

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

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Elections Impact Individual-Level Interactions



<http://www.bbc.com/news/election-us-2016-36404323>

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<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 → increased segregation → interethnic tensions & conflict

Hypotheses

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.

Research Design: Case

- **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:
 ≥ 0.99 (2013 census)

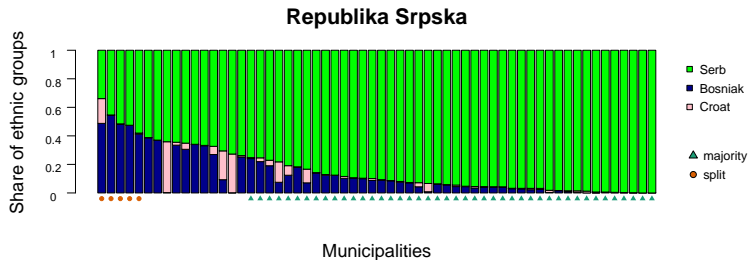
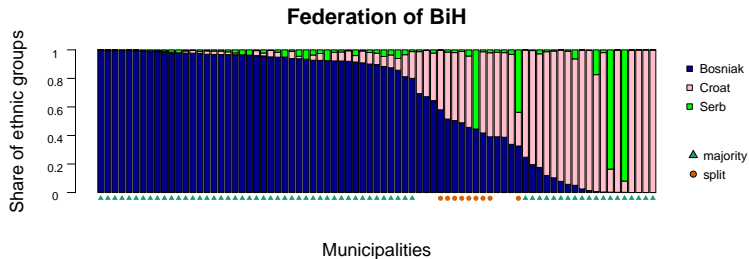
- **Outcome variable:**

- 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



Blogger Platform

[PROFILE BLOGGERS](#)
[BLOGS](#)
[FAVORITES](#)
[COMMENTS](#)

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
Occupation:	Head on TV ELEPHANT, B.Sc.. lawyer
Interests:	art
Date:	10/12/2004
The last time was online:	1 hour 14 minutes
Profile last reviewed / la:	Zena_vojnik

Blogs (1/2)

Blogs that is opened / by SOKO

122

[bookmark +](#)

[SOKO artTV](#)
soko.blogger.ba
refresh / la [SOKO](#) 3 hours 7 minutes

[All my blogs »](#)

Favorites (10/352)

Blogs by SOKO added / la to favorites

18

[bookmark +](#)

[Cafe Concept Art](#)
cafeartconcept.blogger.ba
refresh / la [cafeartconcept](#) before 44 minutes 48 seconds

739

[bookmark +](#)

[spagosmail](#)
spagosmail.blogger.ba
refresh / la [spagosmail](#) 1 hour 18 minutes

21

[bookmark +](#)

[Metaphysics double helix](#)
tragovluvreenu.blogger.ba
refresh / la [Lovica](#) 2 hours 10 minutes

50

[bookmark +](#)

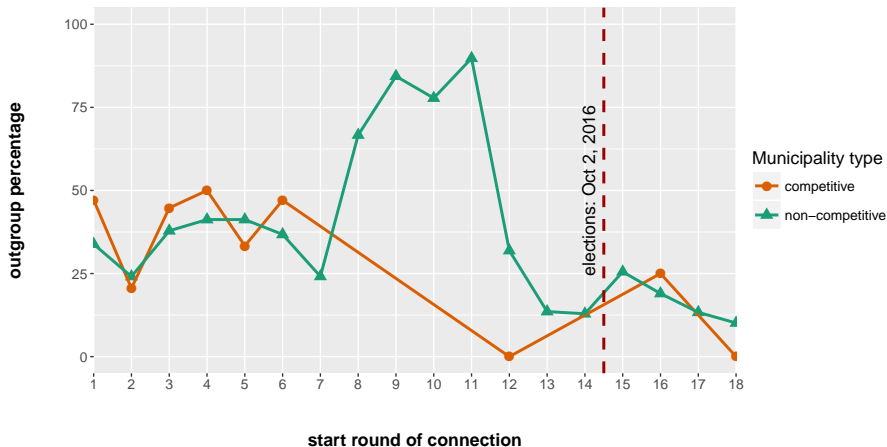
[Sketches of eternal](#)
protagonist.blogger.ba
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581

