



**DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
CENTRE FOR EUROPEAN STUDIES (CES)**

THE INTERNAL POLITICAL STRUGGLE FOR BOSNIA AND HERCEGOVINA'S ENTRY INTO THE EUROPEAN UNION

An ideal type analysis on statements made
by Bosnia and Herzegovina's presidents.

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Abstract

This Master Thesis explores the internal political dialogue in Bosnia and Herzegovina regarding its candidacy for European Union membership. By examining the current research on how Bosnia is defined as a state, between consociational democracy and ethnocracy and discussing the lack of liberal tendencies, the study defines those same three theories to use as the basis for the analysis. Later, three ideal types are constructed based on the previous research and the three theories, which are consociational democracy, ethnocracy and liberal democracy. The thesis focuses on the statements made by political leaders, analysing them with the help of the pre-constructed ideal types. By examining the relationship between power-sharing amendments, ethnic interests, and EU criteria, the research aims to shed light on the challenges shaping Bosnia's path towards EU accession and answering the question of: How do the statements made by the chosen politicians in Bosnia relate to the three ideal types: consociationalism, ethnocracy and liberal democracy? The methodology is a case study design with ideal types as the unit of analysis. The results highlight support for EU membership among politicians from diverse ethnic backgrounds in Bosnia, however, it also showcases the duality of Bosnia's system, wanting EU membership without changing the current power sharing amendments. The thesis underscores the importance of understanding internal political dynamics in the context of EU integration and offers insights into Bosnia's complex journey towards European integration. However, there is a duality in the statements being analyzed in which there always seems to be ethnic prioritation before the pathway towards the EU is being taken.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The signing of the Dayton Accords (DA) in 1995 saw peace for the first time in Bosnia and Herzegovina (from now on Bosnia) for the first time since the outbreak of the war in 1992. It was signed in Dayton, Ohio and the goal was to keep a unified Bosnian state while giving rights to the three major ethnic groups: Bosniaks (mainly Muslim), Serbian (mainly Eastern Orthodox) and Croats (mainly Roman Catholic). While the DA aims to support a unitary Bosnian state it also effectively promotes partition and ethnic divisions within the state. The accord's main takeaways are that the country will be split into two main entities: Federacija Bosne i Hercegovine (FBiH), Bosniak and Croat-dominated, and Republika Srpska (RS), which ethnic Serbs mostly populate. In addition to this, the new state of Bosnia is going to have three presidents, three official languages and three ethnic groups that were mentioned above.

The institutional mechanisms that were created with the DA, which to this day shape Bosnia and Herzegovina, are complex. When speaking about fragmented societies that need to find cooperation in post-conflict there is one political thought that dominates the formation of the new constitution, the thought or theory is consociational democracy, which can be described as: “[...] the means government by elite cartel designed to turn a democracy with a fragmented political culture into a stable democracy” (Lijphart, 1969:216). Bosnia is a clear-cut example of what Lijphart argues is the main characteristic of consociational democracy, which means that there are power-sharing commitments between different groups for democracy to be possible.

There is a national consensus to join the European Union with over 75% of the population in Bosnia wanting to join, yet more progress needs to be made (National Demographic Institute, 2019). There is support from the EU for Bosnia joining and even Bosnia getting candidate status (source) yet small steps are being made. The EU has certain criteria for when a country is allowed to join the union. These are commonly referred to as the Copenhagen political criteria and are the certain criteria that countries wishing to join need to achieve. The main aspects of the criteria are stable institutions that guarantee the rule of law and respect human rights, protection of minorities and a functioning market economy that can implement the obligations of membership (European Council, 1993). These obligations or criteria are strongly linked to

the thoughts of Dahls classical definition of polyarchy or a liberal democracy, meaning the guarantee of basic rights, rule of law, and a functioning democracy (Dahl, 1989:83).

Bosnia applied for membership for the first time in 2016 and has since then made significant progress and accession talks to join the EU that started in March 2024, gaining candidate status in 2022. Even getting praise from the European Commission President: “More progress has been achieved in just over a year than in a whole decade. Of course, more progress is necessary to join the Union [...]” (Ursula von der Leyen, 2024). Bosnia has, therefore, made significant steps in integrating with the liberal values that the EU wishes and wants them to make.

However, in a speech held by Komšić, one of the three Presidents in Bosnia’s three shared Presidency the presidency, he stated:

“(…) it is clear to us that our candidate status, acquired a year ago, as well as the recent conditional recommendation of the European Commission for the opening of negotiations with Bosnia and Herzegovina, is the result of the tense geopolitical situation on the borders of the European Union and that obtaining candidate status has absolutely nothing to do with meeting the standards and realizing the assumed obligations.” (Komšić 2023, Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina)

This raises concern since Komšić is referring to the geopolitical situation in Europe and not the fact that Bosnia has made important improvements regarding the Copenhagen Political Criteria as the main factor for the EU opening negotiations with Bosnia. Previous research on Bosnia's “road to the EU” argues that the EU’s demands for constitutional reform embracing liberal democracy in Bosnia are flawed compared to the in the context to Bosnias current system. This is because the current ethnic groups would not, according to the authors, benefit from these changes since their safety net of constitutional ethnic rights, such as ethnical quotas and vetoes, would be taken away (Dudley & Saez, 2022:86). This line of thinking indicatet that there is support for ethnocratic tendencies in Bosnia. The definition of an ethnocracy is similar to Lijpharts consociationalism, meaning that power is shared between groups, however, an ethnocracy can be distinguished by the fact that ethnicity is central to the political system, such

as ethnicity being the reason for people not being able to run for office and having ethnic quotas when hiring civil servants, which is the case in Bosnia (Howard, 2012:156).

This persistent tension between national aspirations for EU membership and the internal political dynamics raises critical questions about Bosnia's ability to navigate the EU accession process. While other studies such as Dudley and Saez (2022) have looked at this dynamic, this study argues that there is a need to understand the internal political discussion to contextualize Bosnia's candidacy to the EU even further. Understanding how political leaders frame Bosnia's path to the EU is crucial to assessing whether Bosnia can cooperate internally between groups in a consociational model or succumbs to ethnic interests that make for little to no progress moving forward with the EU accession process, which is done by developing their political system in accordance with the Copenhagen Political criteria with liberal democracy sentiments (Dahl, 1989:83). Therefore, this thesis analyses the relationship between internal perspective on power-sharing amendments and ethnic interests combined with the external pressure of enforcing liberal democracy within the internal political debate. Hence, this thesis recognizes a research gap that can be filled and contribute to the current research field of the dynamic between European Union membership criteria in divided societies such as Bosnia. This leads us to the aim of this thesis.

1.2. AIM

This thesis aims to analyze the statements made by the Bosnian Presidency and the two Bosnian entities' Presidents about Bosnia and Herzegovina's candidacy for European Union membership, with the help of the constructed ideal types that are based on the three democratic theories of consociational democracy, liberal democracy and ethnocratic trap. This thesis aims to determine whether the different political actors prioritize cooperation across ethnic lines, as expected in consociationalism, or whether an ethnocracy emerges prioritizing and pursuing objectives primarily aligned with their own ethnic group's interests in the inner political discussion of Bosnia, in addition to the external criteria of liberal democracy that the EU is trying to implement.

1.3 OUTLINE OF THE THESIS

Firstly, a background presenting key institutions and background to the state building and signing of peace treaties will be presented and after that the previous research. In the previous

research, this thesis will not follow a common approach of defining previous similar research that has been conducted in this field. Instead, this thesis aims to discuss how Bosnia is defined in the current research field, if it is viewed a consociational democracy or an ethnocracy? Finally, the previous research will be analysing if Bosnia has any liberal democratic tendencies that the EU requires them to have to become members according to the Copenhagen Political Criteria. Following the previous research the theory that the ideal types also will be based on are going to be presented, followed by the actual ideal types. Continuing, the methodology will be presented, followed by results and then a conclusion.

1.4 RELEVANCE FOR EUROPEAN STUDIES

The relevance for European Studies for this thesis can be described through several factors. For instance, analysing the inner political dialogue of a candidate status country of the EU is highly relevant for European Studies and the thesis could contribute to the discussion of Bosnia joining the EU. The thesis also has relevance to European Studies by explaining the current “situation” in one of the neighboring countries of the EU and giving context to an issue that might not be the most discussed one in the current research field and media. Despite the Western Balkans gaining more attention in the last years there still is little information on the internal political dialogue and how the EU correlates with that, something that this thesis wishes to shed light on. In a time where the EU is aiming at expanding the borders of the Union, the need to shed light on the inner political discussions in a candidate country is highly relevant for European Studies.

1.5 BACKGROUND

In this section, I aspire to give more context to the current situation and history of Bosnia. This section of the thesis will cover the basis of the Dayton Peace Accords, the two entities RS and FBiH, the Office of the High Representative and finally current contemporary politics. As mentioned, this part is needed because of the relevance and context that cannot fit in the previous research yet contributes to the thesis by contextualizing and explaining the situation.

1.5.1 DAYTON PEACE ACCORDS

Following the dissolution of Yugoslavia, the Bosnian struggle, which lasted from 1992 to 1995, was a bloody ethnic and territorial struggle involving Bosnian Serbs, Croats, and Bosniaks.

