



## Araştırma Makalesi • Research Article

# Urban and Rural Voting Tendency: Case of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2014 Parliamentary Elections

*Kentsel ve Kırsal Oy Verme Eğilimi: Bosna Hersek 2014 Parlamento Seçimleri Örneği*

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### ÖZ

Bu çalışma 2014 yılında Bosna-Hersek'te yapılan parlamento seçimlerinin sonuçlarına göre kırsal ve kentsel bölgelerdeki seçmenlerin seçime katılan siyasi partilerin ideolojik temellerine göre yaptıkları oy tercihlerini analiz etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu çalışma Bosna-Hersek'te seçimde oy veren kırsal ve kentsel seçmenlerin sağ ve sol kanattaki siyasi partilere olan desteğinde oldukça anlamlı (yüzde 10 civarında) bir fark olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Bu fark Bosna-Hersek Federasyonu'nda (FBH) Sırp Cumhuriyeti'ne (RS) kıyasla çok daha barizdir. Bu durumun temel nedeni Sırp Cumhuriyeti'nde sol kanatta sayılabilecek bir partinin belirlenmesindeki zorluktur. Teoride hangi partinin sağ, hangi partinin sol parti olduğunun belirlenmesi parti programına ve halka açık dokümanlara bakılarak kolay bir şekilde yapılabilir; ancak pratikte Sırp Cumhuriyeti için bu belirleme düşünüldüğü kadar kolay değildir. Sırp Cumhuriyeti'nde tüm partiler az veya çok ırkçı siyasi söyleme ve duruşa sahiptirler ve bu durum bu partileri temel olarak sağ partiler haline getirmektedir.

### ABSTRACT

This paper aims to analyze the preference of the urban and rural voters with regards to the ideological foundation of the political parties participated in 2014 parliamentary elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The study finds that there is a significant difference (around 10 percent) between the rural and urban voters in their support for right-wing and left-wing political parties. This difference is more remarkable in the Federation (FBH) than in the entity of the Republika Srpska (RS). This is mainly because of the difficulty of identifying a left-wing party in RS. In theory, it is straightforward and easy to distinguish and classify political parties on the right and left of the political spectrum on the basis of their programs and available documents but it is not so clear. More or less, all parties in RS have strong nationalist views and stand which makes them essentially right-wing parties.

## 1. Introduction

A political participation through free, fair, regular and competitive election is one of the basic pillars of democracy. Various factors such as ethnicity, race, religion, gender, age, education, social status, ideology, urban and rural division of eligible voters etc. may influence voters' turnout and choice on the election-day. Some of these factors are more and some are less significant with regards to the final choice of the voters on the election-day. The rural-urban division of

societies has been one of the most significant political cleavages composing political life all over the world. Post-war Bosnia has been a field of various electoral studies on the importance of these factors on the functioning of the political system in general and the role of electoral process in particular. However, no study has been done on rural and urban pattern of voting and to what extent these variables had an impact on the voters' turnout and their preference to select the political parties and their candidates. According to

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the last census held in 2013, 42,7% and 57,3% of Bosnians live in urban and rural areas respectively. Therefore, Bosnia can be considered as predominantly rural country and only three European countries, Lichtenstein, Faroe Island and Moldova have relatively higher populations than Bosnia in rural areas. This share of rural population in Bosnia is too very much above the European average which, according to the World Bank (2018) stands at 28%. Hence, this study will contribute to the relevant literature by examining the distribution of urban and rural voting and comparing the tendency of rural and urban voters in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It will also discuss whether and to what extent its voters fit into the international standards whereby the rural population often more likely participates in the political process through voting than the urban population. The literature suggests that rural voters hold more conservative views and attitudes than their urban fellows and consequently tend more to support the right oriented political parties (Knoke and Henry, 1977).

