

CONSOCIATIONAL DEMOCRACY IN THEORY AND PRACTICE: THE CASE OF POST-WAR BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Mirsad Karić, IUS Press, 2016.

This study is divided into six chapters with an introduction and a conclusion at the end.

The framework used in this study serves a twofold function. First, it provides insights into the theory of political (in)stability. Second, it contributes to the broader and more comprehensive understanding of the government and politics of the post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina in the light of consociational democracy.

In the introduction, the author states that “the primary aim of this work is to examine and analyze the formal structure and the functioning of the political system of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the first ten post-war years, 1996-2006.

Chapter one provides a background and framework for analysis: the role of the International Community, the concept of power-sharing and constitutional arrangements imposed by the Dayton Peace Agreement.

This chapter also outlines a framework for the analysis of the concept of consociationalism, i.e. consociationalism as a power-sharing approach, and favorable conditions for consociational democracy such as population size, the balance of power among segments, the multi-party system, segmental isolation, the nature of the characteristics of Social Cleavages, overarching Loyalties, traditions of political elites and political stability.

Chapter Two provides an explanation of the nature of Bosnian plurality and offers basic data about the country, a historical overview of the devel-

opment of the Bosnian state in the modern are from the Austro-Hungarian rule of Bosnia (1878-1918), the Yugoslav monarchy (1918-1941), and the communist period of the former Yugoslavia (1945-1992), the independence of Bosnia in 1992, the war-period (1992-1995), and post-war multi-polar imbalanced ethnic divisions and social cleavages in Bosnia.

Chapter Three focuses on the elaboration of issues such as the main features of the Dayton Peace Agreement, its background and structure including military and civilian annexes. The election process of the country is explained at the end of this chapter.

In Chapter Four, the author explores the relations between the system and the elites, the structure of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the division of power between the federal and the cantonal levels, the legislative and executive authority of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of Srpska. In this part of the book, author further explains the Bosnian party system, critically examines the Dayton Peace Agreement and Bosnian political elites.

In the following chapter, the author examines relationships among the political elites, i.e. their readiness and capacity for mutual cooperation. The nature of post-war coalitions, functioning of the state institutions, the Council of Europe accession process, the Stabilization and Association Process, the issue of proportional representation and parity representation, segmental autonomy and mutual veto are also analyzed in this chapter.

In the last chapter, the author attempts to address the issue of political stability and economic performance in the post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina. This part describes the Office of the High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as its role and powers. The closing section of the book provides a conclusion and recommendations with bibliography and five appendices.

After reading of this study, it can be concluded that it enables better understanding of the Bosnian political system which has been derived from the Dayton Peace Agreement with all its complexity in general and the political one in particular.

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