Third, the 1974 constitution of the former Yugoslavia introduced decentralization as a process of federalization and guaranteed sovereign rights to the republics, which became the key decision-makers and received more constitutional power triggering a strict power-sharing principles in central institutions based on the consociational principles (p. 71). Fourth, after the first parliamentary election in Bosnia were held in November 1990, the newly elected elite introduced a quite rigid model of consociational decision-making system in central institutions whereby any change to the Bosnian constitution and the Bosnian border would require a unanimous consent of the National Board in which 20 MPs, of each of the three constituent peoples were represented (p. 74). Furthermore, Party of Democratic Actions (SDA) as the leading party of the Bosnian Muslims preferred a consociational power-sharing approach since federalism was seen as the first step towards the break-up of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Finally, consociationalism as a power-sharing arrangement with its all four characteristics is embedded in the Dayton Peace agreement, Annex 4, which is the origin of the current Bosnian political system.

The main emphasize in chapter four is on the nature of Bosnian state, power-sharing mechanism in the post-Dayton Bosnia and Herzegovina at the state, entity, cantonal and local levels and the development of the party system. From the constitutional point of view Bosnia and Herzegovina is not an ethnic federation, but territorial one. However, in reality it works as an ethnic federation and especially at the state and entity levels.

While elaborating power-sharing Keil applies the consociational framework developed by Arend Lijphart and discusses the composition of Bosnia's central institutions in regards to grand collations, proportional representation, mutual veto and segmental autonomy. The main premise and one of the core elements of consociationalism is that in a heterogeneous society such as Bosnia and Herzegovina the focus is on moderate political elites who are willing to cooperate and compromise for the sake of creating political stability and facilitating economic development of the country. However, post-Dayton Bosnia and Herzegovina has been characterized by the application of politics as zero-sum game (p. 105). Since 1996 when the three main political parties³ dominated the Bosnian politics it is

1 Muslim National Organization and the Croat National Union were created in 1906 and Serbian National Organization in 1907.

2 Out of the 72 seats, 31 were reserved for Orthodox Christians, 24 for Bosnian Muslims, 16 for Catholics and one for Jews.

3 Party of Democratic Action (SDA), Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) and Serbian Democratic Party (SDS) representing Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs respectively.

quite clear that they have lost monopoly within their communities. However, the Serb and to a large extent Croat based political parties have continued their politics of secessionist movements and the goal to curve-up the country. On the other hand, Bosniak based political parties have always promoted the concept of a united and prosperous country. However, they have not been so successful in achieving these goals since as they focused on their own political advantages rather than on sincere and genuine progress for the country. Author concludes this chapter by stating that power-sharing approach introduced by the Dayton Peace agreements has not been able to create an environment and political atmosphere conducive for the political stability because it has not originated naturally though compromise but was imposed from outside (p. 122).

The last chapter discusses the nature of the post-Dayton Bosnian federalism and the role of the local elites and international actors in certain policy areas where some significant changes have occurred with special emphasize on a gradual reform of the constitution and a further strengthening of the state institutions. In the first few years after the war international community represented by the Office of the High Representative (OHR) imposed many measures which were necessary for the normal functioning of the state. This includes the imposition of a flag, a common currency, a national anthem, a new coat arms and a new law on citizenship (p. 158). Some results have been achieved by the local political elites such as military reform and the creation of the State Border Service (DGS), the State Investigation and Protection Agency (SIPA) a ministry of Defense at state level, the establishment of an Indirect Taxation Agency (ITA) and introduction of a single Value Added Tax (VAT) throughout the country, which in addition to the customs revenues as the first independent income for the state, enabled the central institutions to have additional independent revenues (p. 170). However, even these successes were possible only after the strong and decisive involvement of the OHR. This contributed to the “culture of dependency” among Bosnian elites which makes Bosnia and Herzegovina far from being a consolidated democracy and international factor remains quite important to guarantee peace and stability in the country (p. 173). Nevertheless, while the political system remains slow and the trust among political elites remains very low, author is of the opinion that for the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina there is no promising alternative to federalism and consociationalism (p. 174).

The last part of the book summarizes the main points discussed throughout the book and points out the fact that Bosnia and Herzegovina might be labeled as internationally administered federation which uses power-sharing formula as a main feature of conflict resolution in the post-Cold War era (p. 190). Hence, there is a need for a more comprehensive theory and wider understanding of the concept of federalism and federation in the post-Cold War era.

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