First multiparty elections in Bosnia were held in November 1990 (Arnautović, 1996, Kapidžić, 2015). At that time Bosnia was still one of the republics of former socialist Yugoslavia. After the break-up of Yugoslavia in early 1990s, in March 1992 Bosnia became an independent country. However, soon after the aggression from Serbia and Croatia had started any kind of democratization process was stopped until the end of the war and signing the Dayton Peace Acord (DPA) in 1995. DPA defined Bosnia as a democratic state, which shall cooperate under the rule of law and with free and democratic elections. Since then until today, seven presidential, eight parliamentary and six local elections were held in the post-war Bosnia (see [www.izbori.ba](http://www.izbori.ba) for details). This study will examine and analyze the 2014 Bosnian legislative elections. One of the main reasons to analyze the results of these elections against the urban-rural cleavages lies in the fact that the first census in the post-war Bosnia, which, among other variables, defines urban and rural regions in Bosnia was held in 2013. However, State Election Commission does not provide any information on how the ballot boxes are correlated with the census classification of urban and rural areas as well as if the ballot boxes are distinct for the urban and rural areas. In other words, it is not clear if some ballot boxes include both urban and rural voters.

## 2. Literature Review

In comparative politics urban and suburban politics is extensively and well-studied field (McKee and Shaw, 2003; Gainsborough, 2005). On the other hand, study of the behavior of rural voters has received less attention. Still some studies in comparative politics on the comparison of urban and rural voters have been conducted and interesting results, which justify the importance and impact of place people live in on their political attitude and electoral behavior, have been obtained. Place where voters live has considerable impact on their political attitude and accordingly on their political behavior and choices on the

election day (Key, 1996). USA presidential election has been subject of many studies with regards to the urban and rural voters' attitudes. The way of live that is present in the USA urban and rural places is quite different. This is very much reflected in the electoral behavior of urban and rural voters (Francia and Baumgartner, 2005-2006). Hence, political attitude along the rural-urban continuum in the USA Presidential election from 2000-2016 shows that the large urban areas have favored democrat candidates on one hand while voters from small and rural areas substantially voted for the republican candidate (Scala and Johnson, 2017). Similar to American elections results have been found in the Canadian elections at both, provincial and federal levels whereby the rural residents prefer to support the Conservative Party, while liberals got more support in the urban areas (Gidengil et. al., 2006; Roy et. al., 2015). In order to explain the possible reasons for these differences in Canada, it has been contended that the strongest difference lies in understanding and approaching the moral values: urban voters tend to be more progressive while the rural voters value more moral traditionalism and conservatism (Cutler and Jankins, 2000).

Study on the first post-war Bosnian municipal elections held in 1997 found that non-nationalist or voting for the political parties of the left political spectrum was likely to be higher where Bosniacs (Bosnian Muslims) were the largest ethnic group, followed by Serbs and Croats (Pugh and Cobble, 2001).

Very interesting study on the electoral behavior of voters was conducted in New Zealand analyzing the results of 1993 binding electoral referendum which was held on the same day as legislative election. The referendum option was between keeping a Single-Member District (SMD) electoral system or introducing a pure Proportional Representation (PR) one. Extensive analysis of the results of this referendum found that there is a strong correlation between the support for one type of the electoral system and the level of education, political party preferences and the residential place of voters. Namely, those having higher level of formal education, placing themselves to the left of the political spectrum and residing in urban areas strongly supported the change of an existing SMD electoral system and introducing a pure PR one (Riambau, Stillman and Boe-Gibson, 2017).

African nations are very much characterized by the stark difference between rural and urban areas in the level of voters support for the incumbent presidential candidates, ruling and opposition political parties. Thus, voters from the country side and the rural areas are much more in favor of incumbent candidates. (Jaffries, 1998; Conroy-Krutz, 2009; Harding 2010; Resnick, 2011). Thus for example, since re-introduction of a multiparty system in Senegal in 1978, incumbent presidential candidates and incumbent party candidates in parliamentary elections received much better support in rural than urban areas (Koter, 2013). Another study on African nations has found that the laws that restrict foreign funding to nongovernmental organizations passed

by some African states (Since 1990, 13 of Africa's 54 states have enacted such laws) reduce local population's electoral participation in legislative elections in a way that it may signal a decline in democratization process as citizens might fear rigged elections where their vote will not influence who forms the next government. On the other hand, in democratic countries, respondents are around 94% more likely to report having voted in a recent national election even after controlling for restrictive NGO laws (Dupuy and Prakash, 2020).