Numerous crimes, such as ethnic cleansing and genocide, left millions of people displaced and hundreds of thousands of dead. The Dayton Accords shape BiH governance, politics and everyday life to this day and can be seen as unique since it has clear structures for all the previous themes stated, which now is part of the constitution in Bosnia. To begin with, the DA agreed in Dayton U.S. and representatives from Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) signed the accords. In addition to this, the new state of BiH is going to have three presidents, three official languages and three ethnic groups that were mentioned above.

1.5.2 REPUBLIKA SRPSKA AND FEDERATION OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

The first entity that is going to be discussed was created during DA and is recognised as one of the two entities in Bosnia. Republika Srpska is run under state-like conditions, meaning that there is a parliament called the National Assembly with 83 seats, there is a President, Milorad Dodik and a prime minister with a cabinet of 16 ministers. The entity has its judiciary system, and the National Assembly is mainly responsible for the implementation of laws and the entity is highly centralized (Government of Republika Srpska, 2019 and President of Republika Srpska n.d). The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina is the other entity in Bosnia that similarly to RS has a lot of self-governing structures. For instance, it also has its parliament, prime minister, and its own President (Lidja Badara) (Government of Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2021). Since both entities hold political power, these Presidents will also be analyzed.

1.5.3 OFFICE OF THE HIGH REPRESENTATIVE

There are plenty of organizations working towards Bosnia and Herzegovina's stability and entry into organizations such as NATO and the EU. As a part of the Dayton Peace Agreement (DA) the Office of the Higher Representative (OHR) was appointed to oversee the implementation of the civilian aspect of the agreement and now has the role to intervene when the agreement is broken. Therefore, the OHR is the highest legal body in Bosnia and can, in theory, remove anyone from office who is not following the DA peace agreement. The international community set it out to integrate Bosnia into Euro-Atlantic cooperation and the main goal is to close the office when Bosnia has made significant steps in self-governing. This means that the OHR holds power, however, the goal is that Bosnia and Herzegovina can take full responsibility for

its own affairs. The current high representative is the German Christian Schmidt (Office of the High Representative, 2015).

1.5.4 CONTEMPORARY POLITICS IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

The Bosnian presidency is shared between Denis Bećirović (Social Democrats of Bosnia and Hercegovina, Bosniak), Željko Komšić (Democratic Front, Croat) and Željka Cvijanovic (Alliance of Independent Social Democrats). This presidency is called the *trojka* (Presidency of Bosnia and Hercegovina, 2022). To understand contemporary politics even further the need to present the Presidents of the entities need to be introduced. Firstly, Dodik, who has been mentioned before, is going to be presented. Milorad Dodik is the current President of the entity of Republika Srpska and is on his third term as President of the entity. Dodik and Cvijankovic share party alliances as he also is a member of the Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (President of Republika Srpska, n.d). Continuing, the President of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina is Lidija Bradara who is on her first term as President of the Federation. (Presjednik Federacije Bosne i Hercegovine, n.d).

2. PREVIOUS RESEARCH

This part of the thesis presents previous research on how Bosnia's political system is defined. This segment will be set up in the following way: first, the arguments made for that Bosnia could have consociational democratic tendencies, then how Bosnia may be defined as an ethnocracy and finally discussing the liberal tendencies or the lack of them in Bosnia.

2.1 BOSNIA AS A CONSOCIATIONAL DEMOCRACY

Kasapovic (2005:8) argues that there are several factors of Bosnia resembling a consociational democracy. For instance, Bosnia has three different ethnic groups with not one having a big majority, it has distinct lines between ethnic groups, and it is a small country with a small population. The author argues that the country is in practice a consociational democracy since power is shared between the ethnic groups in different ways. According to McCrudden & O'leary (2013:7) the power-sharing amendments can be seen in the legislative process which is based on consensus between all three ethnic groups, meaning that there are required efforts to ensure representation from each entity, and ethnic group, in the decision-making process. For instance, this can be highlighted by the fact that the system includes decision-making safeguards, such as the majority votes needed to include one-third of the votes from each entity (ibid:11).

However, much of the literature on Bosnia's consociational arrangement does not contain the successes of the system. Instead, much of the literature focuses on the shortcomings of the consociational arrangements meaning that the focus heavily relies on the system being flawed and not being particularly effective when trying to make political decisions and progress. This is, according to Kasapovic (2005:8) because of a lack of consensus on the state, different groups want different things, the Muslims want a centralized unitary state, the Serbs want their own "state in the state" and the Croats want a regional power structure. This means that the groups have different interests, yet this is what makes a consociational democracy to begin with, the need to cooperate despite disagreements. Here the author makes a point that is highly relevant in the context of this thesis, the political elites are supposed to make alliances to solve problems, yet in Bosnia, there is no such thing since there is not one group that is pleased with the current consociational system (ibid:12).

Then the question can be asked: what happens when the politicians stop cooperating and none of the groups is satisfied with the current system? Scholars argue that not cooperating leads to outside intervention, mainly from the EU, and benefits the ethnic elites by them remaining in power (Merdzanovic, 2017:23). According to the literature, is that the Dayton Agreements have a complex issue with duality, it calls for outside intervention. By this, the main literature argues that there is so-called “imposed consociationalism” in Bosnia. With the introduction of an International Regulating Body, such as the High Representative in Bosnia, the political elites from the different ethnic groups do not have any incentive to compromise and cooperate since the laws will be passed by the High Representative (Merdzanovic 2017:23, 26-27). The author argues that this contributes to Bosnia being stuck in a vicious cycle and that the power-sharing amendment makes for deadlocks and, therefore, the need for international mediation is needed that later results in deepening the problems further. For instance, “the domestic elites, instead of taking agency of the political process as the internationals had hoped, gradually started seeing the political and strategic benefits of international involvement.” (Merdzanovic:32).

Are there any arguments for achievements in implementing legislation or changing the constitution in Bosnia which show that the ethnic groups can cooperate? The argument could be made for the only successful attempt at constitutional reform that has ever been made in the history of the country, the creation of the Brcko district. This is important to the study because it shows that there have been ways when there is cooperation in Bosnia. Brcko District's legal status is unique, it is defined as a multiethnic polity in the ethnically divided state of Bosnia. The district belongs in formality to both the entities of FBiH and Republika Srpska, yet it has the same powers as the entities to which it belongs. This was because of the issues when the DA was supposed to be signed since the boundaries could not be set and the issue was postponed. The issue was later resolved by establishing international supervision led by a U.S. diplomat, which controversially after locked talks by ethnical elites established the current status quo (Stjepanovic, 2015:379-380).

In conclusion, of the scholarly debate of what kind of country Bosnia is has explained the current research on Bosnia as a consociational democracy and has also shown the shortcomings and successes of the system. This is one view of the current situation in Bosnia, and it has shown complex issues such as how the power-sharing amendments work in theory, how a form of

stalemate leads to international intervention and how there can be successes in the current systems with the example of Brcko District.

2.2 BOSNIA AS AN ETHNOCRACY

This segment of the literature that argues that Bosnia as an ethnocracy mainly arguing how the constitution is flawed and how it leads to stagnation and an ethnocracy-like state. There is a broad consensus between researchers on how the Bosnian constitution is constructed, mainly because part of it is a peace agreement that was supposed to evolve into a more functioning constitution along the way. For instance, Seizovic and Simic argue that there is little to no significant change, instead, it brings further problems for the country than could be expected. According to the authors, the DA institutionalises the rise of ethnonationalism in the country's constitution by giving the power-sharing amendments constructed during the peace talks (Seizerovic & Simic, 2016:29-30). Soberg (2008:726) also argues that the constitution of Bosnia is fundamentally flawed and is according to the author something that was not designed as a long-term solution. Instead, the political system leads to corruption and ethnocracy which in the end makes for no hope, however, the author argues that EU membership might be a way as the solution for Bosnia (ibid:732).

Another argument for Bosnia having ethnocratic tendencies and being an ethnocracy is that the party system is flawed. Hulsey and Stjepanovic (2017:56-57), say that it is flawed since it clearly shows signs of ethnic divisions. The creation of ethnic enclaves, such as the Republika Srpska and the Cantons in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina are usually dominated by one of the ethnic groups form a party system which competes within the ethnic group, however, not outside of it. Voters usually split in between these parties yet they do not split the votes across ethnic lines.

Continuing, minorities, who are not one of three constituent peoples, are not allowed to run for the upper house of the parliament and the Presidency. This part of the literature is mainly discussed through the case of the Sejdic Finci case which saw two citizens of the Bosnian minorities, the so-called "others", meaning citizens that do not belong to one of the three constituent peoples, ask for their political rights in Bosnia. The two men, Sejdic and Finci respectively, took the Bosnian constitution to court because they could not contend for the

Bosnian upper house of parliament (the House of Peoples) and the same for the Bosnian presidency. This was simply because they were not one of the constitutional peoples of Bosnia and could, therefore, not be considered candidates for the House of Peoples or the shared Presidency (Mazur-Kumrić, 2012:20-23). The European Court of Human Rights formulated the judgement in 2009 and found the Bosnian constitution guilty of breaking Article 14 of the European Convention of Human Rights (Council of Europe: European Court of Human Rights, 2009). Instead, what the current scholars are discussing is the discussion between democracy and human rights, is it eligible for a state to give up individual rights for the cost of peace? (Graziadeni, 2016:57).

