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Intergroup Relations and the Perception of Identity Threat: The Case Study of Central Bosnia

Dusan Milovic

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List of Acronyms

BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
DPA	Dayton Peace Agreement
ECHR	European Court of Human Rights
EU	European Union
HDZ BiH	Croatian Democratic Union of Bosnia and Herzegovina
ITT	Integrated Threat Theory
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
OHR	Office of the High Representative
RS	Republic of Srpska
SIT	Social Identity Theory
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

Abstract

This thesis, aiming to contribute to a better understanding of why Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina fear a Bosniak-dominated state, is a response to development efforts of the international community to democratize Bosnian-Herzegovinian society, generate a shared sense of nationhood among all citizens and speed up its path towards Euro-Atlantic integrations. With the use of conceptual framework, the issue of fear was further abstracted in order to allow for a more meaningful analysis and explanation. Fear in this particular research was thus seen as a set of perceived identity threats that stem from intergroup relations in which one group (Bosniaks) is more dominant. In order to better understand the resistance to state wide integration and the idea of shared state identity that the international community promotes, it was necessary to address the reasons why and in which ways do Croats perceive their own national identity to be threatened by examining everyday situations and experiences of a small group of respondents (nine Croats from central Bosnia). Furthermore, in order to generate better understanding of the issue and allow for a more comprehensive analysis it was important to understand the ways in which Croats from central Bosnia understand and construct their national identity. The research suggests that the perception of identity threat among the respondents predominantly relates to the issues of economic discrimination of Croats in central Bosnia. The research concludes that the prospects of the integrated state and the prospects of shared identity in Bosnia and Herzegovina highly depend on properly managed intergroup relations that would enable ethnic groups to achieve equality in various aspects.

1. Introduction

The former Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, having been one of the six republics of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, was populated by the three largest and ethnically distinct peoples, the Muslims (Bosniaks), the Serbs and the Croats. None of the groups were taking the majority position and they lived in peace alongside each other and with each other, although with a history of previous conflicts (Malcolm, 2000). With the breakup of Yugoslavia, the independence of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1992 resulted in the bloody conflict that took around 100,000 lives. This did not end until the Dayton Peace Agreement took place in 1995. The Peace Agreement also transformed the inner structure of Bosnia and Herzegovina by acknowledging the existence of the two entities, the Bosniak-Croat Federation and the Republic of Srpska dominated by Serbs. In the Bosniak-Croat Federation Croats are highly outnumbered and often outvoted by Bosniaks due to the international community's¹ employed democratization mechanism which prevents them from protecting their vital national interests in a state decision-making. This situation is considered to be one of the main sources of social and political crises in the shared entity. At the same time while the international community forces membership into a common (higher-level) national category, i.e. Bosnian-Herzegovinian, it is argued that Croats in general identify themselves first by nationality (Croatian), they fear a Bosniak-dominated centralized government and prefer higher autonomy, whereas Bosniaks in general call for a more unified country and are keen to identify with the state. As a counterweight to existing ethnic cleavages and separatist agenda in the country, the international community tries to support non-nationalist parties and join state wide institutions in order to create a cross-Bosnian challenge to nationally based politics as well as to ensure the state's transition into a peaceful and viable democracy on course for integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions. This study aims at expanding the inquiry of Western efforts to reconcile violently divided society in Bosnia and Herzegovina by integrating state wide institutions and promoting a shared state (civic) identity among its citizens.

The author devised a conceptual framework that sets the current socio-political situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the appropriate theoretical perspective that all together enabled a closer definition of research objectives. Theoretical considerations provided a viewpoint that sees the fear of domination as a result of perceived identity threat that stems from intergroup relations. In order to better understand the resistance to the 'integrative agenda' of the international community and the idea of shared state identity, it was necessary to examine the

¹ International Community in the context of BiH is according to Belloni (2009) a "hodgepodge of international organizations and bilateral donors led by the Office of the High Representative" (OHR) (p. 355).

reasons why and in which ways do Croats perceive their own national identity to be threatened by exploring everyday situations and experiences that presumably generate perceptions of identity threat. Considering the fact that central Bosnia represents the most ethnically mixed region where intergroup relations are most prominent, the study focuses on a small group of Croats in central Bosnia in order to investigate the everyday situations that generate perceptions of identity threat, the underlying reasons for these perceptions and their potential consequences. The study furthermore recognises that it would be impossible to understand the underlying reasons behind the perceptions of identity threat if the research wouldn't look more closely at how Croats from central Bosnia understand and construct their own national identity in a contemporary context. The perception of identity threat presupposes a national identity, i.e. a group's self-categorization in national terms. If threats are perceived in relation to a group's identity than how and why identity threats occur is highly linked to how people understand and construct their identity in the first place.

1.1. Background

Already the name of Bosnia and Herzegovina implies a certain dualism. Often Bosnia and Herzegovina is referred to as Bosnia. If one uses the term Bosnia, instead of the country's full name, he or she might expect a reaction from a person in Herzegovina. In order to avoid this, the study will use the official state abbreviation (BiH). Unfortunately, identity-related issues in BiH do not end here. The former Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, having been one of the six republics of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, was populated by three largest and ethnically distinct peoples, the Muslims (Bosniaks), the Serbs and the Croats. None of the groups were taking the majority position and they lived in peace alongside each other and with each other, although with a history of previous conflicts (Malcolm, 2000). With the breakup of Yugoslavia, the independence of the Republic of BiH in 1992 resulted in the bloody conflict that took around 100,000 lives (Sterling, 2012; BBC, 2007). This did not end until the Dayton Peace Agreement (DPA) took place in 1995. The General Framework Agreement of the DPA has a total of eleven annexes. Annex IV currently represents the Constitution of BiH (GFA, 1995). The preamble of the Constitution confirms the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of BiH in accordance with international law. The final sentence of the preamble mentions Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs as constituent peoples. The religious affiliations are predominantly predetermined among these groups, where Bosniaks are traditionally Muslims, Serbs are Orthodox and Croats are Catholics. Even though there has been no recent population census², estimates show that the population in BiH is comprised of approximately 48% Bosniaks, 37% Serbs and 14% Croats (CIA, 2000). The DPA Constitution also transformed the inner structure of BiH, by acknowledging the existence of two entities (Annex IV, Article I), the

² The last population census in BiH was conducted in 1991 before the Bosnian war.

Federation and the Republic of Srpska (RS). The Bosniak-Croat Federation covers 51% and is further divided into 10 cantons, while the RS, dominated by Bosnian Serbs, covers 49% of the BiH's total territory (see Appendix 1). Constitution organized the state of BiH by applying the principles of federal regulation where the entities have certain responsibilities, rights and a high degree of autonomy. Thus, the DPA made BiH a consociational democracy given that the state arrangement paid respect to the four organizational principles that in general constitute consociational settlements (McGarry and O'Leary, 2006; Bose, 2002; Belloni, 2004):

- *executive power-sharing* (three major ethnic groups share in executive power),
- *relative autonomy* or
- *self-government proportionality* (each group is represented proportionally in key public institutions and is a proportional beneficiary of public resources and expenditures),
- *veto-rights* (each group is able to prevent changes that unfavourably affect their vital ethnic/national interests)

Such state arrangement created a complex institutional structure, and BiH today is one state with two entities, three peoples, three presidents³ and “five layers of governance led by 14 prime ministers and governments, making Bosnia the state with the highest number of presidents, prime ministers, and ministers per capita in the entire world” that all together entails massive administrative costs (Belloni, 2009: 359).

In eighteen years after the DPA, the international community has not managed to stabilize BiH in many aspects. BiH seems to be in a state of permanent crisis. According to the European Union's (EU) 2010 Progress Report, “BiH has made little progress toward establishing a functioning market economy, and major reforms will be required to enable the country to cope with competitive pressure and market forces over the long term” (BTI, 2012: 16). At the same time, the unemployment rate continues to increase, from 24.1% in 2009 to 27.2% in 2010, according to the BiH Statistics Agency, while according to other sources total unemployment rate in BiH is 43,3% thereby ranking BiH 13th out of 199 countries found on the ‘unemployment list’ (CIA, 2012). BiH is today the poorest country in Europe (Eurostat, 2013). The living standard is far below European average, despite substantial international development assistance⁴. Parallel to this,

³ BiH Presidency consists of three members: one Bosniak and one Croat elected in Federation, and one Serb elected in RS.