Rural areas in India witness higher turnout than in the city areas and the score of the parties depend on strategies used by political parties to attract voters in rural and urban areas, issues of relevance for women voters and the political dynamics of religious polarization (Mukerji, 2015). Another study on India shows that the Indian People's Party which has been the party of urban India has managed to increase its vote-share in rural areas in a significant manner due to communalization of social life there, however except the areas inhabited by Muslims (Jaffrelot and Kumar, 2015).

Studies analyzing Polish voters' electoral behavior in 2015 legislative election found that 'all moderate or socially progressive parties benefit from a higher share of urban population' on the one hand and the more traditional political parties vote-share decreases with the increase of the urban voters on the other (Marcinkiewicz, 2017). The analysis of voting pattern in Hungary has shown that the urban-rural dichotomy has increased after 2000. Prior to that year election left-wing parties in Hungary managed to secure significant percentage of the rural votes and thus strike the balance between the urban and rural voters. However, since 2000 election, right-wing political parties consolidated their support in the country side while the left-wing political parties in Hungary mainly relied on and attracted the votes from the urban population (Kovacs and Vida, 2015).

### 3. Political History of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Bosnia and Herzegovina's political history has gone through different socio-political contexts. It began with the first written mentioning of the name Bosnia ("horion Bosona") which appeared in the middle of the tenth century in the "De administrando imperio" (The Management of the Empire) by the Byzantine emperor and writer, Constantine Porphyrogenitus (Imamović, 1996 and Bojić, 2001). The medieval Bosnian state lasted until the middle of the fifteenth century which marked the end of the sovereign and independent Bosnian state and, in 1463, it became a unit in the framework of Ottoman Empire that lasted until 1878. In the post-Ottoman period, five different regimes have succeeded one another in Bosnia until today. Austria-Hungary ruled Bosnia between 1878 to 1918; royal Yugoslavia ruled it between 1918 to 1941; during the four years of the Second World War (WWII), Bosnia was occupied and incorporated into the fascist "Independent State of Croatia"; it was governed as a unit of the Socialist

Yugoslav Federation from 1945 to 1991 and finally it became an independent country in March 1992 and finally was granted full membership to the United Nations (UN) on May 22, 1992.

The first sign of dynamic political life in Bosnia was marked by the establishment of ethnically based political parties represented respective ethnic groups in the country: Bosniacs, Croats and Serbs and took place in the beginning of the 20th century during the period of Austro-Hungarian control of the country. This approach to the foundation of the first political parties in Bosnia was in accordance to the stand of the majority of Bosnia's political elites regardless of national affiliation. They had the view that, as a "provisional country", there could be no basis for typical political parties to operate in Bosnia, similar to those existed in Europe at that time, as if there was no "parliamentary base". Therefore, they suggested that every national movement must remain united until it achieved its national political and statehood objectives (Pelesić, 2009).