In conclusion, this literature has shown the difficulty of the consociational system could lead to Bosnia being defined by some researchers as an ethnocracy. By having a flawed constitution and voting system it contributes to these ethnocratic tendencies. Minorities not being able to run for office in the upper house of the parliament and the Presidency is a major issue and the implementation of those policies still has not been made, another argument for Bosnia being an ethnocracy.

2.3 BOSNIA'S LACK OF LIBERAL DEMOCRACY AND INCENTIVES TO CHANGE

This segment discuss the literature that points out the lack of liberal democratic tendencies such as the so-called Croat question, the presence of non-nationalistic parties and the attempts for constitutional change.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has a so-called "Croat question". This case is particularly interesting since it refers to one of the constitutional peoples, Croats, and how they are seen as the group that is the "loser" in the context of the agreement. For instance, Kasapovic, (2017:175) argues the Croats in Bosnia had a subordinate position in the signing of the Dayton Accords because they, at least compared to the Serbs, did not get their political entity. The question was asked during the negotiations over whether or not the Croats were going to be underrepresented or even overrepresented in the new state that was created. Given that the Croats are the smallest of the three ethnic groups it can seem fair that they got the political representation guaranteed, however, this is not the case (ibid). Instead, there is broad consensus in the Croatian population of Bosnia that constitutional reform is needed. Because of their small population size compared

to Bosniaks and Serbs, only 15% of the population, the call for a Croat entity has been discussed. This, however, is mostly due to Željko Komšić who was elected as the Croat candidate but is for a more centralised Bosnian state, not necessarily serving the interest of the Croats (Bell, 2018:27-28). Kasapovic argues that the constitutional debate and political stagnation are because ethnic Bosnian Muslims can vote for the Croatian candidate who is seen as moderate or a protest vote (2017:188). The Komšić case might be viewed as unfair, yet it also shows that politicians who might want change and do not necessarily serve their ethnicities exist and that is a sign of liberal democracy.

Moreover, the research is heavily case-based meaning that the current research is based on specific politicians in Bosnia. For instance, Hulseley and Keil (2019:402) conducted a study where high-party elites were interviewed with party documents being analyzed to understand the underlying motivations of non-nationalistic parties. The non-nationalistic parties that are trying to engage in cross-ethnic cooperation are generally not nationalistic. Pickering (2009:574-577) argues that there could be alternative ways because the non-nationalistic parties are gaining votes. For instance, social capital, ideology, and negative voting are possible explanations. The emergence of these parties and candidates such as Komšić, presented in the previous case shows perhaps that there might be a will to change towards alternative systems, perhaps the ones presented by the EU. Another sign of a possibility towards liberal democracy in Bosnia could be the support for non-nationalistic parties in consociational democracies.

Can the constitution be changed by the influence of the EU? Perry (2015:9), argues, that there can be possible ways of changing the constitution through EU intervention and more specifically the EU setting supremacy clauses for EU integration. By this, the author means the pathway towards a federal or a confederal state, meaning more self-governing by the two entities with the state of Bosnia being intact (ibid:10-13), which would be a step towards a liberal democracy. While both these articles were written some time ago, especially Sobergs, they still raise the important question of how the EU was affecting the current status quo at the time and how Bosnia is unable to make those changes without outside interference.

Another aspect of the literature on constitutional reform is the only two actual attempts that have been made to change the constitution of Bosnia. The two major attempts to change the

constitution, which remains almost the same, are the Prud and Butmir processes during 2008 and 2009 respectively. These processes saw one of the main other issues with the Bosnian constitution, namely the protection of minorities. The main target for both these processes was to address the issues of minorities that are not one of the constitutive peoples in Bosnia, for instance, groups referred to are Jews or Roma, which have been discussed before (Kasapovic & Kocan, 2023:569-571). The search for institutional reform is hard in Bosnia, and this affects the process of further EU integration since it does not consider minorities in the country, something that is needed according to the Copenhagen Criteria (European Council, 1993). This is something that is addressed by Bell (2018:37-38) that the EU has urged constitutional reform but with little to no success. This includes the EU proposing solutions such as the “Dayton Two” but was stopped due to Bosnian leaders deeming the proposal as too drastic.

In conclusion, this segment has literature on the current political will for change in Bosnia through the Komšić case and the rise of non-nationalistic parties, something that presents traits of democracy in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The two attempts at constitutional change have also been brought up to show that there is political will to change the current consociational or ethnocratic stalemate and to implement rights toward minorities.

2.4 CONCLUSION OF THE PREVIOUS RESEARCH

In this chapter the main definitions of how Bosnia's governing has been discussed in different aspects and how it is a consociational democracy, with certain issues and that some researchers define it as an ethnocracy. At the same time, there are indications of liberal democratic changes, however, such as the attempts to change the constitution, have not gained any political status or recognition. Continuing, the next segment will aim at describing these theories for the reader to further understand the ideas that have been discussed.

3. THEORY

In this segment, based on the previous research that has been presented above, the three theories of consociational democracy, ethnocracy and liberal democracy. Having argued for which one can define Bosnia between consociational democracy and ethnocracy, and arguing for liberal democratic tendencies in Bosnia, which the EU wants more of if they are ever to join, these theories will now be theoretically defined.

3.1 CONSOCIATIONAL DEMOCRACY

The consociational democracy is based on the thoughts developed firstly by Arend Lijphart (1969:211-212) who to many is seen as the “father” of this theory. The theory is in its essence about power sharing, consociational democracies emphasize different types of power-sharing arrangements across different societal groups. For instance, there are three different criteria put forward by Lijphart. Firstly, the elites can accommodate different diverging interests, this means that the politicians or “elites” as Lijphart is referring to them are capable of cooperating and can accommodate the different groups and their needs without leading to political stagnation. Simply put, there is room for cooperation between these societal groups, however not integrating them into one group. Secondly, the political elite needs to be able to have common efforts, meaning cooperation, with elites of rivals. Even if there are political rivals, which there will be in this type of system, they need to have some common ground and to again avoid stagnation. This means that for power-sharing to work, there needs to be some type of common interest between the different groups, without that there is no possible way of keeping a stable democracy. Thirdly, depending on the second one it is what the sub-group elites have in common of keeping the system as it is status-quo and benefits them. Here, Lijphart argues that simply keeping the system the way it benefits all the sub-group elites, and therefore, they tend to want to keep it.

Other characteristics are central and may occur in a consociational democratic system. It is common in consociational systems to form grand coalitions from various groups, this inclusive approach is there to ensure that decisions are made through compromise between the different groups in society. Lijphart also argues that it is common to have minority vetoes, meaning that decisions might have to be taken through consensus and groups may be able to stop the legislative process if there is a need for that. Continuing, the author also emphasizes that the

electoral system usually is proportional in these types of democracies since they give a fair representation to all groups.

Lastly, the political system may involve granting some autonomy to different regions and certain groups that can foster a sense of self-determination. Lijphart also distinguishes the shortcomings of this theory and explains them in different steps. These are framed the inefficiency and instability. The author argues that a consociational system may be subjected to inefficiency since it needs to cover the interests of many groups and, therefore, can be subject to inefficiency as well. However, Lijphart uses the Netherlands and Switzerland as examples and argues that they are stable, yet they should not be. Therefore, there is a risk for this, but it is not a necessity (ibid:211). Finally, the elites also understand the means to cause political fragmentation but choose not to act upon it. Simply, the different groups will again not benefit if there is fragmentation and the elites would also not benefit, therefore, there is no incentive for them to act or to change it (ibid:216). In some consociational systems when there is a presence of an international regulation body, such as in Bosnia, it incentivizes according to Merdzanovic (2017:27) not to cooperate since the international regulating body will intervene when it is needed. This means that cooperation might be put aside since the incentive for it disappears and the international regulating body can be seen as a scapegoat to agree with when it suits your group, and to disagree with if it does not suit your group's interest and to blame outside interference for the current problems.

3.2 ETHNOCRACY

The second theory that will be presented is the ethnocratic trap presented by Howard in the *Ethnocracy Trap* which is an extension of the thoughts of Lijphart. Howard explains that much of her thoughts are shared with Lijphart even going to the extent of defining an ethnocracy as a sub-type of the consociational model. However, the main difference is that there is no political expression that is valid other than the one expressing your ethnicity, which in a consociational system is possible due to concepts such as class or religion. In an ethnocratic system, those things do not matter, only your ethnicity does.

The essence of this theory is that it is based on ethnicity, meaning that social and political organizations are based on ethnic belonging. The main features are that most political parties

are based on ethnic interest, ethnic quotas determine key posts in government and state institutions are segmented through ethnic groups (date:155), which quite well describes the situation in Bosnia. It can be considered a “sub-type” of Lijphart’s theory since it shares the core beliefs of political elites sharing power. Moreover, it is distinguished through two main characteristics: consociational systems are not exclusively based on ethnicity and the “grand coalitions” meaning that there should be cooperation is usually absent in ethnocracies. Meaning that grand coalitions between ethnic groups is not possible and not prominent in an ethnocracy.