⁴ BiH has received substantial donor support, with per capita assistance among the highest in post-conflict countries (UNDP, 2009). Economic growth was enabled “mainly due to external aid for peace and reconstruction” (ibid.).

the political leadership among all three ethnic groups continues to “exacerbate existing cleavages for populist and separatist purposes”, putting the very existence of the state in question (BTI, 2012: 2). The existence of the BiH has in fact been in question since the dissolution of Yugoslavia. Bosniaks are generally in favour of maintaining the country in its internationally recognized borders, while the majority of Croats and Serbs fear a Bosniak-dominated centralized government and prefer local autonomy and close links with Croatia and Serbia respectively (Belloni, 2009). As they see it, the Bosniaks’ relative majority in the country, “could lead to the imposition of Bosniak political, cultural, and religious views on the rest of the population” (p. 358). None of the ‘three sides’ are satisfied with the internal organization of the state and the DPA Constitution. The reasons for the dissatisfaction of all three sides are summarized in the following:

Serbian political leaders from the RS in general want greater autonomy for their entity and the most influential and prominent political leader in RS, Milorad Dodik, has called for a referendum on the full independence of the RS from BiH (The Guardian, 2011).

The *Bosniak* political leadership in general wants a more centralized state where political decisions wouldn’t have to be taken through ethnical consensus, and where, consequently, they could arguably have demographical advantage being the most populous ethnic group. Bosniaks frequently condemned the existence of the RS since they consider RS to be founded on extensive ethnic cleansing of the non-Serb population during the war “and have called for its abolition in favour of a stronger, unified government in Sarajevo” (Belloni, 2009: 361). The existence of RS furthermore remains controversial, given that The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), the United Nations (UN) court of law, dealing with war crimes in the Balkans, has ruled that “it has been proven beyond reasonable doubt that the mass murder at Srebrenica was genocide” (ICTY).

Croats do not have a territorial unit they can govern autonomously, as opposed to Serbs, and they share political power in the Bosniak-Croat Federation in which they are outnumbered (and often outvoted) by the demographically stronger Bosniaks (Belloni, 2004, 2009). Thus, Croatian leadership (generally represented by the Croatian Democratic Party – HDZ BiH), being alarmed by the unfavourable position of Croats in BiH, has frequently requested autonomous entity with a Croatian majority. In 2001, Croatian political leadership withdrew from participation in the convening of the Federation’s government and declared “temporary Croat self-government”, also referred to as ‘Herzeg-Bosnia’ (ESI, 2001: 14). However, the international community took certain actions to disband the self-government (ESI, 2001; Belloni, 2009). A third entity that would be exclusively ethnically defined would “never be acceptable to Bosniaks” (Bose, 2002: 31). One of the biggest obstacles for creating the third (Croatian) entity is the complexity in partitioning the two ethnically (nationally) mixed cantons, Central Bosnia and Herzegovina-Neretva Canton as opposed to the remaining cantons that are ethnically more homogeneous (ibid.). Bose continues to claim

that the concerns of ordinary Croats regarding their institutional status in BiH are “exaggerated” (p. 31). Even though those concerns are not unfounded, they are far from being sufficient to approve of partition.

On the other hand, the *international community* represented by the High Representative of the Office of the High Representative (OHR), who has the highest political authority in BiH, pushes for further integration, making their agenda in compliance with Bosniaks’ ‘vision’ of the state (UNDP, 2009; ICG, 2002; Belloni, 2004). Since the DPA in 1995, the international community and OHR have been involved in the democratization process in BiH, and EU membership continues to be a driving factor for further democratization. One of the major tasks of the OHR and the international community is to ensure BiH’s transition into a “peaceful and viable democracy on course for integration in Euro-Atlantic institutions” (OHR, 2012). The former High Representative of the OHR, Paddy Ashdown, claims in his interview that a breakup of BiH would not happen peacefully and that the potential dissolution of BiH has far greater implications. Ashdown (2011) claims that Bosniaks would never allow “themselves to be trapped into a tiny pocket in central Bosnia, isolated, let down by Europe yet again and surrounded on all sides by their enemies” and continues to say that in the case of separation there is a high probability of a renewed armed conflict. Furthermore, he says, even in the case where the armed conflict could be avoided, the incapability of the international community to suspend the Europe’s oldest Islamic community (Bosnian Muslims) from isolation would have far reaching consequences for the processes of peaceful global integrations and democracy.

As a counterweight to existing ethnic cleavages and separatist agendas, the international community and the OHR tried to support non-nationalist parties and join state wide institutions in order to create a “cross-Bosnian challenge to nationally based politics” (SAFAX, 1998 and Numanovic, 1998 in Chandler, 2000: 112) and allow democratic changes in the Constitution without which BiH cannot apply for the EU membership. These attempts were seen as bound to favour the majority - Bosniaks, who could arguably turn state institutions into tools for domination, especially in the Federation where they share power with largely outnumbered Croats (Belloni, 2004). In the process of democratizing BiH, the international community laid its fingers on the electoral engineering of the state what provoked serious political crises. The International community has changed the rules for the election of the House of Peoples⁵ of the Federation. The effect of the changes was the deviation of key principles where the Bosniaks elected Bosniak and Croats elected Croatian candidates in the House of Peoples – the provision embedded in the DPA Constitution. With amended provisions, Bosniaks can vote for Croatian candidates and vice versa, whereas previously each constituent people voted only for their representatives (ESI, 2001). The basic idea of the House of Peoples in the Federation – to represent and protect the

⁵ The House of Peoples of BiH is one of the two chambers of the state parliament consisting of 5 Bosniaks, 5 Serbs and 5 Croats.

collective rights of each constituent peoples (major ethnic group), was thus annulled by this measure to the detriment of the largely outnumbered Croats. In practice, this meant that the number of delegates in the House of Peoples loyal to the Croatian nationalist party (HDZ BiH), which usually gets most votes from Croats in BiH, drops and the control over veto rights that serve protection of vital interests of Croats weakens (p. 14). The allocation of seats in the high legislative bodies (Presidency, House of Peoples) is usually achieved “on the basis of ethnicity” as all major ethnic groups are guaranteed equal representation in the key state institutions (Chandler, 2000: 111). In 2010 elections the Social Democratic Party (SDP), non-nationalist party that appeals across the ethnic divide, obtained the largest number of seats in the parliament, and its candidate, ethnically Croat, retained the Croatian seat in the presidency. However, results showed that Croats gave most of their votes to the Croatian nationalist parties. This meant that the SDP candidate was elected with a large help of Bosniak votes (The Economist, 2010). Electoral changes thus allow Croatian representatives to be appointed by the parties that do not have support from the majority of the Croatian electorate. In this way, outnumbered Croats stay deprived of the representatives that are appointed from the parties they voted for, while Bosniaks retain their own.

The governance structure has been the subject of many local and international attempts to reform the Constitution so as to create a state able to integrate into the EU and join The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The EU accession process requires functional institutions and effective coordination mechanisms at all levels what should allow “the country to speak with one voice”, as well as a constitution that complies with the ruling of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) (European Commission, 2012: 1). This, however, does not imply domination of the Bosniak majority, but quicker and more efficient method in reaching compromise⁶. However, none of these attempts have produced stable results, and constitutional reform remains one of the country’s most contentious political issues (BTI, 2012). In BiH, formal citizenship is generally not withheld from minority groups and there is a continued constitutional discrimination against individuals that do not belong to one of the three constituent groups which participate in the country’s power-sharing agreement (ICG, 2012). In 2009, in the case ‘Sejdić and Finci v. Bosnia and Herzegovina’, ECHR held that the racial or ethnic-based exclusion of Jews and Roma from BiH’s highest elected offices constituted unlawful discrimination (Council of Europe, 2013). Under the Annex IV of the DPA, only those belonging to one of the three constituent peoples in BiH are permitted to stand for election to the House of Peoples or for the

⁶ Most recently, this problem in achieving compromise occurs in connection with Croatian EU accession:

BiH will no longer be able to export agricultural products to Croatia. The reason is that BiH’s politicians can’t agree on who should assess whether their producers meet EU’s regulations. Bosniaks want the certification done by a central body, whereas Serbs want the job done by the separate entity agencies (Economist, 2013).

presidency, thus excluding members of the country's 14 other national minorities (others). BiH authorities failed to reach an agreement on implementation of the ECHR ruling before the 2010 general elections were announced, thus constituting a breach of Article II of the country's Interim Agreement with the European Union. The ECHR has ruled that the current Constitution of BiH is in breach of the European Convention of Human Rights (Sejdic and Finci v BiH, 2009). However, in spite of this legal recognition that the Constitution is undemocratic, it remains unchanged (BTI, 2012: 4).