In December 1906 the Bosniacs created a formal political party, the Muslim National Organization (Muslimanska Nacionalna Organizacija, MNO). The MNO and its post-1918 successor the Yugoslav Muslim Organization (Jugoslovenska Muslimanska Organizacija, JMO) dominated Bosniac politics until 1941. The MNO enjoyed the support of the vast majority of the Bosniac population from the various social status, urban and rural population and its major demands were for Bosniac religious and vakuf-mearif autonomy and for the political autonomy of Bosnia as a state subject to Sultan's sovereignty. The Muslim Progressive Party (Muslimanska Napredna Stranka, MNS) was another political organization which was founded in August 1908. The group of Bosniacs who initiated various cultural, educational and commercial actions and used to call themselves "progressive Muslims/Bosniacs", founded this political party (Pelesić, 2009). Regarding the basic social issues, MNS's program was basically no different from that of MNO. However, due to the fact that this Bosniac majority political party took a pro-Croatian position on national issues it did not enjoy a widespread support among Bosniacs and therefore had to revise its program and renounce the Croatian national idea. In October 1907, Serbian political activists created the Serbian National Organization (Srpska Narodna Organizacija, SNO). This political party incorporated Serbs from three political groups. One group consisted of the leaders who supported the idea of autonomy for Bosnia and artisan and merchant community whose main goal was promotion of their own economic interests. The Serb intelligentsia criticized the former group and tried to stop the campaign, which was primarily educational and clerical in nature. They instead tried to make it a political struggle. The third group among Serbs, which prevailed mainly in the Bosnian Krajina region aligned with the peasantry and rural people demanding a radical solution to the agrarian question. In February 1908, Bosnian Croats formed the Croatian National Union (Hrvatska Narodna Zajednica, HNZ). In addition to this,

Croatian clerics, in January 1910, established another party, Croatian Catholic Association (Hrvatska Katolička Udruga, HKU) whose political program emphasized clerical ideals and religious exclusivity. Both political parties considered Bosnia a Croatian land and therefore it would be natural for Bosnia to become part of Croatia (Imamović, 2006 and Filandra, 1998). This stage, which was marked by the emergence of mass politics, proved to be crucial for later country's political development.

#### 4. Bosnia and Herzegovina's Independence and the DPA

Party pluralism and ethnic-based political parties in Bosnian politics were reintroduced in the 1990s, after the absolute dominance of the Communist Political Party for few decades following the end of the WWII. In the first multi-party elections held in November 1990 the three ethnically based political parties, Party of Democratic Action (Stranka Demokratske Akcije, SDA), Serb Democratic Party (Srpska Demokratska Stranka, SDS) and Croatian Democratic Union (Hrvatska Demokratska Zajednica, HDZ) emerged victorious in the Parliament. They won 86% of the 240 seats in the Bosnian Assembly (Hulsey and Keil, 2021). The remaining 14% of the seats were one by few other smaller political parties. According to these results, three ethnic-based political parties won the majority of both, urban and rural votes all over the country.

Soon after the first parliamentary and presidential elections in B&H were held and following the dissolution of former Yugoslavia, the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina took place and lasted between 1992 and 1995. The war ended by the Dayton Peace Accord (DPA), which was signed and ratified at the end of the 1995. The DPA reflected the new post-cold war interventionist approach of international institutions, elaborated in the United Nations' Agenda for Peace, which since 1992 has stressed the importance of post-conflict peace-building and the necessity for the long-term involvement of international organizations in political institution-building and governance. Today's Bosnian political system and power structure are based on the provisions of the Annex 4 ("Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina") of the DPA. Furthermore, these constitutional arrangements set up a new arena for dialogue among the local political elites who have been legally elected in the elections.

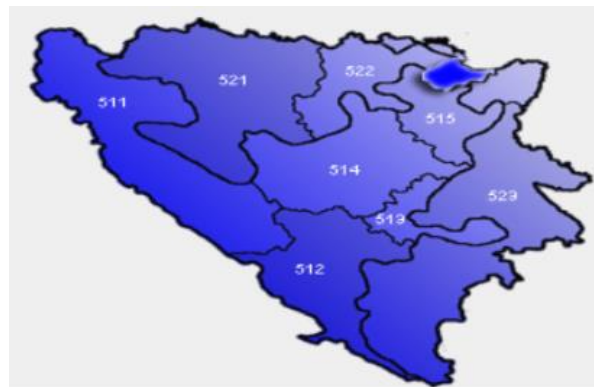
At the state level, the DPA provided for consociational power-sharing with the bicameral parliament, the three-member rotating Presidency, the Council of Ministers and the constitutional court. The state consists of two entities, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBH) and the Republika Srpska (RS) and the District of Brčko. Regular general and local elections have been held in BH since 1996. Having regular, free and fair elections in the war-torn societies have been considered and justified in terms of the democratic peace theory, which assumes that the people's will expressed in the election and the power of the ballot

boxes will be able to reverse the atrocities and crimes committed during the war.