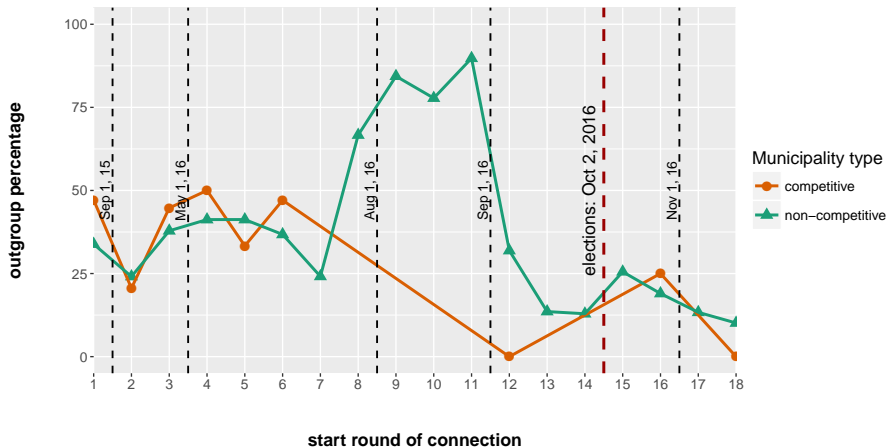
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[CRIME IN GOVERNMENT](#)
kriminaluvlasti.blogger.ba
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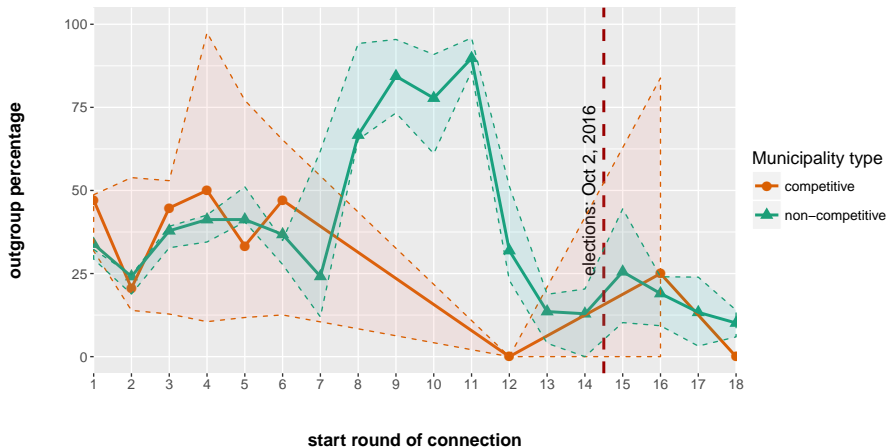
Outgroup Percentage of Newly Added Links by Municipality Type



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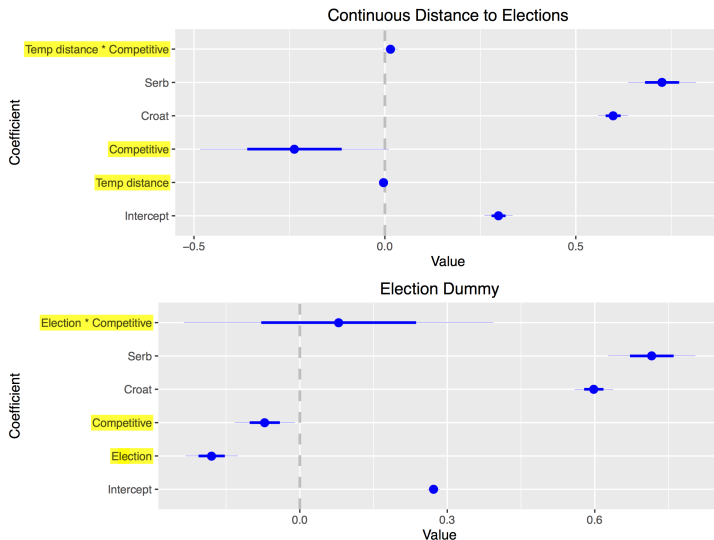


Outgroup Percentage of Newly Added Links by Municipality Type



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

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Summary Statistics

Table: Summary statistics

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