This means that ethnocracies are based on ethnicity is central in the political sphere. Howard argues that this can be costly to the individual since there is no incentive to vote for a political party that does not represent your interests. Another example of ethnocratic rule is that in Bosnia minority groups are frozen out from running for office because they fall out of the three constitutive people groups. Ethnocratic systems also tend to be subjected to a severe inner discourse meaning that there usually are tendencies of ethnic outbidding. This can be explained by one politician being moderate in their views, allowing members of the same ethnic group to question them since they can be seen as a traitor or “sellout”. The traitor or sellout might want to promote more moderate and different views; however, the system simply does not allow it. Ethnocratic systems sometimes call for outside intervention, in Bosnia, this has been the EU. By this, Howard argues that the ethnocratic model resembles the colonial governing mechanism of divide and rule which was designed to ensure that the colonial power could stay in power because of internal conflict. Continuing, the author also argues that the model is bad for business. The need for cooperation for business to flourish is vital and ethnic lines keep development down. Finally, ethnocracies may find it harder to transform into a liberal democracy since it is “organised against itself” and, therefore, destined not to transform (ibid:160-162).

3.3 LIBERAL DEMOCRACY

The term liberal democracy is a wide spectrum since it both represents the ideology and the political system. There is a liberal thought that was first introduced by Locke and later evolved by several thinkers, however, that is not what is going to be introduced in this part of the theoretical chapter. Instead, this part will introduce the political system that was first “coined” by Roland (1952) and later developed by other scholars, more specifically, the thoughts and definitions used by Dahl will characterize this part of the theoretical chapter.

The democratic part of a liberal democracy is explained by Dahl (1998:37-38) argues that it differs from country to country yet there are criteria for a democratic process. Firstly, effective participation is needed, meaning that before something is adopted all members of society must have equal opportunities to make their views known. Secondly, voting equality is needed, meaning that every member of society has the equal right to vote and that the votes are equal. Thirdly, enlightened understanding means that each member must have opportunities to learn about alternative policies when deciding. Fourthly, control of the agenda, means that the people have control of the matters that will be discussed, and the matters of discussion are always open for change. Finally, the inclusion of adults is needed for a functioning democracy treating everyone as their political equal.

A liberal democracy is characterized by different aspects, the first and the most prominent one is the rule of law. All individuals and institutions in society are accountable under the rule of law and it is and is applied to everyone regardless of their position or status. Secondly, fundamental civil liberties are applied, meaning that individual rights and freedoms such as freedom of speech, assembly and press are applied. Citizens have these rights and can criticise authority without having fair retribution from anyone (1998:83-87). Thirdly, the need for political pluralism is needed, mainly argued by Dahl (ibid:130) that political pluralism is needed, meaning that multiple parties should compete for power in free and fair elections. Fourthly, the need for respect and protection of minority groups are needed to be safeguarded and protected from oppression. Probably one of the most prominent is the separation of power, meaning that the executive (government), legislative (parliament or congress) and judicial (the courts) are separated and not influenced by each other. This means that no single branch can dominate the other and, therefore, the abuse of power can be prevented (ibid:62). Finally, a liberal democracy has no incentive to intervene in other states and it does not have the need to be intervened in, however, cooperation between states is encouraged (ibid:147-148).

Following the presentation of the theories, the ideal types will now be presented based on the previous research and the theory. While reading the previous research and the theories the researcher has decided to categorize the ideal types into five themes, for the analytical process to become simpler. All the theories had these in common, or a proper definition of it, therefore,

the choice was made to categorize them this way. This will later be motivated in the method chapter of this thesis, the following themes are political organisation, representation and participation, rights and freedoms, perceived problems and transformation of status quo and outside interference and cooperation.

3.4 CONSOCIATIONAL IDEAL TYPE

Firstly, the political organization theme in the consociational ideal type can be defined through the power-sharing among societal groups and for grand coalitions meaning that the groups need to cooperate in a consociational system (Lijphart, 1969:211). Secondly, the representation and participation theme is constructed through the ideas of proportional electoral systems and minorities should have veto power for representation to be guaranteed for all groups (ibid). Thirdly, when speaking of rights and freedoms the groups are central to this approach, therefore, the ideal type is constructed with importance on group rights and even regional autonomy (ibid:212). Fourthly, the perceived problems in a consociational democracy are the fact that there is a risk for the ethnic groups not to cooperate and it can be difficult to transition into other systems, therefore, the last ideal type is constructed around this premise (ibid:216). Finally, the theme of outside interference and cooperation is based on the thoughts of Merdzanovic (2017:27), with outside interference leading to international intervention, that might be needed in some consociational systems.

3.5 ETHNOCRATIC IDEAL TYPE

Firstly, the theme of political organization in an ethnocratic structure might seem like a liberal democracy with multiple parties, yet the system makes voters vote for their ethnicity, and the political organization is therefore constructed around that, making this the first theme (Howard, 2012:155). Secondly, representation and participation in an ethnocracy are similarly driven by ethnic interests and government positions are based on ethnic quotas (ibid: 160). Thirdly, rights and freedoms are based on ethnicity and minorities' minds find no political representation and participation in the system (Mazur-Kumric, 2012:20-23). Finally, the last theme is similar to the consociational ideal type, making changes in the status quo difficult and the risk of instability is high with outside interference being common (Howard 2012:160-162).

3.6 LIBERAL IDEAL TYPE

Firstly, the political organization of a liberal democracy is the heavy emphasis of that all adults are welcome to participate and should be informed. Therefore, the theme political organization is summarized as “advocates for political pluralism and participation” (Dahl, 1998:130). Secondly, representation and participation are heavily important in a liberal democracy and the second theme will advocate for multiple parties in free and fair elections (ibid & Hulsey & Keul, 2019:402). Thirdly, the rights and freedom theme will be based on fundamental civil rights and the protection of minorities from oppression (Dahl, 1998:84). Fourthly, under perceived problems and transformation of the status quo liberal democracy advocates for potential changes through government institutions, however, liberal democracy might become ineffective if there is not one party with majority rule and not willing to cooperate. Finally, the theme of outside intervention and cooperation can be defined as that a liberal democracy does not have an incentive to intervene in other states, however, cooperation between states is encouraged (ibid:147-148).

Given that the ideal types are constructed in this way and the themes have been chosen the following table has been created to make the analysis a little easier to follow:

3.7 TABLE 1: IDEAL TYPES

| Theme | Consociational ideal type | Ethnocratic Ideal Type | Liberal Democracy ideal type |
|---|---|---|--|
| Political Organization | Emphasis on power-sharing among societal groups. | Perceived as free yet centred around ethnicity. | Advocates for political pluralism and participation. |
| Representation and Participation | Fair representation through proportional electoral systems, and minority vetoes to ensure representation. | Political parties are driven by ethnic interests, allocation of government positions is based on ethnic quotas. | Political pluralism with multiple parties in free and fair representation. |
| Rights and freedoms | Importance of granting every group rights and even autonomy to different regions. | Individual rights are based on ethnicity. | Emphasis on fundamental civil liberties, and protection of minority rights from oppression. |
| Perceived problems and transformation of the status quo | Risk of inefficiency and instability, challenges in transitioning to other political systems. | Risk of inefficiency and instability, challenges in transitioning to other political systems. | Potential for changes through government institutions or the switch in politics and hard to form government if there is no majority party. |

(See Boréus & Bergström, 2018:152 for the inspiration of this layout)

3.9 RESEARCH QUESTION

Based on the previous research, theories and the constructed ideal types, the following research question has been created:

- How do the statements regarding Bosnia's EU entry made by the chosen politicians from the trojka and the two entities in Bosnia relate to the three ideal types: consociationalism, ethnocracy and liberal democracy?

4. METHODOLOGY

The research design, methodology and material will be presented in this segment of the thesis. After the establishment of the research problem and the theoretical choices, this segment will demonstrate how the thesis has been conducted and what type of material has been used.

4.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

Bryman (2016:60) identifies a case as an object of interest in which the researcher seeks to provide an in-depth examination. What is unique to the case study is that the researcher usually is interested in finding the unique characteristics of the case, something that this thesis aims to do. The case in this study is the study of how the EU criteria are being portrayed and discussed in deeply ethnically divided societies such as Bosnia. According to Yin (2014:4-5), three criteria need to be fulfilled to conduct a case study; the questions should be based on “how” and “why” where the researcher has little to no control over the behavioral events. Since the research questions are “how” questions and I as a researcher do not influence Bosnian politics, so therefore, I see the criteria fulfilled. However, the case study is only a research design since it is a good fit for the study, but the ideal types will be the means of analysis.

4.2 TEXT ANALYSIS

The overall approach in this thesis when conducting the study and interpreting the material will be a qualitative text analysis. A qualitative text analysis is used to grasp the overall message of the text and the context that it is part of (Essaiason et al. 2017:211). Qualitative text analysis can be suited for trying to find meaning and alternative definitions in a text, something that is central in this study. It is the researcher that should interpret the text and understand the material, read it carefully and examine the material multiple times (ibid:213).

4.3 IDEA ANALYSIS

This thesis will use a specific type of text analysis which is an idea analysis and more specifically a describing idea analysis. The describing idea analysis may sound comparable to only describing a situation or phenomena, however, this is not the case. It needs to be aligned with what the goals of the study are (Boréus & Bergström, 2018:140-141), in this case, the goals are to contribute to the theoretical puzzle of the current governing of Bosnia and at the same time balancing EU accession in the statements made by politicians. Boréus and Bergström argue

that this approach can be used when ideas are put against each other and to relate them to one another in a set time span, precisely what is being done in this study. By comparing and describing similarities or differences between these ideas in the statements made by the politicians this thesis seeks to explore that relationship through the constructed ideal types that have been presented and now below there will be a presentation on how they were constructed.