#### 5. Bosnia and Herzegovina's Electoral System

According to the Constitution of BH, the lower house of the parliamentary assembly consists of forty-two (42) directly elected representatives, from open candidate lists, by preferential vote, in multi-member constituencies, which enables voters to give a preferential vote to their candidates on the list. Twenty-eight (28) and fourteen (14) representatives are elected from the FBH and the entity RS respectively (Constitution of BH, article 4.2). The number of representatives elected from each consistency depends on the total number of registered voters in each constituency and varies from three to six. Total of twenty-one (21) representatives from the FBH are elected on the basis of a direct mandate from the list of political subjects from five constituencies<sup>2</sup>, while remaining seven (7) candidates are elected from the whole entity using the model of compensatory mandates. In the entity RS, the total of nine (9) representatives are elected through the direct mandates from three constituencies<sup>3</sup> and the remaining five (5) mandates are allocating to the political parties on the basis of compensatory mandates. Voters registered in the District of Brčko need to choose to vote for the constituency either in the entity of the FBH or in the entity of the RS (Election Law of BH, articles 9.1-9.11). Electoral law allows registration and participation of various political subjects in the legislative election. These political subjects include political parties, coalition of two or more political parties, independent candidates and the list of independent candidates. Electoral law applies the proportional representation model in converting the votes into the parliamentary seats. Passing the threshold of 3% at the constituency level makes a requirement for political subjects to get the seats in the assembly. Since the threshold is quite low, it encourages creation and participation of many political parties in the election. This makes Bosnian political system quite fragmented as many political parties are able to pass the threshold and secure the seats in the parliament.

Figure 1. State electoral constituencies in BH



Source: Central elections commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina (2014)

State legislative elections held in 2014 were the 7th postwar legislative election in BH. Total of twenty-eight (28) political subjects were registered for 2014 state legislative election: twenty-one (21) political parties, six coalitions and one independent candidate. Some political subjects took part in both entities. However, only one political party, Party of Democratic Action (SDA), leading Bosniac political party, was able to secure the seats in both entities.

After studying and analyzing programs of the political parties that participated in the election it is quite clear that they subscribed to different ideological backgrounds, ranging from the extreme left to the extreme right. The table below provides the information about the parties left-right political spectrum, which is derived from the parties' names, their political programs and some other documents, such as party members' interviews and press statements.

**Table 1.** Political parties and their orientations

Party name and acronym	Area of support	Political spectrum	Party name and acronym	Area of support	Political spectrum
Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD)	RS	Left	Democratic People's Union (DNZ)	FBH	Left
Serb Democratic Party (SDS)	RS	Center-Right	Communist Party (KP)	FBH	Extreme left
Democratic People's Alliance (DNS)	RS	Right	People's Party for Work and Betterment (NSRzB)	FBH	Center
Serb Radical Party (SRS)	RS	Extreme right	Our Party (NS)	FBH	Center-Left
Party of Democratic Progress (PDP)	RS	Center-Left	Croatian Christian Democratic Union (HKDU)	FBH	Right
Union for a Better Future (SBB)	FBH	Center	Bosnian party (BOSS)	FBH	Left
Party of Democratic Action (SDA)	FBH/RS	Center-Right	Party of Democratic Activity (A-SDA)	FBH	Right
Democratic Front (DF)	FBH	Left	Labor Party-Laburisti	FBH	Left
Socialist Party (SP)	RS	Left	Diaspora-Dijaspora	FBH	Unknown
Croatian Democratic Union 1990 (HDZ1990)	FBH	Center-Right	New Movement-Novi Pokret	FBH	Center-Left
Social Democratic Party (SDP)	FBH	Left	Croatian Party of Rights (HSP)	FBH	Right
Bosnian Patriotic Party (BPS)	FBH	Center-Left	Union of Social Democrats (Unija SD)	FBH	Left
Party for BH (SBiH)	FBH	Center-Right	Vinko Tomić -Independent candidate	RS	Unknown
Party of a Just Politics-Stranka Pravedne Politike	RS	Center			