In 2002 democratization process in BiH led to signing of the 'Sarajevo Agreement' that was perceived as a BiH's major step towards democratic development and the rule of law (ICG, 2002). However, Bosnian Croats were alarmed by the inclusion of others (minority groups) in the Federal Parliament. Croat politicians were concerned that the majority Bosniaks could abuse the category of 'others' to achieve further 'majorization'⁷ (majorizacija) through 'phoney others', implying that they are an empty category that can easily be manipulated to produce extra Bosniak votes (ICG, 2002: 14). Signers of the Agreement in general defended the inclusion of others as it would be undemocratic and backward to politically dismiss all the minority groups and individuals who consider themselves primarily to be citizens, or simply as 'Bosnian-Herzegovinians', recognizing civic identity and civic nationalism as a legitimate concept and a social reality that in general stands against dominant ethnic nationalism (ibid.). Interests of individual ethnic groups continue to prevail, and the rhetoric of ethnic political leaders dominates the political space in BiH. This marginalizes the EU agenda, as well as any other potentially pro-democratic agenda. This is because the question of national identity in BiH still bears the greatest importance (BTI, 2012). One can hardly speak of a shared Bosnian-Herzegovinian national identity because of the presumable lack of common characteristics among constitutive peoples (major ethnic groups) what disables economic, social and political sense of unity. Different types of conflict identity are present in almost all aspects of life and prevent the successful functioning of its citizens. The concept of 'nationality' is usually linked to a country. In BiH, the term is rather linked to 'ethnicity'. The majority of Serbs from RS, for that matter, "identify themselves with the entity rather than the state" whereas Croats "identify themselves first by nationality" (UNDP, 2009: 15). Only the Bosniaks are in general eager to identify with the term 'Bosnian nation' (ibid.). Furthermore, apart from BiH citizenship, Serbs and Croats are entitled to Croatian and Serbian citizenship respectively. Most Bosniaks, however, only hold BiH citizenship. "State-level ownership can only have meaning if both entities are in agreement, so effective national (country) ownership requires extensive advocacy, political dialogue and negotiation at the entity level. Many development challenges, such as creating a single economic space, can only be met if the entities (and within the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the cantons) assume common ownership" (UNDP, 2009: 15).

⁷ Majorization is here mentioned and perceived as a negative side of the principle of majority rule.

Until now there has been hardly any scientific research conducted to examine more closely the reasons behind the resistance to state integration and the promotion of a shared state identity in BiH. Analysing the reasons behind this resistance could generate a better understanding of the problems that stem from intergroup relations and reveal a more thorough image of the complex socio-political and economic situation in BiH. However, analysis of the problems that arise from the background of this research, which primarily relates to the issues of intergroup relations in a divided society, can be undertaken from a variety of perspectives. In order to approach the problem, which stems from the background, from a more scientific level and in order to engage in a more narrow analysis and explanation of the problem, it was important to understand and problematize the background with a help of contextual framework. This in turn helped the author to end the struggle over the choice of approach to setting the problem more concisely and develop a more narrow research question.

2. Conceptual Framework

Conceptual framework is a structure that stems from a broad set of concepts and theories that assist a researcher to properly identify the problem he or she wishes to study and frame their research questions (Smyth, 2004). Usually, researchers use a conceptual framework at the beginning of a research because it helps the researcher to understand and validate the subject he wishes to study, clarify the research questions and aims (ibid.). There are a number of concepts and theories that also could have been included in the following framework, but given the background of this research the time limitation and scope, the researcher tried to find the most important concepts and theories that could assist in a more clear identification of the problem that stems from the background of this research.

Any discussion about a *nation*, *ethnic/national* identity, and social identity in general is hampered by serious terminological difficulties. Therefore, when we embark on a study of the phenomenon of social identity we come across two close and yet different concepts: *ethnic* and *national*. It is important to observe the distinction between these two concepts, especially in the context of BiH. As noted earlier, there are three major ethnic groups in BiH: Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats. The concepts of *ethnicity* and *ethnic identity* imply a common cultural tradition, sense of community and closeness that is identified with a particular group based on some particular characteristics (religion, language, etc.), and which exists as a subgroup of a larger group (Gregory, 2009). According to this definition, Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats in BiH are ethnic groups that live in the common state and two different entities. However, since there is hardly any sense of shared national identity among these three major ethnic groups, these groups are often referred to as national groups. This study uses terms *ethnic* and *national* interchangeably when referring to Bosniak, Serbian or Croatian national identity, and uses *civic*, *shared*, or *state identity* when referring to either national identity of individuals that consider themselves primarily to be citizens of BiH, or a common (higher-level) national identity (Bosnian-Herzegovinian) that the international community is trying to promote in BiH.

The concept of *nationality* and *national identity* usually refers to a country. In BiH, however, only the Bosniaks see themselves as a part of the “Bosnian nation” (ICG, 2002: 14). A great majority of Serbs and Croats usually identify only with their own respective ethnic groups, i.e. they do not share the sense of Bosnian-Herzegovinian nationhood with Bosniaks. There are those who argue that there is a substantial number of individuals in BiH who consider themselves primarily to be citizens, or simply ‘Bosnian-Herzegovinians’, implying a civic or state identity, and whose interests should also be institutionally defended (ICG, 2002).

Scholarly literature on ethnic identity and division is grouped around two contrasting views, *primordial* and *constructed* (Jenkins, 1996; Hale, 2004). Primordialism views national identity as something objective acquired by birth and fixed, while constructionism sees national identity as socially constructed,

different for each individual and constantly in flux. This thesis furthermore recognizes a distinction between the two categories of national identity and nationalism, *ethnic* and *civic* (Ignatieff, 1993).

Ethnic nationalism is based on the people's loyalty to an ethnic group, and not to a larger political entity, or state, which may include many ethnicities and/or nationalities. Here, *nation* is founded on "not the cold contrivance of shared rights, but the people's pre-existing ethnic characteristics: their language, religion, customs and traditions" (Ignatieff 1993: 4). Structuring society and politics on the basis of ethnicity is by many viewed as negative and backward. Horowitz (1985) argues that such structuring ultimately leads to a society characterized by ethnic groupings at the expense of shared identities and interspersed settlements, promote the rule of kin, instead of the rule of law, where sharing the same genealogy will be reassurance for assuming social status.

Adversely, central to the idea of *civic identity* and *civic nationalism* is the possibility for citizens to adopt national identity by choice. Nation based on the principles of civic identity sees citizenship as primary, rather than prior membership in a descent group or cultural tradition (Ignatieff 1993). The relationship between citizenship and nation should thus be an act where common people demonstrate their capability to base their union on social consensus, pertaining to common legal system and common political institutions. The nation of citizens would not be derived from the constituent ethnic and cultural common properties, but from the ability of citizens to appropriate civil rights, politically participate and arrange equal cooperation of free individuals. Despite different ethnic identities, a superordinate civic national identity could construct a platform on which conflict can be peacefully negotiated. All citizens can claim allegiance to a shared national identity and claim rights on all of the shared public resources. Civic conception sees nation as a political, self-governing, democratic community, with legal and political equality among its citizen-members (Smith, 1991). This distinction is however problematic, as "rhetoric of civic nationalism and citizenship can mask underlying commitments to particularistic cultural or racial definitions of what counts as a *proper* or *good citizen*" (Calhoun, 2007: 42). Recent experimental work has demonstrated that even people who sincerely adopt civic understanding of nation nonetheless show tendencies to construct their national identity in ethno-racial terms (Devos and Ma, 2008). Smith (1995) furthermore argues that civic nationalism is "neither as tolerant nor as unbiased as its self-image suggests" and that it can be very uncompromising as well and that it often demands the surrender of individuality, "the privatisation of religion and the marginalisation of ethnic culture and heritage of minorities within the borders of the national state" (p.186). National is not only defined from within, the common features that fellow-nationals share together, but also from the outside (Triandafyllidou, 1998). National characteristics become meaningful only through the process of 'otherisation'. Thus, national identities in BiH are being formed in comparison to other national identities in the same state. Given that most

Bosniaks identify with the state, they can be perceived as a *proper* or *good* citizens of BiH.

Central to the subject of this study is the presence of *ethnicization* and *majorization* of the democratic process in BiH. Ethnicization in democracy appears since nationalist parties are confined by the interests of the specific ethnic group they represent. This principle thus undermines the dimensions of civil society, citizenship and socioeconomic issues. Majorization is the aspect of democracy that enables the rule of majority. Given the fact that the Bosnian Croats are ethnically outnumbered and lack institutional protection, majorization enables situations in which vital interests of the Croatian people in BiH are potentially ignored or dismissed in the parliamentary debates. Thus Croats from BiH perceive their position relative to that of Bosniaks as underprivileged.