4.4 IDEAL TYPES

Constructing ideal types is about the categorization of a few characteristics of certain phenomena to later use this categorization to compare it with the empirical material. The point of the ideal type is not for it to exactly resemble the real world, instead, the value of the ideal type is that the categorization can bring comparison to real-world phenomena. This means that the researcher needs to bring forward a few aspects for them to be compared and analyzed with the empirical material. The ideal types should never be seen as neutral, they are directly linked to the researcher's interest in what they want to research. According to the authors, the first step in an ideal type analysis is to define the concepts or ideas that are going to be used, this can be done through previous research and theory, meaning that it is constructed deductively. The student or researcher should then categorize them to create an ideal type based on the most cultivated aspect of the idea. The next step is to relate the ideal type to the material, which will be further discussed in the method chapter (Bergström & Boréus, 2018:148-149).

With the thoughts of Bergström & Boréus in mind the ideal types will now be constructed. The first step is to define the thoughts and ideas, which were done in the previous research and the defining of theories. The categorization should now be made with the three theories in mind. Five major themes were identified when writing the previous research and theoretical framework, that these concepts have in common. Every theme will all individually motivated by each ideal type and how it correlates with previous research and the theories. The themes that have been identified are political organization, representation and participation, rights and freedoms, perceived problems, and transformation of the status quo as well as outside interference and cooperation. They have been identified through the reading and understanding of the theories and for the ideal types to be applied to the empirical material. The themes have been chosen by the researcher after reading the theories presented and realizing the need to find common ground for them to make the analytical process easier.

4.5 ANALYTICAL PROCESS WITH THE USE OF IDEAL TYPES

This thesis has already discussed how the ideal types were constructed, instead, this segment aims to describe the analytical process of how the ideal types have been used and later a critical reflection of the use of ideal types.

Firstly, the statement needs to be translated if it is in Bosnian, that process will be discussed in the material part below. After the translation, the second step has been to read and interpret the material, trying to figure out what is being said. Thirdly, after grasping the statement to the best of my knowledge it is compared to the existing ideal types, comparing which themes mainly align with the statements and sometimes, multiple ideal types might be applicable to one statement (Bergström & Boréus, 2018:148-149). Finally, if a certain theme has been identified during the process, that does not fit into the ideal types, the ideal type has been expanded and added those aspects. This will be exemplified and discussed further below. After the ideal types are applied, they fit the criteria for making assumptions in the limits of the ideal types, meaning that the “real world” can be interpreted through the ideal types and certain assumptions and results can be made (ibid).

4.6 CRITICAL DISCUSSION OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN AND OVERALL APPROACH

The specific situation in Bosnia, of power-sharing divided states that need to balance foreign influence, could perhaps be compared to other power-sharing states such as Belgium or Lebanon. The approach that is used in this study could, therefore, be replicated to some extent and perhaps anticipate similar results. However, another topic of the political spectrum would perhaps be relevant to discuss since Belgium is in the EU and Lebanon is in the Middle East. The problems of generalization do not necessarily need to be something bad, Bryman (2016:399) argues that the specific situation can add something to a broader discussion and, therefore, be generalizable. For instance, this research might give insight into the bigger discussion of Bosnia joining the EU and generalizing specific explanations in that bigger context. Moreover, since the only unit of analysis is the internal politics of Bosnia then this thesis is per definition a single-case study (ibid). Yin also argues that the most important thing in a single-case study is to define the units of analysis and the case itself to proceed (ibid:46). The case itself is interesting because it suggests that Bosnia is locked in its political system, yet

it has made significant political effort and even some success in attempting to join the EU. By exemplifying this the need to analyse this through specific analytical tools is clear and that is why the choice of idea analysis, and the construction of ideal types is central in this thesis, something that will be presented in the next segments.

When conducting qualitative research, or any research for that matter, the need to address reliability and validity is highly important. Having chosen a case study design Yin (2014:37) argues that the case study needs to consider validity, both internal and external validity. Internal validity is the concern that x happens because of y and how sure of that causality a researcher can be. However, the author argues that this is only an issue in causality studies and will, therefore, not be a problem in this study. This is because the study aims to analyze statements and does not consider the causalities. Bryman (2016:184) discusses construct validity refers to the extent to which a measure assesses the underlying theoretical construct it claims to measure. This has been done in this thesis by explaining the operationalization of the ideal types and having clear definitions of what analytical tools will be used.

Secondly, external validity relates to generalizability, if this study was conducted in another country with the same design and analytical tools would the same result be made? When using a case-study design the main concern is the fact that it is hard to replicate (Yin, 2014:48) and that it cannot be replicated. However, since this study has chosen a specific time frame, this being from December 2022 to March 2024, and a clear set of theoretical guidelines, it is expected that if the same study was conducted again the same result would be reached. This is called reliability and is highly important when conducting a case study or qualitative research in general (ibid:38). Yin emphasizes the importance of positionality in research, particularly in qualitative studies. Positionality refers to acknowledging one's own social, cultural, and personal standpoint and how it might influence research design, data collection, interpretation, and analysis. Yin suggests that researchers should reflect on their own biases, assumptions, and perspectives that they bring into the research process, as these can affect every stage of the study (ibid:32-34).

The main issue that needs to be addressed regarding the ethical considerations during this thesis is the fact that the researcher has heritage from Bosnia and is more specifically of Bosnian Muslim heritage. How will this be addressed? The solution, according to this thesis, is to use

intersubjectivity which now will be presented. A possible solution for positionality, is intersubjectivity which is also argued by Yin is needed in case studies and means that multiple perspectives need to be acknowledged that they shape the data (ibid). By this, Yin argues that there needs to be an acknowledgment by the researcher that the data can be influenced by all parties involved and this needs to be addressed because biases might occur. The researcher, therefore, needs to acknowledge these and engage in multiple perspectives, meaning being open to alternative perspectives, raises the validity and credibility of the research (ibid:34). This will be done in this thesis as well by being open to the fact that this research is narrow, only analysing through the ideal types and that there is other possible explanation for this research topic.

When conducting research, the researcher should always consider a few things when it comes to ethics. According to the All-European Academics, published on the website of Gothenburg University where this thesis is conducted, there are four aspects to consider: reliability, honesty, respect, and responsibility. These will all be followed for the thesis to keep the good ethics that are needed when writing a master thesis.

4.7 CRITICAL REFLECTION OF THE USE OF IDEAL TYPES

The ideal types are central for the results to be conducted and are the only analytical tool that has been used, when a certain statement is analyzed, and it resembles an ideal type it is discussed and shown in the results. However, at times there might be statements that do not fit into the ideal type and the ideal type might even be poorly constructed, which at times has been the case (ibid:166). Therefore, this thesis has chosen to be having an abductive approach meaning that the researcher has to move between the empirical material and the concepts (or in this thesis case the ideal types) when something new is being observed in the chosen material that does not fit into the constructed ideal types. For example, the theme of outside interference and cooperation was constructed during the analysis of the empirical material since the researcher identified the need to have this theme. Since the statement consisted of discussing outside interference, whether that being the EU or another actor, the theme was added to address that and to analyse it as well.

The main critic of the use of ideal types might be that it might be forced onto the material, meaning that the ideal type needs to match the material or that the other way around, that the

material is tweaked to match the ideal type. This is needed to both assure validity and reliability in the constructed ideal types (ibid:166) In this thesis, this has been of thought of and has been tricky to navigate, however, with the translations of the documents being done by multiple people, the ideal types being revised and based on theory and research, this problem has been addressed in the most comparing way possible for the limits of this thesis. This leads us to the materials that have been used.

4.8 MATERIALS

Since this thesis is going to analyze the statements of different politicians, the need to clarify and present the material is essential for the thesis. The need to specify in what way and approach the materials have been collected is also highly relevant since it specifies the choices made when sampling certain statements and why they were chosen. To begin with, when sampling the material needs to define what approach is going to be used. In this thesis, purposive sampling will be the way of sampling material. Purposive sampling is when the material has been chosen because they have characteristics that fit in answering the research question and to which can be analyzed by the constructed ideal types. According to Bryman (2016:410), this approach is highly linked to the research questions so that the units of analysis can answer the research question. Therefore, the research questions guide the sampling approach meaning that there is a correlation between these two, this also raises the validity in the study. In this thesis, this is also the case since the research questions quite clearly state the need to analyze statements based on politicians in Bosnia, a highly specific set of material that is specifically based on the research questions. The material has been collected in the given time- period for the case study, meaning statements from December 2022 to March 2024.

4.8.1 MATERIAL DERIVING FROM BOSNIAN STATE AUTHORITIES

Continuing, the author also argues (ibid:552, 554-555) that the need to specify and have different approaches when using materials arriving from different sources is needed. In this thesis, the material will be conducted from official documents being provided from the state, mainly three speeches that have been held by the three-fold Presidency, which have been collected directly from the official website of the Presidency. When using the state documents as a source for data it can be considered quite safe since it is directly derived from the state

(ibid:552). However, there still needs to be a critical eye for biases in the presented material, but these speeches were usually held at conferences and the need to fabricate something would be unnecessary, therefore, the material can be deemed as legitimate to use.