Source: Classified by authors

According to the last census held in 2013, BH had a total population of 3.53 million people. 57,3% of the population lived in rural areas, while the rest of 42,7% resided in cities and urban areas. For the sake of comparison, FBH is less rural than RS. Namely, 56,7% of the population in the FBH lived in rural areas, whereas 59,3% of the RS population resided in rural places. Remaining 42,7% and 40,7% of the population lived in urban areas of the entity of FBH and the entity of RS respectively. 3.282.581 eligible voters were registered for the election, 2.039.316 or 62,1% voters in the entity of the FBH and 1.243.265 or 37,9% voters in the entity RS.

## 6. Data and Results

Data for this study were obtained from the official webpage of the Central elections commission (Central elections commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2014). The webpage provides detailed information about the Bosnian elections in ballot box level. Data were transferred into Microsoft Excel and then analyzed using STATA program. This study employs data from 2014 state parliamentary elections. In 2014, there were 3.383.581 eligible voters for the state level legislative elections in BH. Total of 1.745.934

(51,6%) eligible voters voted in the elections and 1.590.933 of these votes were valid (91,1%) while 155.001 of them were deemed invalid (8,9%) in 5.500 ballot boxes across the whole country. In the FBH, 2.039.316 voters were registered in the central election list. The total number of 1.080.910 (53,0%) eligible voters voted in 3.257 ballot boxes and 965.865 (90,9%) of the votes were valid while 96.890 (9,1%) of them were invalid ballots. On the other hand, in the RS, 1.243.265 eligible voters were registered in the central election list. Total number of 683.169 (54,9%) eligible voters voted in 2.243 ballot boxes and 625.068 (91,5%) of the votes were valid, while 58.111 (8,5%) of them were declared as invalid votes.

The most problematic part of the data analysis was to determine which ballot boxes contain rural or urban votes. The solution is not straight forward. Central elections commission webpage provides the address of each ballot box. However, often it is not possible to determine if the voters in a particular ballot box are rural or urban. For instance, a ballot box in the south of the city of Mostar may include the people of a nearby village which is approximately 2 km away from the city boundary. This study opted to determine whether the ballot box represents

urban or rural votes by collecting information from the academicians or students at International University of Sarajevo who lived or have lived in the vicinity of each major city or town. They were expected to identify correctly if the address of the ballot box is a village, small town or city center. Although this method has such limitations, it is considered to be the most suitable method under current conditions.

Using the information provided in Table 1. then the number of right and left votes was calculated for each ballot box. It should be noted that the classification of right and left parties is inherently subjective and open to debate for some parties as it is difficult to identify some of the parties, especially in the entity RS, in terms of their ideology and their position in political spectrum. This study made the labeling based on the program of these parties and placed them on the left. However, it is quite clear that almost all political parties in the entity RS exercise very nationalistic rhetoric and thus should be placed on the right or extreme right of the political spectrum line.

Table 2 presents the findings of the study in the country level while Table 3 and 4 presents the result in entity level. In addition, Table 5 provides the right and left votes in each electoral constituency, five in the FBH and three in the RS.