Hechter (1975, 1978) argues that nationalism can lead to unity as well as disunity that challenges legitimacy of the state, especially if certain groups are relegated to underprivileged positions. Thus, individuals from a group that is less privileged will feel greater resentment towards dominant group, whereby individuals from the 'inferior' group that are 'better off' will develop more positive feelings towards dominant group and/or official state nationalism. In Hechter's terms, working class members are more likely to embrace minority (ethnic) identity rather than the one of a 'higher social class'. According to Lustick (1979) disunion is reinforced by historically embedded patterns of social segregation and endogamy, meaning that the levels of intergroup distrust and hostility are high, economic growth is low, "membership is clear and, with few exceptions, unchangeable" (p. 325).

In the aftermath of an ethnic violent conflict, in the process of peace-building, rather than forcing conflicted sides to glue the broken societal fragments through a shared state identity, consociational arrangements, such as the DPA in BiH, often institutionalize the existence of ethnic differences. The concept of *consociational* democracy was introduced by Arend Lijphart (1969). The consociational model tries to 'help' establish democracy in deeply divided societies, societies in which there are a number of collective identities, none of which have the absolute numerical advantage. In such a situation, it is argued, consociational democracy is the best democracy, as it is the most realistic (pragmatic). The veto-right principle in connection to proportional representation and the autonomy of the segments is a mechanism of the consociational settlement that acts against the domination of the demographically advantageous groups, or the mechanism by which collective identities are protected from domination by other collectives. Consociational principles of governance thus avoid majoritarian political systems in which the competition for power allows exclusion of smaller groups from sharing political power. Proponents of consociationalism argue that ethnic identities and divisions that stem from it are "resilient rather than rapidly biodegradable and that they must be recognized rather than wished away" (McGarry and O'Leary 1995: 338). Moreover, ethnic groups are unlikely to melt down into one common or shared identity at any conceivable point (ibid.).

Another approach to peace building and societal reconciliation in a post-conflict society is provided by the so called *centripetalists* who aim at *integration* of different ethnic/national groups through advocacy of non-nationalist politics, i.e. the adoption of electoral methods that will force parties to adopt more moderate positions in an effort to obtain votes from across the ethno-national divide (Horowitz, 2001). It is argued that the integrative approach of the centripetalists does not reward extremism. It rather builds foundation for its neutralization that in turn leads to a shared civic (state) identity. Shared public identity enables “liberal justice and democratic politics” (Moore, 2001: 2), appropriation of civil rights what in turn strengthens civil society (Ignatieff, 1993; Belloni 2004). Furthermore, civil society is seen to possess the biggest capacity for achieving dialogue and compromise among various stakeholders what permits sustainable peace-building, enhances “development cooperation” and “security” (Paffenholz, 2010: 47, 23). Consociationalism, on the other hand, ensures group-based hostilities that stand on the way to any chance of a shared and reconciled society.

Among the various theoretical approaches used to explain the concept of national identity, its construction and social issues that stem from it, the most appropriate theoretical approach to tackle the problem of this particular research is perceived here to be formulated in Social Identity Theory (SIT) by Tajfel and Turner (1979; 1986), and Integrated Threat Theory (ITT) by Stephan and Stephan (2000). According to Tajfel and Turner, identity of every man implies the existence of social identity that stems from an individual belonging to different social groups. National identity is part of a social identity that is based on the feeling of belonging to a national group. Only group membership enables a sense of belongingness that contributes to a *positive self-concept*. The primary motivation of the individual, as a group member, is to develop a positive social identity, because this contributes to one’s mental health, feeling of security, self-value, self-esteem, sense of community, etc. In order to achieve this, the group seeks to be positively perceived. However, when belonging to a group does not bring those benefits (self-esteem, security, etc.) but the opposite, we talk about negative social identity. Such identity can be developed in relationships between national groups, in which one group develops low self-esteem because individuals perceive themselves as members of an inferior group. Accordingly, there are the two ways in which such situation is managed:

- Discard the current social identity and convert to dominant group (negative psychological consequences)
- Preserve the existing identity and develop a group ‘defence’ mechanism (implies intensification of national identity and nationalist attitudes)

The latter is accomplished by the development of pride within the group, i.e. re-establishment of positive self-concept or worth in comparison to other groups. When it comes to ethnic/national groups, this is achieved by a ‘self-serving’ comparison with other ethnic groups in a way that the outcome of the comparison turns out positive for the one's own group. This is done by emphasising another

group's features that are 'known' to have a characteristic that is worse, or has a negative connotation, while in one's own group the same features are strong or positive. In other words, in order to achieve and maintain a positive social identity a group will insist on those dimensions on which the comparison is favourable for them, and ignore the dimensions on which the comparison is unfavourable. The most distinctive identification with one's own group will follow when the boundaries among groups are perceived as *impermeable*, when *status relations are unstable*, and when *differences are perceived as illegitimate*. According to Tajfel and Turner (1979, 1986) the SIT has three central components:

- *Self-Categorization*, where a person must categorize (identify) oneself as a member of a group in order to have its self-esteem elevated through association with the group.
- *Group Self-Esteem* is a component that refers to the situation in which self-esteem or self-identity is gained through membership in a group. Membership in a group must hold some value for a person, such as the possibility to climb the status ladder.
- *Group Commitment* refers to the level of the commitment one feels to his/hers in-group. The more self-esteem a person acquires by associating (identifying) oneself with the respective group, the person will be motivated to maintain the group and his/hers own membership in it. However, crossing over to another group is harder if the boundaries are rigid or impermeable, as in the case when it comes to race, gender, etc.

According to the SIT, social identity is defined as a result of an interactive relationship between groups (ethnic/national groups) in which groups define themselves in comparison to other groups. This relationship, according to the ITT entails competition for status or resources. Riek, Mania & Gaertner (2006) explain that "intergroup threat occurs when one group's actions, beliefs, or characteristics challenge the goal attainment or well-being of another group" (p. 336). In simple words, members of one group perceive that they will not have further access to resources because another group will use them. In the context of the ITT, the in-group can be explained as the group with whom an individual identifies with and furthermore as the group which potentially feels threatened, where the out-group is the group which is posing a threat to the in-group.

There are two major types of identity threats which cause conflict between groups (Stephan and Stephan, 2000):

- *Realistic Threats* result from the perceptions, held by the in-group, that the out-group represents a risk to their safety, economy, politics, health or well-being.

- *Symbolic Threats* refer to the beliefs and values of the group which may be at risk. They primarily involve “perceived group differences in morals, values, standards, beliefs, and attitudes” (Stephan et al., 2002: 42).

3. Problem Formulation and Research Questions

From the perspectives devised in the contextual framework, the problematic intergroup situation in BiH can be outlined and problematized as follows.

First, the differences between ethnic groups are highly prominent. While peace-building efforts of the international community and the employed democratization mechanisms forces membership into a common (higher-level) national category, i.e. Bosnian-Herzegovinian, Croats and Serbs are reluctant to comply. Croats and Serbs predominantly identify (self-categorize) themselves by their respective ethnic group, they fear a Bosniak-dominated centralized government and in general prefer local autonomy, while Bosniaks in general call for a more unified country and are keen to identify themselves with BiH. From the SIT perspective, the animosity to and fear of another group stems from an intergroup relation in which one group is more dominant as in the case of Croat-Bosniak group relations in the Federation. From the perspectives of the SIT and ITT, the issue of fear of domination and resistance to integration can be observed easier from the perspective of Croats in the Federation.

Second, Croats are highly outnumbered and often outvoted by the demographically dominant Bosniaks. Due to the fact that official political program of the international community tries to undermine nationally based politics and create a greater sense of unity, where Croats are deprived of equal representation in respect to Bosniaks, in everyday social comparisons, the latter are an important reference group for the former. Moreover, given that most Bosniaks identify with the state, they can be perceived as a *proper* or *good citizens* of BiH. Such situation can affect the notion of an average ‘Bosnian-Herzegovinian’ citizen. Thus, construction of the national identity of Croats highly depends on their interaction with Bosniaks. Bosniaks do not just signify an important reference group, but because of the unequal nature of the integration process, social comparison with Bosniaks potentially results in a negative outcome, where Croats, it is argued, are relegated to underprivileged position, are ‘majorized’ (*majoriziracija*) and theoretically perceive themselves inferior to Bosniaks. what in SIT terms can have negative affect on the *groups self-esteem* (positive self-concept) and *group commitment*. In Hechter (1975, 1978) terms, if certain groups are relegated to underprivileged positions it might potentially challenge the stability of the state. Here, members of the inferior group that are however economically ‘better off’, will have more positive feelings towards dominant group and the state, while the situation is opposite for the people of lower economic status. Correspondingly, ITT posits that intergroup interaction entails competition for status and resources what often results in the perceptions of *threat*, i.e. Croats being a lower-status group feel that the dominant Bosniaks will deprive them of status and resources.

