The Effect of Elections on Ethnic Interactions:
Evidence from a Bosnian Blogger Network

Annerose Nisser
Graduate School of Decision Sciences (GSDS)
Department of Politics and Public Administration
University of Konstanz

CSS Winter Symposium, Cologne, December 1, 2016
Elections Impact Individual-Level Interactions

Elections Impact Individual-Level Interactions


https://issakaadams.wordpress.com/tag/ethnic-clashes-in-guinea/
Ethnic Voting

- Ethnic voting = voting along ethnic lines

- Ethnicity: identity categories based on descent, language, religion, physical appearance (Chandra, 2006; Vogt, 2014)

- Ethnicity as an instrument of political mobilization (Posner, 2004; Eifert et al., 2010; Michelitch, 2015)
  - Politicians “playing the ethnic card”
  - Citizens’ awareness of resource allocation
Research Gap

Research Gap and Research Question

Do elections impact the level of individuals’ interethnic interactions? (in a context of ethnic voting)

Importance of research question:
- Contact hypothesis
- Political competition $\rightarrow$ increased segregation $\rightarrow$ interethnic tensions & conflict
1 Hypothesis 1 (temporal hypothesis):
Interethnic interactions decrease at election times.

2 Hypothesis 2 (spatial hypothesis):
The more competitive the elections in a given constituency, the higher the decrease in interethnic interactions.
Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Ethnic divisions (three ethnic groups – Bosniaks, Croats, Serbs)
- No language barriers

October 2016 municipal elections
- Decentralized resource allocation
- Ethnic outbidding and interethnic competition

Blogger platform
- Largest platform within Bosnia
- Large-scale longitudinal webscraping (using Python)
- Original $N = 80,000$; restriction to most active $N = 2,946$
- $\approx 70,000$ links between bloggers
Research Design: Operationalizations

- **Ethnicity:**
  - Small language differences (cf. Tiedemann and Ljubešić, 2012)
  - Correlation between language and ethnicity: $\geq 0.99$ (2013 census)

- **Outcome variable:**
  - Outgroup percentage of newly added links between bloggers
  - Time frame: since August 2015 (ongoing)

- **Independent variables:**
  - Time distance from/to elections
  - Competitiveness: Ethnic set-up of municipalities (majority vs. split; 2013 census)
Ethnic Distribution of Municipalities

**Federation of BiH**

- **Share of ethnic groups**
- **Axes:** X: Share of ethnic groups, Y: Municipalities
- **Legend:**
  - ▲ majority
  - ● split
  - Green: Serb
  - Blue: Bosniak
  - Pink: Croat

**Republika Srpska**

- **Share of ethnic groups**
- **Axes:** X: Share of ethnic groups, Y: Municipalities
- **Legend:**
  - ▲ majority
  - ● split
  - Green: Serb
  - Blue: Bosniak
  - Pink: Croat
Blogger Platform

SOKO

Send private message
To send a private message to this blogger must be logged. Log in by entering your username and password in the login form at the top of this page.

Basic information
Name and surname: Emir Nišić
(S) pole: male
Year: 1987
Country: Bosnia and Herzegovina
City / Town: Tuzla

Blogs (1/2)
Blogs that is opened / by SOKO

122
SOKO artTV
soko.blogger.ba
refresh / ia SOKO 3 hours 7 minutes

Favorites (10/352)
Blogs by SOKO added / ia to favorites

18
Cafe Concept Art
cafeartconcept.blogger.ba
refresh / ia cafeartconcept before 44 minutes 48 seconds

739
spagosmail
spagosmail.blogger.ba
refresh / ia spagosmail 1 hour 18 minutes

21
Metaphysics double helix
tragoviuvremenu.blogger.ba
refresh / ia Lovica 2 hours 10 minutes

50
Sketches of eternal
protagonist.blogger.ba
refresh / ia goa227 2 hours 11 minutes

581
CRIME IN GOVERNMENT
kriminaluvlast.blogger.ba
refresh / ia zdenkobaja 2 hours 30 minutes

Profile last reviewed / ia: Zena_vojnik
Outgroup Percentage of Newly Added Links by Municipality Type

![Graph showing outgroup percentage by start round of connection and elections: Oct 2, 2016. The graph distinguishes between competitive and non-competitive municipalities.](cnc.uni.kn/people/nisser/Bloggers, Elections, Ethnicity/CSS Winter Symposium 2016)
Outgroup Percentage of Newly Added Links by Municipality Type

![Graph showing outgroup percentage over time by municipality type. The graph includes data points for elections: Oct 2, 2016, Sep 1, 2015, May 1, 2016, Aug 1, 2016, Sep 1, 2016, Nov 1, 2016. The x-axis represents the start round of connection, and the y-axis represents the outgroup percentage. There are two lines: one for competitive (orange) and one for non-competitive (teal).]
Outgroup Percentage of Newly Added Links by Municipality Type

- Competitive
- Non-Competitive

Start round of connection: Oct 2, 2016
Results:
Effect of (Competitive) Elections on Outpercentage
Summary and Next Steps

- Evidence for less interethnic interactions
  - around election times
  - in ethnically split municipalities (=competitive elections)

- No evidence for interaction effect between elections * split municipalities

- Collect more data to know how network develops after elections

- Theorize about causal mechanism


### Summary Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>St. Dev.</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Temporal distance</td>
<td>2,854</td>
<td>12.131</td>
<td>3.103</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>1,363</td>
<td>27.450</td>
<td>11.024</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outpercentage</td>
<td>2,854</td>
<td>0.385</td>
<td>0.405</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1,529</td>
<td>0.690</td>
<td>0.463</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosniak</td>
<td>2,854</td>
<td>0.769</td>
<td>0.421</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croat</td>
<td>2,854</td>
<td>0.153</td>
<td>0.361</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serb</td>
<td>2,854</td>
<td>0.077</td>
<td>0.267</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majority municipality</td>
<td>875</td>
<td>0.904</td>
<td>0.295</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Split municipality</td>
<td>875</td>
<td>0.055</td>
<td>0.228</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>