Multinational federalism in Bosnia and Herzegovina, by Soeren Keil, S., Aldridge, Ashgate, 2013, 232 pp., GBP 65.00 (hardback), ISBN 978-1-4094-5700-8

Soeren Keil's *Multinational Federalism in Bosnia and Herzegovina* casts a fresh look on the complex institutional architecture of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Inspired by the country where federalism was enforced by the international community as a mechanism for managing ethno-nationalist conflict, Keil uses Bosnia and Herzegovina as "one *case* in a wide range of new federal models in the post-Cold War era" (3). The author argues that understanding the particularities of this internationally administered federal country can inform the study of multinational federalism as a tool of conflict resolution, state-building and democratization. He distinguishes two dominant characteristics of Bosnian federalism, demonstrating the evolution of the relationship between self-rule and shared rule. First, Keil maintains that the operation of federalism in Bosnia and Herzegovina is not an exclusive competence of the international authorities. Rather, there is an iterative process involving the international community and the local political elites, who also can influence decisions "even if they veto them, or refuse to implement them" (177). Second, he identifies several competing discourses on federalism in Bosnia and Herzegovina, rooted in the multinational nature of the state and reinforced through the historical narratives of national belonging. These two characteristics give a unique flair to Bosnian federalism, which indeed remains contested among the politicians and the people of the country. In a nutshell, by looking at the intricacies of federalism in Europe's most fragmented country, Keil offers not only a timely, theoretically sound argument on how "imposed federalism" has evolved from a conflict management tool to a contemporary institutional form, but also an empirically well-grounded analysis of the shortcomings of the political processes in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In the Introduction, Keil presents the main research questions, provides an overview of the methodology, defines key concepts and offers a roadmap of the individual chapters. Conceptual and methodological clarity from the very beginning is particularly commendable, as it makes the book accessible to wider audiences including students of political science, researchers and practitioners of politics.

The second chapter discusses different conceptions of multinational federalism, highlighting the lack of consensus among scholars on what the term implies in theory and in practice. Keil counter-poses liberal nationalism and consocialism as paths to constructing a multinational polity, in discerning the value of federalism as a mechanism of managing states composed of multiple and competing ethnic communities. This allows him to emphasize three problems in the relationship between democracy and nationalism in multinational federations, including "citizenship, secession and asymmetry" (31). The well-constructed conceptual discussion in the second chapter further supports Keil's later claim that federalism in Bosnia and Herzegovina is a *sui generis* one.

The third chapter delves into an exploration of history, emphasizing the continuity and change in Bosnia and Herzegovina's federal tradition, particularly as regards historical influences of foreign powers on this country's socio-political landscape. Here, Keil maintains that the complexities of the federal tradition in this post-Yugoslav state can be attributed to the fact that "Bosnia and Herzegovina has not been an independent state before 1992 and its history until then is a history of being part of different empires and states, from the Roman Empire to communist Yugoslavia" (53). Even though this chapter contains a

consistent argument, supported by a number of authoritative sources in the English language, the debate could have been strengthened by introducing some local writings on Bosnia's experience within broader empires and states. Such additions, used with a critical distance, would have emphasized the elements that underpin the national narratives of Bosnia and Herzegovina's constituent peoples.

Moving to an account of the present-day federalism in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the fourth chapter analyzes the dynamics between shared rule and self-rule in the country, arguing that "Bosnia is a highly decentralised state that continues to suffer from a weak central level" (95). Outlining that Bosnian federalism lingers between ethnic and territorial power-sharing models, in this chapter Keil explores the ways in which power is distributed at central, entity and cantonal levels. He singles out the 2000 decision of the Constitutional Court, which induced ethnic power-sharing at entity levels, in order to prove that, until 2006, centralization and power-sharing at the level of the federal state diminished but that they were strengthened at the entity and cantonal levels. In addition to this, he examines the core features of party politics in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and pushes forward the argument that international intervention in the country's institutional setup has been triggered by the inability of the local elites to reach a consensus on core political issues. This argument also informs most of the final empirical chapter in Keil's book.