Third, the most prominent group interaction between Croats and Bosniaks is in central Bosnia, as opposed to other regions that are mostly ethnically homogenous. Thus central Bosnia is the region where issues that stem from intergroup relations, including perception of threats are most likely to occur in daily life terms.

In order to better understand the attitudes of those who oppose state-wide integration and the idea of shared state identity, it is necessary to address reasons why and in which ways do Croats perceive their own national identity to be threatened by a situation in which international community enables a Bosniak-dominated state. The fact that central Bosnia represents the most ethnically mixed region, the study will focus on Croats in central Bosnia in order to investigate the daily situations that generate the feelings of threat, what are the underlying reasons for these perceptions and their potential consequences as long as Croats from central Bosnia are concerned. Based on this, the research questions this study tries to answer are:

- *What are the aspects of daily life in which Croats from central Bosnia perceive their identity to be threatened by Bosniaks and a Bosniak-dominated state?*
- *What are the underlying reasons for the perception of these threats and what are their potential consequences?*

It would be impossible to understand the underlying reasons behind the perceptions of identity threat if the research wouldn't look closely at how Croats from central Bosnia understand and construct their own national identity in a contemporary context. The perception of identity threat presupposes a national identity, i.e. a group's self-categorization in national terms. If threats are perceived in relation to a group's identity than how and why identity threats occur is highly linked to how people understand and construct their identity in the first place. In this way, self-categorization of an in-group and perceived threats that stem from intergroup relation represent a dependant assembly of variables, the analysis of which will hopefully provide a better understanding of the perception of threat, their reasons and consequences. Moreover, the use of particular theories in this case study may contribute to their better understanding and their practical applicability in understanding social problems.

3.1. Significance

As evidenced so far, national identity is still an important social category that bares great significance in the field of development as it can seriously hamper social, political and economic processes of a country and its people. The issues pertaining to national identity are standing on the way of the BiH's development and transformation into a viable democracy. Analysing the reasons why Croats in central Bosnia perceive their identity to be threatened could contribute to the

existing academic knowledge on the subject; explain how intergroup relations and perceptions of threat can influence people's feelings and ultimately their behaviour and actions. Furthermore, the analysis of intergroup relations and their consequences can offer guidance to government policy-making on their path to establishing stable and "healthy democracy" as well as "national legitimacy" (Eaton, 2002: 47). Moreover, it can provide a valuable insight on how state and nation-building⁸ efforts of the international community are manifested on the ground. The Dictionary of Human Geography (Gregory, 2009) explains how questions regarding national identity, nationalism and nation states are central to the studies of two sub-disciplines of human geography, namely, political geography and social geography (p. 350-351). Finally, socio-political and economic development in BiH has far greater implications, something that the current High Representative of the OHR, Valentin Inzko, successfully stresses at the last UN Security Council meeting. "The question of Bosnia and Herzegovina does not, fortunately, have the immediate security dimensions of the other issues that the Security Council is dealing with. But I am sure that the Council will agree with me that what happens to Bosnia and Herzegovina matters far beyond its borders. Bosnia and Herzegovina is a country that in so many ways has come to symbolize our shared commitment and quest for an integrated European continent rooted in lasting peace, stability, prosperity and tolerance" (Inzko, 2013).

⁸ Nation building is a "term used in conflict resolution to explain the actions of the international community in postwar societies. In this context, the term refers either to a preventive measure to avoid the breakup and social fragmentation of the state or to an element of post-conflict peace-building strategies" (Parillo, 2008: 607).

4. Methodology

The nature of the research question has direct implications for the type of research one employs. To simplify the general school of thought: Qualitative research is concerned with words and quantitative research is focused on numbers (Bryman, 2008). Qualitative research usually aims at gathering an in-depth understanding of human relations, behaviour and the motives that direct such behaviour. Thus, qualitative method usually provides answers to 'why' and 'how' of the research question and does so by putting a focus on smaller samples of data. This study aims at understanding how and why Croats in central Bosnia perceive their identity to be threatened through everyday life situations. The research considers and examines the research subject – the intergroup relations and perceived threats that stem from it - in situ, i.e. within the context in which it occurs on the ground, or in other words - on the field. Therefore, qualitative approach is chosen for this research since it is better suited to capture phenomena in situ. Considering research questions, the author wanted to assess a number of parameters, such as, perceptions, feelings and generally subjective views of the people involved. Accordingly, the author has chosen to conduct qualitative, semi-structured, in-depth interviews in order to encapsulate the above parameters. The author found that qualitative methods allow detailed illustration on how the processes of generating perceptions of threat occur from people's interactions and experiences that stem from there.

The case study design enabled an in-depth analysis of the complex relationships and particular nature of the case in question (Bryman, 2008: 52). It furthermore allowed the author to pursue an inductive approach, in which he could try to identify common themes that are to be analysed, based on opinions and observations of a small group of people (respondents). This study wants to illustrate people's understanding of the research problem that could contradict with what one often hears from academics or politicians on the same subject. Furthermore, the qualitative approach of this study aspires to investigate prospects of emergence of the shared, transnational identity in BiH as 'desired' by the international community. By choosing to conduct a qualitative research, the author aimed at contributing to the understanding of how people (Croats from central Bosnia) think and feel about the circumstances and situations in which they find themselves, and not making judgements about whether those thoughts and feelings are valid or justified. Because this research aims at illuminating the specific, to identify the social phenomena of self-categorization and identity threat through how they are perceived by the actors in a situation, this research is taking a phenomenological approach. Phenomenological approach enables description and analysis of the individuals' experiences of the phenomenon (identity threat). "The phenomenologist views human behaviour (...) as a product of how people interpret the world. (...) In order to grasp the meaning of person's behaviour, the phenomenologists attempt to see things from that person's point of view" (Bogdan and Taylor, 1975: 13-14 in Bryman, 2008). The fundamental starting point of this approach "resides in the fact that social reality has a meaning for human beings

and therefore human action is meaningful - that is, it has a meaning for them and they act on the basis of the meanings that they attribute to their acts and to the acts of others” (Bryman, 2008: 16). From there, it stems that the job of a researcher is to gain access to people's ‘common-sense thinking’ and hence to interpret their actions and their social world from their point of view” (ibid.).

4.1. Stepping into the Field and the Use of Theory

Although qualitative research is almost always inductive, one should not equate theoretical ignorance with an inductive approach. If a researcher is uninformed in regards to different perspectives to the problem he or she addresses, he or she will not be able to fully understand the data, or analyse it effectively. Thus, it was important for the researcher to get a broad grasp of theoretical perspectives on the subject he wanted to study before stepping into the field and choose the most appropriate set of concepts and theories to identify the research question. The research started with a rather general conceptual framework that places the case study into a large context and also validates the choice of that particular research. The objective of this research was not to formulate a new universal general theory, but rather to shed light on a social phenomenon through the case being studied. This research is thus aiming at changing the view on theory, or contributing to its use and understanding (Bryman, 2008: 94). In this way, theoretical perspectives help the researcher to find his way out of the data ‘forest’ and set the scope and framework of the research question. Conceptual framework here serves as an inspiration for the researcher, but does not necessarily undermine the heuristic undertakings of the field work. In Malinowski’s (1961) terms “the field worker relies entirely upon inspiration from theory” (p. 9).

4.2. Data Collection and Sampling

In order to answer the research questions, the study focuses on individuals’ perception of their national identity (self-categorization), their concerns in regards to threats to their identity and future in their homeland. Five main areas of research enquiry were prearranged for this study:

- How do Croats from central Bosnia understand their own identity (what are the most fundamental psycho-social elements that encompass the contemporary social identity of Croats from central Bosnia)?
- What are their perceptions of and feelings towards their own (ethnic/national) group?
- Do they feel their identity (status) is threatened in BiH and why is it so?
- What are their own experiences in relation to that threat; in which spheres of life do they mostly occur?
- How do they see future of BiH and themselves in it?

The foundational question in phenomenology usually tries to answer what is the meaning of the lived experience of this phenomenon to an individual or a group of people. Thus, this researcher is interested in individuals' perception of reality. Conducting in-depth interviews is thus a common method in order to reach for the individuals' experiences, or in other words the essence of those experiences. Phenomenological researchers often search for commonalities across individuals and focuses on those aspects that are common for most respondents.