As it can be seen in Table 2, there is a significant tendency toward parties of the right political spectrum in 2014 State Parliamentary elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Thus, in total three-fifths (60,4%) of votes were secured by the parties of the right political spectrum, while the left-oriented political parties obtained the remaining two-fifths (39,6%) of the valid votes. However, this difference is more striking in rural areas compared to urban ones. Namely, in rural areas, right oriented political parties obtained almost two-thirds of all valid votes (64,9%), while in rural areas, a little bit more than one-third of votes (35,1%) were secured by the parties of the left political spectrum. Majority of all urban valid votes went to the right political parties too. However, that difference is exactly 10 percent in favor of right-oriented political parties. Generally, this explains that, in total, even urban voters in 2014 state elections in BH preferred to vote for the right-oriented political parties.

When analyzing the overall election results at the entity levels the significant difference might be noticed while comparing the total number of votes received by the right-wing and the left-wing political parties in two entities. Namely, in the entity of the FBH, more than two-thirds of valid votes (69,1%) were grabbed by the right-wing political parties and the left political parties got 30,1 percent of the valid votes. On the other hand, in the entity RS, this difference is in favor of the left-wing parties which seized 53 percent of the valid votes. Right-wing political parties were able to secure only 47 percent of all valid votes.

With regards to the support of the right-aligned parties the difference is much more significant among the voters of the entity of FBH and it goes up to 14 percent in rural areas in

favor of right-aligned parties (see Table 3). In contrast, we do not see such a significant tendency towards right-aligned parties in RS though the difference is still in favor of right-aligned parties (4,1%) in rural areas (see Table 4).

**Table 2.** Urban-Rural voting comparison of Right-Left votes in Bosnia and Herzegovina

	Number of votes			Percentages	
	Right	Left	Total	Right (%)	Left (%)
Rural	562.839	304.413	867.252	64,9	35,1
Urban	398.261	325.420	723.681	55,0	45,0
Total	961.100	629.833	1.590.933	60,4	39,6

Source: Calculated by the authors

**Table 3.** Urban-Rural voting comparison of Right-Left votes in the FBH

	Number of votes			Percentages	
	Right	Left	Total	Right (%)	Left (%)
Rural	394.204	127.374	521.578	75,6	24,4
Urban	273.403	170.884	444.287	61,5	38,5
Total	667.607	298.258	965.865	69,1	30,9

Source: Calculated by the authors

**Table 4.** Urban-Rural voting comparison of Right-Left votes in the entity RS

	Number of votes			Percentages	
	Right	Left	Total	Right (%)	Left (%)
Rural	168.635	177.039	345.674	48,8	51,2
Urban	124.858	154.536	279.394	44,7	55,3
Total	293.493	331.575	625.068	47,0	53,0

Source: Calculated by the authors

Table 5 presents a comparative analysis of voting behavior in all eight constituencies of Bosnia and Herzegovina. As it can be seen in the table, the difference between percentage of right votes in rural areas versus urban areas varies between 1,9 percent (constituency 521) and 13,9 percent (constituency 515) always in favor of right-aligned parties. In the entity of the FBH, this difference in all but constituency 515 is around 10 percent. On the other hand, in the entity of the RS this difference is much lower and does not exceed 4,5 percent. Hence, these results support the main idea of this paper; voters in rural areas tend to vote towards right-wing parties while voters in the urban areas tend to vote more towards left-oriented parties. In this particular year, for whatever reason, the right votes are dominant in almost all areas. However, this concentration of right votes is more obvious in rural areas than urban areas.