Table 2: Material collected by the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina's official website.

| Year | Author of the statement | Reference in text | Link |
|------|-------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 2024 | Denis Bećirović | Bećirović Speech 1 | Bećirović Speech 1 |
| 2023 | Željko Komšić | Komšić Speech 1 | Komšić Speech 1 |
| 2023 | Željka Cvijanovic | Cvijanovic Speech 1 | Cvijanovic Speech 1 |

4.8.1 MATERIAL ARRIVING FROM NEWSARTICLES

Mass media or newspapers are the other main sources of data collection which can be highly beneficial in studies that seek to find inner meaning or underlying meaning in the data, which is the case of this thesis. Bryman (2016:544-555) argues, however, that some considerations need to be followed when having these works as a source. The articles will be used only for the statements and not comments made by the authors, if the article provides any. Firstly, the need to consider authenticity in the material that is being used is highly important since it sometimes can be difficult to establish the authorship, something that will be considered and doublechecked in this thesis. Having authenticity means that the statements have been checked and can be confirmed by multiple sources. Secondly, and probably the most important is credibility, which means having trustworthiness in the statement, that Bryman argues can be easily fixed by using the means of analysis to uncover the truth. Finally, the need to consider contextual awareness, meaning that the time and place the statement was said, when the material is chosen and when it was said is also highly relevant. This will be done in the results by giving context to each statement, when it was said and what the surroundings were. The material will now be presented below.

Table 3: Material collected from newspapers on the trojka

| Year | Author of the statement | Reference in text | Link |
|-------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| 2024 | Denis Bećirović | Bećirović 1 | Bećirović 1 |
| 2024 | Denis Bećirović | Bećirović 2 | Bećirović 2 |
| 2023 | Denis Bećirović | Bećirović 3 | Bećirović 3 |
| 2022 | Denis Bećirović | Bećirović 4 | Bećirović 4 |
| 2024 | Željka Cvijanovic | Cvijanovic 1 | Cvijanovic 1 |
| 2024 | Željka Cvijanovic | Cvijanovic 2 | Cvijanovic 2 |
| 2022 | Željka Cvijanovic | Cvijanovic 3 | Cvijanovic 3 |
| 2024 | Željka Cvijanovic | Cvijanovic 4 | Cvijanovic 4 |
| 2022 | Željko Komšić | Komšić 1 | Komšić 1 |
| 2023 | Željko Komšić | Komšić 2 | Komšić 2 |
| 2023 | Željko Komšić | Komšić 3 | Komšić 3 |
| 2023 | Željko Komšić | Komšić 4 | Komšić 4 |

Table 4: Material collected from newspapers on Dodik and Bradara

| Year | Author of the statement | Reference in text | Link |
|-------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| 2024 | Milorad Dodik | Dodik 1 | Dodik 1 |
| 2023 | Milorad Dodik | Dodik 2 | Dodik 2 |
| 2024 | Milorad Dodik | Dodik 3 | Dodik 3 |
| 2024 | Milorad Dodik | Dodik 4 | Dodik 4 |
| 2023 | Lidija Bradara | Bradara 1 | Bradara 1 |
| 2024 | Lidija Bradara | Bradara 2 | Bradara 2 |
| 2023 | Lidija Bradara | Bradara 3 | Bradara 3 |
| 2024 | Lidija Bradara | Bradara 4 | Bradara 4 |

4.9 TRANSLATION OF STATEMENTS

The need to clarify in what way the material, that is in the Bosnian language, has been translated. By contacting two people that have been helping me with the translations, both being Bosnian and English speaking it has helped into making the statements as clear as possible. An appendix will be presented with all the statements in English so that it can be compared to the original statements, keeping transparency in the materials that are going to be analyzed. The results that follow will showcase a selection of the material to visualize how the ideal types have been used, not the entirety of the material that has been analyzed.

5. RESULTS

This part presents the results and discusses and analyses the statements if some underlying themes are identified. The results will be presented thematically with the themes being identified in the different statements; the themes are to be presented in cursive to be distinguished from the rest of the text. Firstly, the trojka, the threefold presidency, will be presented and analysed with Bećirović, Komšić and Cvijanovic as the first analysis subjects. After that the two entity presidents, Dodik and Bradara, will be presented and then the same proceeding with the ideal types that have been identified.

5.1 CONSOCIATIONAL IDEAL TYPE

Firstly, Denis Bećirović, the president of the trojka representing the Bosniaks, resembles the consociational ideal type in the following ways. In a speech when Bosnia gained candidate status in December 2022, Bećirović stated that: “Further progress of Bosnia and Herzegovina will depend on the speed and results of government work at the state and lower levels” (Bećirović 1). When Bećirović emphasises the need to cooperate on all levels of Bosnia's government he is referring to the current political system with the power-sharing amendments between the groups and how they now need to cooperate to make this happen, a clear indication of the theme of *political organization* and the consociational ideal type. This theme means the emphasis on power-sharing among societal groups. Another example of the theme of *political organization* that can be related to the consociational ideal type is when Bećirović refers to Dodik who has threatened to annex the RS entity from Bosnia: “Unfortunately, the head of the BH entity of RS continues dangerous anti-Dayton actions to endanger the peace, independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina.” (Bećirović 2) which illustrates the emphasis on power-sharing.

Continuing, the Serb President in the trojka Cvijanovic also issues statements resembling the consociational ideal type when speaking on the RS wanting to stay neutral on the EU sanctions to Russia after the war on Ukraine: “The same commitment of the institutions of Srpska is that with all who respect its position, respect the Dayton Agreement” (Cvijanovic 1) which has signs

of the themes *rights and freedoms* theme. This is because Cvijanovic is referring to the integrity of group rights and autonomous regions, an indication of the *rights and freedoms* theme. In the same statement, Cvijanovic also speaks on the Bosnian path towards the EU, stating: “The European path of BiH is itself composed and difficult [...] We understand that there are domestic authorities' obligations, but on the other hand, there must be a credible partner we're talking to about negotiations” indicating a resemblance to the theme of *representation and participation* advocating for the need to respect that fairly represented and can use their veto if the EU is not a credible partner in this matter.

Moreover, Komšić the final member of the trojka, representing the Croats also has statements that appear to be similar to the consociational ideal type. It can firstly, be recognizable in a speech held at the U.N General Assembly in 2023: “[...] whereby such policies are obstructed and what is, in my opinion, one of the key goals of my country – its way to membership in larger supranational systems such as the European Union or NATO alliance” (Komšić 3), where he refers to supranational systems as a solution of Bosnia's problems. This could indicate the theme of *outside interference* since that might be needed in some consociational systems. Komšić also speaks on these problems that cause inefficiency. For instance, when speaking on Bosnian Independence Day Komšić said: We are, when it comes to the EU it is a step back, we have not fulfilled our obligations for years. We have not fulfilled what Europe [the EU] is looking for” (Komšić 4) which can resemble the theme of *perceived problems and transformation of the status quo* meaning that the President is indicating the inefficiency and challenges that may occur in a consociational democracy. Referring to the fact that little has been made and that the inefficiency of the system is a fact.

Leaving the Presidents of the Trojka we now move forward to the Serb-dominated entity President, Milorad Dodik who also has statements resembling the consociational ideal type. For instance, when Dodik was addressing an issue over a new election law which was proposed by the High Representative:

“The EU can't ask Bosnia and Herzegovina to adopt democratic standards, and applaud colonial status [referring to the power of the High Representative] [...] the EU's position according to Schmidt's intent to impose the Election Law shows the treatment of BiH” (Dodik 2)

This statement showing indications of the theme *rights and freedoms* when not wanting to be controlled by someone from the outside, such as the Higher Representative, not to respect the group rights and autonomy of the RS entity.

The ideal type could also be perceived when Dodik speaks on who should be negotiating for Bosnia when conducting negotiation talks from the EU: “How do they think BiH is headed for the European road if it's not RS involved? How do they think it would have come to this if it wasn't for Republika Srpska?” (Dodik 4) through the themes of *rights and freedoms*, *perceived problems and transformation of the status quo*. The theme of *political organization* could perhaps coincide with Dodik referring to that all three constituent peoples made the decision wanting to join the Union, simply explaining the power-sharing amendments. Continuing, the theme of *rights and freedoms* could be seen throughout with Dodik arguing that his group (the Serbs) should get representation in the negotiations as well. Finally, *perceived problems and transformation of the status quo* could bear resemblance through accusing others (the other groups in Bosnia or the High Representative) of causing instability and unrest, a clear indication of this theme that promotes inefficiency.

Moreover, the entity President of FBIH also has some statements resembling the ideal type of consociational democracy. For instance, when speaking at a conference in Brussels she said: “The acquisition of candidate status was a strong motive and generator that after the BiH General elections implementing a government and in record time establish power at all levels to launch strong reform processes and meet 14 priorities of the European Commission” (Bradara 1), this could resemble the theme of *political organization* since the entity President emphasises the power-sharing amendments between different groups in Bosnia. Another example of Bradara resembling the consociational democracy ideal type is in an interview with the newspaper Vecerni List: “Unfortunately, we failed to reach the target we set, and that is the opening of the negotiations. There are certain questions open, and I know that these 14 priorities are at a stage of being implemented” (Bradara 2). Here the theme of *perceived problems and transformation of the status quo* could be resembled since the President is speaking on not reaching the set goal, indicating inefficiency.