The field research itself consisted of number of semi-structured, in-depth interviews that were conducted on the sample of small group of Croats situated in central Bosnia. The author was able to obtain a successful response from 9 people consisting of 4 female and 5 male respondents, representing only one nationality (Croats), and coming from four different locations in central Bosnia (cities of Busovaca, Kiseljak, Vitez and Zenica). All interviews were conducted in the period from March 1, 2013 until March 20, 2013. Although the author had a prepared set of questions almost all interviews were conducted in a sense where the interviewees were encouraged to talk about relevant subjects and share their related thoughts, opinions, feelings and experiences. The questions of the interview were used only as a guideline for the interviewer and were almost never entirely covered during a single interview. Some of the interviews rather resembled a structured conversation and ranged from two to four hours. However, the interview inquiry ensured a common focus and complete responses in terms of topics to be covered. Considering that some of the respondents were interested in one topic/question more than other, the author allowed them to pursue the topic in depth as he hoped that the overall result would be a richer set of accounts from respondents. The interviews were initiated with a short introduction of the research project and a clarification/discussion over some basic terminology that the study is based upon. Furthermore, all respondents were told that their personal identity would remain unrevealed.

The sampling used in the study was a combination of snowball and purposive sampling study (Bryman, 2012:187). The snowball sampling refers to the process of recruiting respondents known and recruited by previous subjects, whereas purposive sampling is based on the process in which subjects are chosen based on certain characteristics of the people. The author based his purposive sampling on ethnicity, age, employment and level of education of the respondents. Ethnicity was important given that the subjects had to be "Croats from central Bosnia". As I the author was more interested in people that are politically active and supposedly have a greater life experience, he had to consider age of interviewees. However, he was also interested in people that are economically active / have been employed in recent history because theory suggests that competition and status for resources potentially increases perception of threat if one group sees its positions as unfavourable due to its ethnic/national background. Level of education was another characteristic that the author was interested in, because he had to make sure that people that he interviewed would be able to understand basic concepts the study is dealing with.

4.3. Data Analysis

Transcripts of the interviews represent the data which has been processed under the principles of qualitative approach. The first step in the analysis was the reading of the interviews and selection of the appropriate method of data analysis - The thesis applies the thematic analysis model as postulated by Braun and Clarke (2006). The theme here is a type of pattern in the data that can principally be determined in two ways: by either inductive or deductive method. The deductive method, also referred to as theoretical, was chosen for the analysis, with topics determined in accordance with the theoretical/analytical interest of the thesis. This approach often leads to a less detailed description of the data in its entirety, and is more focused on analysis of some aspects of the data.

The thematic analysis can be semantic or latent. In the semantic analysis themes are defined explicitly, meaning that the researcher does not seek hidden (latent) meanings of what is found in the data. The latent analysis, on the other hand, emphasizes interpretation of the data.

The research combines both approaches, whereby semantic level was used to literally convey the perspectives of respondents, as well as to provide information in order to verify the interpretation. It is important to note that all the interviews for this thesis were translated and transcribed as heard, leaving the content entirely uncensored and not corrected in any way (e.g. without linguistic corrections). The process of data analysis began with establishing the framework for the interpretation of data through five themes. The themes were determined based on the insights into the interviews and in accordance with the conceptual framework (section 2.), specifically SIT and ITT theory, and research objectives. The themes are as follows:

- Self-Categorization and intergroup relations (with sub-topics: Homeland and belonging, Croats in central Bosnia, Croats and catholicism, Croatian language). It would be impossible to understand the reasons behind the perceptions of identity threat if the research wouldn't look closely at how Croats from central Bosnia understand and construct their own national identity.
- Intergroup relations and the perception of threats.

The process in which the above themes were established consisted of the following steps:

1. Reading of the full text of the interviews,
2. defining codes for each interview,
3. generating and defining themes within each interview in compliance with conceptual framework,

4. determining and defining key themes that were common for most interviews.
5. interpreting the obtained results in accordance with the conceptual framework and supporting it with certain quotations from the interviews.

4.4. Scope and Limitations

A widely discussed limitation is also an issue in this study and refers to the selected research design. Since the thesis is based on a single field case study, it is facing certain constraints in terms of being able to generalize the findings (Bryman, 2008). There is an on-going debate about how valid case studies are in respect to being applicable to other situations, but the scope of this thesis and the available resources have not allowed for conducting several case studies that would have supported or rejected the findings. Consequently, this study represents more of a starting point within this specific field of research than a complete and totally explored area. Another limitation in respect to interviews is the tendency of the respondents to reply based on their assumption of what is a correct or desired answer. This corresponds to what Bryman (2008) refers to as a “social desirability bias” (p. 218).

Six out of 9 interview participants allowed the interviews to be voice-recorded. Since topics were considered politically sensitive, most participants were worried about the privacy of the interview. Consequently, the author had to make written notes by often asking respondents to repeat the whole sentences. This has considerably influenced the pace of data collection, motivation of the respondents and the amount of data that could have been collected given the time limits.

All interviews were conducted in Croatian language as this is the mother tongue of all of the interview participants. This means that all quotes had to be translated to English and that some of the connotations might have been lost in this process. Having this in mind, the author has to stress that this study does not regard its interviewee sample as representative, nor does it aim at generalization, but simply tries to delve into honest human feelings, concerns and opinions and find out what are the possible causes of their manifestation. Since the study has taken constructivist approach, the above parameters are considered as social constructs that are a subject to change and are not fixed.

4.5. Positionality

The researcher is a native of the site where the field work was conducted and the biggest motivation for the research stems from there. This ultimately influenced the phases of the research process, i.e. procedures and steps employed to conduct a research (Bryman, 2008: Ch.1). The author, having been residing outside of the country for over 9 years, was puzzled with the problems the country of his origin is dealing with. He aspired for the better understanding of the socio-political and economic development of his country and to identify some of the key issues that

hamper this development. By investigating the profile of a country and the recent socio-political developments within, He came to identify that one of the biggest problem in the country is the lack of a general social contract among its citizens. With a further understanding of the related concepts and theories the author devised a set of questions and assigned the most appropriate method that would help in answering those questions.

When conducting a research, several considerations must be taken into account. First and foremost, the author had to consider that his personal and philosophical perceptions of the surroundings influence his judgments and evaluations of his observations. In order for a reader to understand the underlying assumptions and their effects on the findings and conclusions, it has to be specified what are the epistemological and ontological convictions of the author. An epistemological issue concerns the question of what is (or should be) regarded as acceptable knowledge (Bryman, 2008). The author's empirical observations are affected by his own ontological conviction. The author sees institutions as being socially constructed concepts and perceived differently by various actors. Therefore the author is taking a constructionist position and accepts that organizations, cultures and thus identities are a product of social interaction and are a subject to change (Bryman, 2008: 160).

5. Findings and Analysis

This research aims to contribute to a better understanding of the attitudes concerning the resistance to the state-wide integration and the idea of a shared state identity in BiH. More precisely, it aims to facilitate the set of underlying reasons of why this occurs by examining the individuals' perceptions of the intergroup relations between Croats and Bosniaks in central Bosnia. Since Croats, it is argued, fear Bosniak-dominated state, the study scrutinizes the understanding of their own national identity, situations and circumstances under which this identity is perceived as threatened. After 9 in-depth interviews, without a representative sample, the author generated a list of themes through the process of coding and in accordance with the conceptual framework (section 2.). In order to better understand the reasons of how and why Croats in central Bosnia perceive their national identity to be threatened and answer the research question, it was important to examine first how Croats from central Bosnia understand and construct their own national identity.

5.1. Self-Categorization and Intergroup Relations

5.1.1. Homeland and Belonging

All subjects identified BiH as their homeland. However, all respondents indicated a significant level of national identification with the Republic of Croatia (hereafter Croatia). For example, some respondents expressed it in terms of the importance assigned to Croatian national sport teams, in contrast to those from BiH. One respondent for example stresses: *"I care more about Croatian national teams whenever they are playing, that's true. There is something deep inside my stomach that shivers. However, whenever there is a team from BiH playing, I also hold my thumbs, even though that team consists mostly of Bosniaks"* Respondent 1 (R1). *"It is the same with the flag"*, she continues, *It is prettier and has got much more meaning than the BiH flag that some foreigner drew some years ago"*. Another respondent argues how Croatian sport teams are simply better and renowned in the world, plus that there are very little Croats in BiH sport teams and that these are the reasons why he identifies with those coming from Croatia.