The fifth chapter discusses the developments of federalism as a conflict management instrument in post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina. The author singles out three policy areas, namely, identity policy, security sector policy and fiscal federalism, in order to exemplify the achievements and the limits of the imposed federalism in this post-Yugoslav state. An analysis of the symbols of the state clearly shows how due to the inability of the representatives of the constituent peoples to reach an agreement, the international community imposed the underlying policies, which subsequently became accepted by the country's population. The other two cases illustrate the evolution of policies through the European Union's conditionality (fiscal policy) and the limits of the EU accession "carrots" in a multinational federation (security policy).

The conclusion summarizes the key findings of the book, discussing the applicability of its findings to other post-conflict regions. Keil concludes by suggesting that "a better understanding of federalism, federation and power-sharing, as possible solutions to these [security] challenges, might contribute to a more peaceful world, and more effective forms of institution-building and external intervention" (190).

While Keil's excellent book is a much needed publication in the studies of multinational federalism, it could be further strengthened by a review of sources written in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Writings of Nerzuk Ćurak, Trajan Stojanović, Kasim Suljević, Ugo Vlaisavljević and others offer interesting yet very different perspectives on the institutional and societal milieu of this post-Yugoslav state. In addition to this, it would have greatly benefited the book had the author emphasized that even though "the protection of human rights across the country has the highest standards worldwide in theory" (175), in practice, a share of the country's population is virtually deprived of political rights. While the latter issue has independently been examined in the fourth chapter, it could have been referred to in conclusions to the last empirical chapter to cement the claim on the unique traits of Bosnia and Herzegovina's multinational federalism. In terms of style, the book has been written in highly literate English, although sometimes the author uses conjunctions in several consecutive sentences (e.g. 132, first paragraph) and is somewhat inconsistent in his use of diacritics for local names. These issues, however, do not undermine the value

of Soeren Keil's innovative approach to multinational federalism, exemplified by the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Jelena Džankić
European University Institute
jelena.dzankic@eui.eu

http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00905992.2014.929237

Nations: the long history and deep roots of political ethnicity and nationalism, by Azar Gat & Alexander Yakobson, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2013, 441 pp., $27.99 (hardcover), ISBN 978-1107007857, $72.00 (paperback), ISBN 978-1107400023

Azar Gat aims with his book (with a chapter contributed by Alexander Yakobson) not only to critique the modernist and instrumentalist theories of ethnicity and nationalism, but also to demonstrate that the distance between the primordialist/traditionalist theories and the aforementioned competing theories is indeed shorter than often portrayed. The undertaking of such a line of research and thought is long overdue. The biggest contribution of this work is not its ability to persuade those who support modernist theories to change their opinion and see the light shown by the primordialist camp, but rather to illuminate how the debate has come full circle. The genesis of the modernist school of nations and identity sprouted from a sharp criticism of the primordial school for its inability to explain and, even more importantly, predict changes in national identity and nations. Gat now throws a counter-punch, suggesting that change in nations has always been present and that it is the modernist school that fails to both explain and predict pre-modern nations and, as he suggests, national states. He argues that evolutionary inheritance and historical transformation concur to shape and re-shape nations and that such change pre-dates modernity. In essence, he explodes the modernist theories for their selection of the growth of the nation-state (commonly if not accurately attached to the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648) as a false and misleading take-off point for the study of nations and nationalism. The implication is clear: nations and nationalism are not just sociohistorical constructs, but rather a product or sum of deep-rooted kinships that have their own historical trajectory.

Key to understanding Gat's sharp critique is his assertion that "ethnicity has always been political" (3). The greater majority of the book is taken up defending this statement and supporting it through historical examples. Gat maintains that the rule in pre-modern states as well as modern states was ethnically related. As Gat summarizes, "Ethnicity made the state and the state made ethnicity, in a reciprocal and dialectical process" (3). The sublime nature of this statement should not be missed for the modernist school would certainly agree with it – but only for the modern era. Gat's argument is built on a threefold classification of ethnicity, people, and nation. He defines ethnicity not only in the narrow sense of common descent (as in Max Weber or Walker Connor) but rather as a shared kinship (which may include common descent but does not necessarily) and culture. A people are an ethnos with "a sense of common identity, history and fate" (22). Therefore, a people can exist within a nation-state, in more than one nation-state, or even without any sense of a nation-state. The important part of re-establishing the use of the term "people" is to bridge the theoretical gap between an ethnicity and a nation, with the latter