In conclusion, the statements and actions of Bosnia's political leaders, including Denis Bećirović, Cvijanovic, Komšić, Dodik, and Bradara, closely resemble the consociational ideal type, reflecting key themes such as *political organization*, *rights and freedoms*, *perceived problems*, and *transformation of the status quo*. Bećirović emphasizes cooperation among all levels of government and opposes actions threatening the power-sharing system, while Cvijanovic highlights the importance of respecting group rights and Bosnia's path to the EU. Komšić discusses outside interference and critiques inefficiency, while Dodik insists on RS's involvement in negotiations and opposes external control. Bradara stresses powersharing and acknowledges failures in meeting EU obligations. Together, these leaders' statements and actions illustrate the intricacies of Bosnia's consociational democracy, where the balance of power among ethnic groups is central to political stability and governance.

5.2 ETHNOCRATIC IDEAL TYPE

The President's statements will now be put through the lens of the ethnocratic ideal type, starting again with Bećirović, the representative for Bosniaks in the trojka. In a previously mentioned statement where Bećirović is responding to Dodik over the potential accession of the RS entity: “The European path of Bosnia and Herzegovina is threatening the irresponsible separatist policy of the authorities of the RS entity. The path is unprecedented with the anticonstitutional and anti-European policy of the authorities of the BH Entity” (Bećirović 1) which can correlate to the theme of *perceived problems and transformation of the status quo* which shows that Dodik wants to create instability, according to Bećirović, to slow down the process of EU-membership in the context of Serb-accession. Continuing Bećirović also says: [...] “the RS entity directly threatens the peace and sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina” (Bećirović 1) which could resemble the theme of *representation and participation* that ethnic interest is the main political driver.

Moreover, the Serb President of the trojka, Cvijanovic, also has a statement that resembles the ethnocratic ideal type. In a previously quoted statement when addressing the Bosnian road towards the EU and the current sanctions on Russia, the president said this:

"We in Republika Srpska do not promote the position that anyone should introduce sanctions to anyone." We also do not promote a position that all problems in the world are resolving wars, but wars happen, so this is our official policy and we should keep a neutral course there" (Cvijankovic 1)

This statement could coincide with the theme of *outside interference and cooperation* since the current sanctions on Russia and how the RS region wants to stay neutral in this aspect, because Serb and Russian ethnic groups are similar, and therefore, the ethnic Serb President opposes the sanctions. This means that, because of the similarity of the ethnic groups, sharing religion and having strong ties, the statement could resemble the theme of *outside interference and cooperation*.

Following, Komšić in the speech when addressing the U.N assembly, in an already cited quote, he also said this: "[...] the political system in Bosnia and Herzegovina does not contain complete democracy, but a system in which elects government institutions, power distribution, distribution of jobs in the state, and in the real sector, based on ethnicity" (Komšić 3). This statement could be matched to the constructed theme of *political organization* since it is not a complete democracy and it is centred around ethnicity, the theme specifically emphasizes that politics is centred around ethnicity. Moreover, the government institutions and the power distribution can be seen through the lens of *representation and participation* theme since Komšić refers to the allocation of government positions based on ethnicity. In this statement, Komšić directly refers to two themes in the constructed ideal type and he is not advocating for them, just referring to their existence.

In this statement, the Serb entity President was talking about the opening of negotiation talks with the EU, having an engaging thing to say:

"It is to say that opening talks is the result of a vast and crucial contribution to the Republika Srpska in the process. For us, the European path is important because it is fulfilling a major national goal - life of Serbs in economic and political space without borders" (Dodik 2)

The statement bears a resemblance to the ethnocratic theme of *outside interference and cooperation* since cooperation is possible with the same ethnic group. This means that Dodik is positive about the path towards the EU since it would, in theory, fulfil the goal of Serb

unification and not have any borders between Serbs living in Serbia and Bosnia. Of course, this heavily depends since this would mean that Serbia needs to join the EU as well.

Finally, Bradara the President of the FBiH entity that is shared between the Croatians and the Bosnians, said this in a previously quoted interview: “Of course, the priority in a political sense is to adopt the Election Law that will allow Croats to, as a constitutional people, be equal in the field, or that they can choose their legitimate political representatives” (Bradara 2). This statement is similar to the themes of *political organization* and *rights and freedoms*. The theme of *political organization* can be seen since the President is directly referring to the system being perceived as free; however, it is centered around ethnicity. Continuing with the theme of *rights and freedoms*, individual rights could also be based on ethnicity since there is a need to implement a law to strengthen the individual and voting rights of Croatians in Bosnia.

In conclusion, when examining Bosnia's political leaders through the lens of the ethnocratic ideal type, several themes emerge. Bećirović's remarks on Dodik's actions highlight *perceived problems and transformation of the status quo* and the dominance of ethnic interests. Cvijanovic's stance on EU sanctions reflects a preference for neutrality driven by ethnic solidarity and the theme of *outside interference and cooperation*. Komšić 's acknowledgement of Bosnia's ethnic-based political system underscores the theme of political organization. Dodik's remarks emphasize the potential benefits for Serbs, indicating a belief in ethnic cooperation correlating with the theme of *outside interference and cooperation*. Finally, Bradara's focus on the Election Law highlights ongoing struggles for equal representation based on ethnicity. The main interesting takeaways are that all politicians had ethnocratic tendencies, even though Komšić only acknowledged their existence and did not participate in contributing to them.

5.3 THE LIBERAL DEMOCRACY IDEAL TYPE

To complete this part of the thesis the final ideal type will be used as a lens to guide us through the statements made by the different Presidents in Bosnia. This speech was held after negotiation talks started in March 2024 when Bećirović said this: [...] The potential of the EU membership provides a significant incentive for changes within Bosnia and Herzegovina that are necessary for building a true democratic society, strengthening the rule of law, promoting

media freedom” (Bećirović Speech 1) The most resembled themes in this statement are *political organization* and *rights and freedoms* being prominent. For instance, the president speaks about creating a true democracy, striving for the political pluralism and participation that the liberal ideal type advocates. Moreover, the theme of *rights and freedoms* is noticeable multiple times in this statement. Firstly, when the president speaks on “building a true democracy”, “strengthening the rule” of “law and “promoting media freedom” all fall under this category. Secondly, when saying that Bosnia needs to adopt human rights also evidently is something that fits the liberal ideal type.

Cvijanovic represents the Serb population in the country of Bosnia and was asked about the optimism she has for Bosnia joining the EU, this was her response: [...] BiH, within the EU” [...] “whether it will be so serious or it will be just green light or will the EU be trapped like this alone, without awareness that it should provide the hand of the Western Balkans” (Cvijanovic 5). The liberal ideal type theme of *outside interference and cooperation* is favourably noticeable since Cvijanovic wants the EU to integrate and to give the “green light” for Western Balkan countries, including Bosnia, to join the Union.

To finalize the trojka a statement made from the Croatian representative in the Bosnian president is needed. This statement was made during a speech in Brussels over the integration of the Western Balkans into the European Union:

“Understand the subjective relationship of citizens to the value system based on which the EU can lead to giving up the EU themselves. After all, the value system we believe is still in the EU, as in Bosnia and Herzegovina makes us committed to being part of the EU. [...] I mean, first of all, about the support the elimination of discrimination based on religious, ethnic, racial, political or any other affiliations, which guarantees the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, which is an integral part of our Constitution”

(Komšić 1)

The first liberal theme that is resembled in this statement is *rights and freedoms* which Komšić wants to implement from the EU. For instance, when speaking on the EU system and the elimination of racism and discrimination in the Bosnian system is an indication of the liberal ideal type and this specific theme. Continuing, the theme of *perceived problems and*

transformation of the status quo can be seen through how Komšić wants to address the current problems, with the use of institutions that already exist in Bosnia, for the changes to be made. Finally, *outside interference and cooperation* are the most prominent themes in this statement, Komšić speaks about the importance of working with the EU and that cooperation is central to the stability of the region, a clear indicator of this theme.

The Serb-entity leader, Dodik, said in a quote that has been in this results part before but is brought forward because of the duality it shows. This was said by Dodik after the EU opened negotiation talks with Bosnia:

“It is to say that opening talks is the result of a vast and crucial contribution to the Republika Srpska in the process. For us, the European path is important because it is fulfilling a major national goal - life of Serbs in economic and political space without borders.” (Dodik 2)

The theme of *outside interference and cooperation* in the liberal democracy ideal type can be compared when wanting to cooperate, wanting no borders and a common economic space. This statement shows that Dodik wants to cooperate with other nations and with the EU, even though his goal might be slightly different, the statement still coincides with the liberal democracy ideal type.

Finally, the president of the FBiH entity, Bradara, also addressed Bosnia opening negotiation talks with the EU. She said: “We have a huge job ahead because that is what follows the demanding phases in the negotiating process. I believe that all institutions, both BiH and others participating in the Coordination Mechanism, will take responsibility and engage in this process” (Bradara 4) meaning that she wants the Bosnian authorities to use the current institutions to make this transition. This can coincide with the liberal democracy theme of *perceived problems and transformation of the status quo* since she wants to use the institutions to make a change, something that this theme advocates for.