Most respondents furthermore categorized Croatia as their second home and/or a backup solution if things get 'worse' in BiH. Only one person wished to move to Croatia at the time being, and would do so as soon as the "situation permits" (R9). Some respondents claimed, however, that a choice to move to Croatia is not as easy to make as it might seem. First, people have their land, houses, jobs, family members, friends, etc. what prevents them from leaving. Second, they claimed that they are and will always be looked at differently in Croatia. One interviewee claimed that Croats from Croatia are not necessarily fond of Croats from BiH, especially when they come to Croatia to take their jobs away. Moreover, respondents claim that the economic situation is not ideal in Croatia either and

that finding a job there, having no connections, would be quite difficult. Data also suggests a certain level of awareness among respondents when it comes to problems that stems from the overly attachment and identification with Croatia. One respondent is eager to claim: *“We have a complex from Croatia. Is that normal!? We will have no future here, not until we realize that we don’t live in Croatia. Only when we accept that fact, we will be enabled to create our own socio-political and cultural body that will know how to define the concept and the meaning of ‘Croat from BiH’. (...) The irony is that I am a Croat only in BiH, everywhere else, including Croatia, I am just a Bosnian (Bosnian-Herzegovinian)”* (R6).

If we observe the situation from the perspective of SIT, outnumbered groups may perceive themselves inferior to dominant groups, i.e. Bosniaks, and consequently develop low self-esteem. This might in turn results in negative social identity that will trigger negative psychological consequences. One of the defence mechanisms in these situations is the re-establishing of a positive social identity through emphasising certain characteristics of a group that are favourable only for them. One can argue that the need for strong identification with Croatian sport teams can be interpreted as a defence mechanism to avoid negative psychological consequences triggered by the inferiority complex. First, respondents argued that in BiH sport teams are not as good as Croatian teams and that there are very few Croats found there. Second, Croats do not have other clearly defined aspects of identity, such as political or cultural as one interviewee argues. Thus, because of the ‘lack of identity’ in those aspects, Croats use Croatian sport teams as a mean to obtain positive self-concept.

Smith (1991) argues that it is the attachments and associations, rather than residence in or the possession of the land that matters for ethnic identification (p. 23). Hence, an ethnies may persist even in the case when it is long divorced from its homeland through an intense nostalgia and spiritual attachment. The territory is an integral aspect of ethnic identity, as it represents the origins and the past of the group living in it or being attached to it, as well as it struggles to conquer it. In this way, it becomes a ‘holy ground’, or a sacred land of our forefathers, our kings and saints (ibid.). Croats from Croatia and Croats from BiH lived in the same country for a period over 100 years (Malcolm, 2002). Croatia’s politics arguably shaped the national identity of Croats from BiH during that period. However, since the signing of the DPA, Croatia worked in compliance with the efforts of the international community and the USA to strengthen joint institutions in BiH, directing Croats from BiH towards BiH. *“We encourage full Croatian support for implementation of the Dayton Accords, (...) and support for strengthening of federation and joint institutions in Bosnia (...)”* (US Embassy, 2013). Respondents claim that BiH is their homeland, yet they share a strong ‘spiritual’ attachment to Croatia. However, even though Croatia still might enjoy the status of the ‘holy land’, respondents expressed a certain level of a political self-awareness and identification with BiH.

5.1.2. Croats and Catholicism

All respondents, without exception, stated their Croatian nationality and identified Catholicism as its main characteristic. In the case of one respondent, it becomes obvious that she finds it difficult to differentiate between her Croatian nationality and her religion: *“I am a Catholic, I mean I am a Catholic from BiH. Oh, you mean national identity, (haha) I am a Croat from BiH, yes”* (R1). Another respondent makes an even more direct link: *“I am Croatian, because I was baptized in a Catholic church”* (R7). Yet, not all respondents identified themselves as Catholics or as religious *“I consider myself Croatian, even though I am not religious in any sense”*, says a male person from Vitez (R3). Religion or Catholicism was, however, the most frequently used term to denote Croatian identity in BiH. One person tries to provide an answer to why this occurs: *“...Croatian national identity in BiH is an area that we all shyly tap into – this step towards developing and separating somehow identity of Croats in BiH. I mean, to make it Croatian, but BiH Croatian. It is being promoted here and there. But, it is being promoted wrongfully, by my opinion, from Franciscan Catholic order and based on some kind of catholic Bosnianhood, which is totally ridiculous and will never, as such, be legitimate and accepted!”* (R5).

Already Weber argued that religion is “an exceptionally important part in creating feelings of ethnic affinity” (Weber and Runciman, 1978: 366). However, as data here suggests, the existence of ethnic groups does not require ontological collectivism; not everyone that considers himself a Croat in Bosnia is necessarily a Catholic. Yet, respondents argued that for the majority of people being a Croat in BiH is inevitably linked to one being a Catholic as well. When discussing the circumstances that led to this, one respondent offers his own view of the underlying reasons behind this: *“One should always bear in mind that there are ca. 400 000 Croats in BiH and that they do not have any prominent institutions, and what’s left of academics among Croats in BiH - it is difficult to channel them into an institution so that they could give an opinion about something. (...) We cannot finance any meaningful Croatian Institute in BiH, or say, University. The promotion coming from Herzegovina is totally insignificant – not to say stupid. It is, in fact, a mass production of undereducated students. Croats do not manage their own money; we have no money for any academy, any money for any theatre, basic cultural needs, let alone money to pay to someone that could create and produce an anthem for BiH Croats – an anthem that would suggest that we are a self-aware entity (...) Bosniaks have it all - Sarajevo, University, theatres...films about how great they are!”* The respondent goes on by saying that the international community played a significant role in disabling Croats to finance mechanisms that would enable Croats to construct and strengthen their Croatian identity in BiH in other aspects, not just in ‘clerical terms’: *“The fact is that the economic resources are taken away from BiH Croats, they do not have economic capital anymore, and they have no banks. They had Herzegovina Bank, and then army tanks broke into it – after suspicion for money laundry and that it gives support to the separate agenda. And it is OK to close it down, but to have army*

squad and tanks?! That is, if the bank dealt with crime, then state mechanisms of prevention should have been present and used, rather than raiding tanks. Even today, 13 years after people are unable to withdraw their deposits from the bank. I refer to ordinary citizens, not to mention businessmen and companies. This is one of the biggest examples of economic theft” (R5). The above implies that there is a growing need for other aspects of national identification that do not necessarily relate to religion, or Croatia, for that matter. One could argue that Croats are subjects to feelings of a low self-esteem in relation to Bosniaks that perpetuate an image of a stronger cultural group.

5.1.3. Croatian Language

Few subjects had general difficulty in identifying other aspects of Croatian identity apart from religion and one interviewee stresses the following: *“I don’t think that anyone can tell you what is that that constitutes Croatian identity here in BiH, apart from religion.”(R7).* Most respondents, however, identified Croatian language as another most important aspect of Croatian identity in BiH, but these statements were usually followed by a significant doubt about its relevance for that matter, often making ironic comments in that regard. However, all of them insisted on that they should have the right to speak the language of their choosing (Croatian). One respondent makes a firm statement in defence of Croatian language as the most important aspect of national identity, but also provide us with an insight on how and why this aspect is accentuated in intergroup relations: *”Preserving of Croatian language, which I personally will never renounce, is one of the most important aspects of Croatian identity here in BiH. And, why is this? It is because I think that language is the most crucial aspect of any nation. It’s the matter of principles as well. Everyone finds it important to feel a member of a group. In BiH most people are keen to preserve their own membership to a group they already belong to by birth, religion, name... More and more people that I know (Bosniaks) try to use those words characteristic of the so called Bosnian language; they emphasise the ‘h’ letter where it belongs and where it doesn’t. It is ridiculous. We went to high-school together and they never spoke like that, ever. We all spoke our common language Serbo-Croatian. Now, every time they emphasise one of those words, I return with the same – I use those words that are exclusive to Croatian language just to provoke them in return. It is ridiculous, I know. Nobody in BiH will ever speak either clear Croatian or Bosniak, or Serbian language for that matter” (R1).*

According to Tajfel and Turner (1986) identification with one’s own group intensifies, among other reasons, when differences are perceived as impermeable. Perhaps one could overcome the importance he or she gives to his or her own religion, however, one’s own identity becomes more obvious when it comes to which language is one speaking. However, the problem here is that the two groups understand each other perfectly and that there is no problem whatsoever in communication, apart from the fact that certain individuals emphasise certain

words (expressions) or constructions that are exclusive to either Croatian or Bosnian language, yet virtually completely understandable to both.