**Table 5.** Urban-Rural voting comparison of Right-Left votes in all constituencies

Entity	Region	Type	Number of votes			Percentages	
			Right	Left	Total	Right (%)	Left (%)
Federation (FBH)	511	Rural	56.184	22.561	78.745	71,3	28,7
		Urban	25.653	16.153	41.806	61,4	38,6
		Total	81.837	38.714	120.551	67,9	32,1
	512	Rural	62.991	7.554	70.545	89,3	10,7
		Urban	46.188	11.614	57.802	79,9	20,1
		Total	109.179	19.168	128.347	85,1	14,9
	513	Rural	30.029	16.819	46.848	64,1	35,9
		Urban	92.074	81.034	173.108	53,2	46,8
		Total	122.103	97.853	219.956	55,5	44,5
	514	Rural	136.777	36.151	172.928	79,1	20,9
		Urban	65.560	29.032	94.592	69,3	30,7
		Total	202.337	65.183	267.520	75,6	24,4
	515	Rural	108.223	44.289	152.512	71,0	29,0
		Urban	43.928	33.051	76.979	57,1	42,9
		Total	152.151	77.340	229.491	66,3	33,7
Republika Srpska (RS)	521	Rural	63.411	81.683	145.094	43,7	56,3
		Urban	56.124	78.022	134.146	41,8	58,2
		Total	119.535	159.705	279.240	42,8	57,2
	522	Rural	64.494	51.607	116.101	55,5	44,5
		Urban	34.384	32.181	66.565	51,7	48,3
		Total	98.878	83.788	182.666	54,1	45,9
	523	Rural	40.730	43.749	84.479	48,2	51,8
		Urban	34.350	44.333	78.683	43,7	56,3
		Total	75.080	88.082	163.162	46,0	54,0

Source: Calculated by the authors

## 7. Conclusion and Discussion

This study has sought to investigate the support for the right and left political parties in BH's 2014 legislative state elections among the voters coming from rural and urban areas. Results show that there is a quite significant difference between the rural and urban voters in BH in their support for the right-wing and the left-wing political parties. This difference is much more remarkable in the entity of the FBH than in the entity of the RS. The reason for such a big difference in terms of votes between the right and left political parties in two entities in BH lies in the fact that though it is quite easy to distinguish and classify political parties on the right and left political spectrum on the basis of their programs and available documents, however, in BH's context that classification is not applicable and relevant and does not correspond to the factual situation on the ground. This is much more evident in the RS entity than in the entity of the FBH. Taking into consideration the rhetoric, stands and policies advocated and supported by the political elites coming from that entity it is quite difficult to position any political party in the entity of the RS on the left political spectrum, in spite the fact that some of these political parties carry the labels of the left political spectrum in the very name of the political parties and their political programs. The best example for this is the leading and the most dominant party in the entity RS, Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD) which, according to its name and political program, should be on the left political spectrum. However, its leader, Milorad Dodik, and other top

leaders of this party have been well known for their ultranationalist rhetoric. In addition, since ethnonational rhetoric is the most promising way to bring extra votes in the election, other political parties, such as Party of Democratic Progress (PDP), Socialist Party (SP) and Democratic People's Alliance (DNS) in the RS are not immune from this syndrome. Therefore, interpretation of the entity RS results should be made with special attention to these details.

On the other hand, in the entity of the FBH that classification is much more available and apparent in the regions where Bosniacs make the majority of the population, in constituencies around the cities such as Sarajevo, Tuzla, Zenica and Bihać. In the regions where Croats make the majority of the population it is obvious that one political party, Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ), which is positioned on the right political spectrum, receives quite strong support from both, rural and urban Croat voters. This is very much noticeable in the results from the constituency 512, where the right political party(s) got almost 90 and 80 percent of votes from rural and urban areas respectively. However, what is common for the entire entity of the FBH election results is the fact that the right political parties received more votes in the rural than urban areas.

Finally, this study provides a good ground for the future comparative longitudinal study of two or more electoral cycles in the Bosnian context, including even the local election and for the sake of confirming/rejecting the notion that there is significant difference between the rural and

urban voters and their electoral support for the parties of different political spectrum.

### Notes:

- <sup>1</sup> This study does not cover the analysis of elections held at the entity and the cantonal levels.
- <sup>2</sup> Constituency one has three representatives, constituency two has three representatives, constituency three has four representatives, constituency four has six representatives and constituency five has five representatives.
- <sup>3</sup> Each constituency has three representatives.

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