To conclude, applying the lens of liberal democracy to the statements of Bosnia's leaders reveals a commitment to democratic values and cooperation among all. Bećirović emphasizes political organization and rights, advocating for a true democracy and media freedom. Cvijanovic's

optimism for EU integration reflects a desire for outside cooperation. Komšić stresses rights, tackling discrimination, and transformation of the status quo through EU cooperation. Dodik's support for EU talks shows a willingness to cooperate and pursue economic integration. Bradara aims for transformation using existing institutions, highlighting the importance of institutional change. These statements collectively illustrate a commitment to liberal democratic principles, albeit with varying emphases.

6. CONCLUSION

The overall research question which was: “How do the statements made by the chosen politicians in Bosnia relate to the three ideal types: consociationalism, ethnocracy and liberal democracy?” will now be answered. The statements have related to the ideal types above and they will now be answered thematically as well.

6.1 CONSOCIATIONAL IDEAL TYPE

The statements relate to the consociational ideal type in several aspects and can be found in the statements of all the chosen politicians, in the sampled statements that have been collected in this thesis. There is an indication that this ideal type is the prominent one in all of the statements, Bećirović, Komšić, Dodik and Bradara all highlight the importance of cooperation among different ethnic groups on all levels of government, highlighting the theme of political organization. Cvijanovic and Dodik signify the importance of group rights and autonomy while Komšić and Dodik critique the inefficiencies of the system and call for reform within the system. In addition, outside interference and cooperation appears as well coming from Komšić which will be discussed further in the discussion.

6.2 ETHNOCRATIC IDEAL TYPE

The statements relate to the ethnocratic ideal type in several aspects as well and can be found in the statements of all the chosen politicians, in the sampled statements that have been collected in this thesis. Bećirović, Dodik and Cvijanovic all show correlation with the ideal type through commenting on the state and being very upfront with their ethnic interests on several themes and are confronting each other. Cvijanovic and Dodik can also be related to the ideal type by using outside interference to create instability and to cooperate with similar or the same ethnic group outside of the borders of Bosnia, with Dodik's statements relating to this ideal type regularly. Similarly, Bradara does this by referring to her party in Croatia. Komšić is the only politician analyzed that does not correlate with the ideal type, only describing Bosnia's ethnocratic tendencies and according to him, realities.

6.3 LIBERAL IDEAL TYPE

The statements relate to the liberal ideal type in several aspects and can be found in the statements of all the chosen politicians, in the sampled statements that have been collected in this thesis. By this, the indication of the political will to join the Union by all politicians seems, according to the limits of this study, as a possible consensus. However, there seem to be different aspects of why this integration is important, which will be further discussed in the discussion. The statements relate to the ideal type in multiple ways, for instance, both Cvijanovic and Dodik show support for the process, yet under the circumstances of not being part of certain sanctions towards Russia. Bradara is emphasising the use of institutions in Bosnia for the change to be made and Komšić wants to implement the EU's rights and freedoms.

7. DISCUSSION

In this segment, the results will be discussed and put into context with the presented theories and the previous research. Underlying themes will be discussed and put into context of a wider scope, however, still in the limits of this thesis.

The first topic of discussion will be the fact that every politician that has been analyzed from all of the ethnicities in Bosnia has shown some kind of support for joining the EU. There seems to be consensus that everyone would benefit from joining the Union and a willingness from all of the politicians analyzed to make this happen. Yet, there seems to be different outlooks on how this is going to happen. For instance, Bradara argues that this should be done without the sanctioning of Russia, connecting to the ethnocentric theory and Komšić argues that it should be done by accepting the EU's view on human rights, similar to the liberal ideal type. There seems to be a duality in the goals, joining the EU is possible but with the premises of not the ethnic group losing status and power.

The duality in the statements is prominent throughout the whole study and not only through the relationship between consociational democracy and the ethnocentric ideal type. There seems to be an implication that some of the statements contain all the ideal types and that the politicians respect the consociational arrangements, wanting to implement the EU criteria and yet prioritizing their own ethnic group's interest. I argue that this indicates that Bosnia is a kind of ethnocracy since there is little to nothing being done about the current status quo. As argued before, there seems to be an urge to prioritize the ethnic group even though it is not necessarily needed for the cooperation forward, yet there seems to be more to lose for some with changing the status quo. This affects the current negotiations with the EU in the way that it creates a stalemate in the negotiations, since no EU criteria is being implemented. Therefore, there seems to be a point in what Komšić said in the statement presented in the introduction, that the only reason for the EU giving Bosnia candidate status may be because of the current geo-political situation in Europe as a whole (Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2022).

Dodik, as previously mentioned, has the most ethnocentric tendencies in his statements, which is not a revelation since the previous research has argued for this phenomenon. Yet, what this thesis finds interesting is that Dodik also argues for EU-integration because of the fact that the

Serbian people can be united, without any borders. By this, the leader of the RS explicitly crosses two ideal types that should, in theory at least, usually not aligning with each other. Arguing for Serb unification through the EU, with the premises that Serbia joins, is a very interesting aspect that shows how the ideal types of interplay given the results in this thesis. This argument for having different views yet the common a common goal is interesting, but, at the same time when trying to have reform there seems to be little to no cooperation. The same could also be argued for the Croatian population in Bosnia, that after EU integration there will be no borders between the Croatian people in the Balkans.

Continuing with Dodik, who has been an interesting subject to analyse and his statements can be directly linked to the previous research. To give an example, Merdzanovic (2017:26-27) argued that the international regulating body, or in Bosnias case the High Representative, is used as either a friend or an enemy. Dodik has showed through multiple statements where he explicitly uses the High Representative as a scapegoat for the problems that Bosnia or his entity of RS are currently facing. An example of this is when Bradara is advocating for the election law as being a priority for her, as it would give equal voting rights for the Croatian peoples in Bosnia (Bradara 2). This was furiously dismissed by Dodik advocating for that the High Representative should not intervene to the affairs of the RS and that the integrity of the entity would be questioned if this law was established.

Bradara wanting to implement the new election law as mentioned in the previous segment (Bradara 2) can be connected to the Croat-question that was discussed by Kasapovic (2017:175) that there is no fair representation, which raises an interesting aspect of the powerstruggle for this election law. On one hand, Bradara is fighting for her ethnic group to be presented fairly in the political system, while on the other, Dodik is fighting for him not to lose any power. At the same time, we see none of them really addressing the issues of minorities gaining more political power, which would see both of their groups loose power but would be in line with the Copenhagen Political Criteria and the liberal ideal type.

The need to understand Komšić as an actor in this Presidency and in Bosna is also central for discussing the Croat question since he is in the epicenter of it, here I identify another duality which is that Komšić wants political reform towards the EU (Komšić 3) yet is not accepted by

his “own” ethnic group (Kasparovic, 2017:188) since he is seen as an illegitimate candidate representing the Croats in the three-fold presidency. Yet, Komšić is the only one that did not have any ethnocentric tendencies, only speaking about them, which makes him a candidate for someone despite their ethnic group who perhaps would want change from the current system.

In conclusion, the analysis of Bosnian politicians' stances on EU integration reveals a complex interplay between ethnic interests, political narratives, and the pursuit of European integration. Despite broad support for joining the EU, there are diverging perspectives on how this should be achieved, reflecting underlying tensions within Bosnian society.

The findings demonstrate a duality in politicians' goals, where the desire for EU integration coexists with the imperative to maintain ethnic power dynamics. This suggests Bosnia exhibits ethnocentric tendencies, as politicians prioritize their ethnic group's interests even within the framework of EU integration.

Dodik's stance, advocating for EU integration while emphasizing Serb unity, exemplifies this complexity. Similarly, Croatian politicians envision benefits like unity without borders after EU integration, showcasing the interplay between ethnic narratives and European aspirations. Moreover, the scapegoating of the High Representative by politicians like Dodik illustrates the contentious role of international actors in Bosnian politics. The High Representative is often used as a tool to deflect criticism and maintain control over internal affairs, reflecting a broader power struggle within Bosnia. In this context, Komšić stands out as a figure advocating for political reform towards the EU without ethnocentric tendencies. However, his lack of acceptance by his own ethnic group underscores the challenges of promoting change within the existing political landscape. Overall, the analysis underscores the complexity of Bosnia's political dynamics and the challenges it faces in reconciling ethnic interests with the requirements of European integration. While there is consensus on the benefits of joining the EU, the path forward remains fraught with tensions and competing priorities, highlighting the need for nuanced approaches to address Bosnia's unique political context.

In context with the further research the thesis has shown a duality that might be interesting to further approach and to investigate. For instance, there might be an interesting study into analysing the relationship between Bosnia and the EU through the lens of security, how much are the EU willing to accept in terms of Bosnia failing to meet certain criteria and yet let them

into the Union. Another possibility of further research is to analyse the relationship between Bosnia and an actor such as NATO which also could be an interesting dynamic because of the current securitization of the region and how the internal debate is revolving around that issue. Looking forward, there seems to be a long way towards EU membership for Bosnia, yet progress has been made despite the lack of any sufficient implementation. The internal debate is an issue that needs to be dealt with for Bosnia to integrate, however, how will it be done when there is no incentive for change?

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