5.1.4. Croats in Bosnia and Croats in Herzegovina

Respondents claimed that being a Croat in central Bosnia and being a Croat in Herzegovina is not the same thing in connection to how Croats understand and experience their socio-political and economic reality based on their geographical position and ‘exposure to others’. These contrasts may have had historic and/or ethnographic background, but respondents claimed that the differences are more significantly related to the fact that Bosnian Croats have lived, and still do live among Bosniaks, and that central Bosnia is still the only truly multi-ethnic region in BiH, whereas Croats from Herzegovina live in a more homogenous area. One respondent tries to explain: *“Because in BiH, the only canton that is multi-ethnic is Central Bosnian Canton. If this were not the case, if this canton had a majority of one ethnicity (...) - BiH would have clear ethnic boundaries. We had rhetoric of Bosnian ‘tiger skin’, where everything was mixed. This rhetoric was valid before the war. Now, after the war, everything is mono-ethnic, except central Bosnia. Other multi-ethnic municipalities are very homogenized. (...) Central Bosnia is really mixed and just because of it, it is impossible to divide BiH. That is, whoever tries drawing boundaries within BiH, he will stop at central Bosnia. It cannot even be rendered where one village is Bosniak, another Croatian and so on.”*(R5).

These captivating differences among Croats in BiH most arguably came from the temporary establishment of the Croatian autonomous community (third entity) “Herzeg-Bosna” in 2002 as a reaction to the international community’s imposed electoral rules that put Croats in an even more underprivileged position relative to Bosniak majority. The reason was that this autonomous region excluded a significant amount of Croats from Bosnia (Malcolm, 2002). Moreover, these differences are realized through the interaction between Croats and Bosniaks in central Bosnia and all the experiences and perceptions that arise from it. One respondent talks about the importance of a neighbourhood (komsiluk) to an average Bosnian-Herzegovinian person and how neighbourhood and the place of origin still bears a great importance to people in BiH: *“I could never go and live in Herzegovina. I would be looked at differently. In BiH, personal status and well-being is largely based on connections. For example, Herzegovinians would always first consider one of ‘their own’ when it comes to employment, or anything else. It is like that. All those places in Herzegovina are small towns and villages. Everybody knows each other. Who am I to them?!”* (R1).

Data suggests that there is a growing emancipation of Croats in central Bosnia. Even if one considers Croats from BiH as a self-aware entity, ‘divorced’ from Croatia, data implies that there appears to be another level of separation and self-categorization among Croats in BiH. Tajfel and Turner (1986) suggest that if status relations are unstable in-group identification intensifies. Given the above

accounts and the fact that many Croats from Bosnia felt excluded during the temporary establishment of the autonomous community Herzeg-Bosna in 2002, one can argue that Croats might perceive their status position inferior to the rest of the 'Croatian community'.

Every person has a range of different, social identities, including those derived from a more clearly defined groups (e.g. professional association, local football team, etc.) as well as those referring to a more abstract social category (e.g. national identity, fellow Europeans, etc.). A level to which a person can feel committed to one group differs from one individual to another (Crisp and Hewstone 2001; Haslam and Turner, 1992). This depends on whether individuals from one group consider their inclusion, or membership, in one group to be characterised by a lower-status and is as such unjust or illegitimate. Data and the above self-categorization analysis imply that respondents, being Croats from central Bosnia, express low group commitment on multiple levels as they perceive their membership to any group, whether this regards identification with Croatia, Croats in BiH, Federation, BiH, or Bosniaks to be relegated to underprivileged positions and as being of 'lower-status'. Moreover, respondents expressed their lack of commitment and/or trust to the general political leadership as they perceive that politicians only protect their own interest (in the case of HDZ BiH and temporary Croatian autonomous entity).

In a poorly functional and impoverished community that lacks opportunities and conditions for the promotion and strengthening of the self-confidence, group identification is a powerful source of self-respect. Since our self-comprehension depends on our social status it is very important for individuals to evaluate the status of the group they belong to. This evaluation is based on the relevant intergroup comparisons on the basis of which individuals ultimately shape their social identity (Tajfel and Turner, 1986). If a group assesses itself positively in comparison to other groups, the identity of that group is determined as positive what in turn contributes to mental health of individuals, giving them a sense of security, self-respect and belonging (Mummendey, 1985). It can be argued, based on the data, that in terms of SIT Croats from central Bosnia are in an inferior status position and are a subject to feelings of negative social identity. According to Tajfel and Turner (1986) the feelings of negative social identity also involve certain coping strategies of the group: discarding the current social identity and convert to dominant group or preserving the existing identity and develop a group defence mechanism. However, in the context of Croats from central Bosnia, we embark on serious limitations of the proposed coping strategies. Given the problems pertaining to permeability, Croats will hardly ever convert to dominant group (Bosniaks), on the other hand, they also seem not to poses any significant defence mechanism by which they can protect their group identity and their social self-esteem. Apart from identification with Croatia, data suggests that Croats from central Bosnia lack the tools that could 'elevate their spirit'. Such situation could be described as a 'coping limbo'.

5.2. Intergroup relations and the Perception of Threats

Realistic threats primarily regard the fear of other ethno-national groups in the context of resource distribution. By exploring the aspect of realistic threats, the author aimed at documenting perceptions of realistic threats among Croats in central Bosnia. Most respondents perceived realistic threats in relation to socio-economic aspects. These aspects were concerning problems that Croats come across when running their private businesses and finding employment.

A holder of a medium-large business claims that intensification of inspections are exercised only among Croats in central Bosnia: *“Regularly, federal inspections that are under the protection of the ruling Bosniak political elite are focused on businesses owned by Croats here, and this I witness through my daily work (...), while businesses of Bosniaks in general and Croats in Herzegovina are virtually untouched relative to those of Croats in central Bosnia”* (R9). Another respondent claims that Croatian businesses are employing Bosniaks in vast numbers while the opposite is true for Bosniak businessmen: *“Croatian businessmen here continue to employ everyone, regardless of their ethnicity, while Bosniaks predominantly employ their own. Profit dictates it. The owner of the biggest Croatian company (‘X’) is aware of the fact that Bosniaks constitute majority here and he employs them in order to ensure greater profit, while one of the biggest Bosniak companies (‘Y’) does not employ a single Croat (...) Croats are money grabbers first and they don’t care about the consequences it has for the Croats here. Furthermore, Croats employ Bosniaks under minimal wages that very little Croats will accept, and the fact he employs Bosniaks will protect him from frequent inspections, because a cousin of the person that works there is the inspector and so on... Croats are spoiled as well, no pay check is good enough they think they deserve better, they think – Croatia!”* (R3). One respondent expresses his concern that the threat is not only coming from Bosniaks, but that Croats in central Bosnia are threatened also due to clandestine agendas of the Croatian leadership and international community: *“Well...It is becoming more and more obvious to everyone now. They (Croatian leading nationalist party HDZ) are ignoring all the facts by which Croats in central Bosnia are being really ‘majorized’. They are doing this in order to have less and less Croats living in central Bosnia - they want us to move out. They are working on it all the time. Without the problematic and multi-ethnic central Bosnia, Herzegovina remains politically and ethnically ‘clean’ and those Croats have stronger argument to separate from BiH. (...) I mean, what if Herzegovinian part becomes third entity? Then our political leaders from central Bosnia (a breach of HDZ – HDZ1990) will lose their current political power since they will suddenly become “Bosnians” in Herzegovina. The same will happen with all of us – I mean we are Bosnians and are perceived and treated as such in Herzegovina (...) It is only a question of personal interest and differences between Croats in Bosnia and Croats in Herzegovina – no unity in terms of Croatian belongingness or anything alike. Unfortunately, it is only a matter of individual political interest. This can never happen to Bosniaks. The fact the OHR is approving all of this suggests they*

want the same too. I only wait for the moment until I will move out and take my kids and wife with me, I will not go to Herzegovina.” (R4). As the interviews went on, most respondent, clearly agitated by the subject, often commented that the only way out of their situation is to leave the country, either to Croatia, or preferably to EU that Croatia is now a part of.

Symbolic threats are primarily related to the threat of group identity, its value system and worldview (e.g. language, religion, culture) (Duckitt, 2003). From the standpoint of the ITT the perception of threat leads to prejudice, regardless of whether it is a “real” threat or not (Stephan and Stephan, 2000). The following accounts of the respondents can be interpreted as direct representation of symbolic threat perception.

Croatians have pleaded for a national TV in their own language on numerous occasions as they felt that the current TV station undermines Croatian language. However, up until today Croats in BiH never got their Television. One respondent explains the process through which Croats were denied the right to TV in their own language: *“...when Croats asked for a TV in the Croatian language, Bosniaks denied that right by implying that this is against the vital national interest of the Bosniak people. (...)When the Parliament voted for the establishment of the TV in Croatian language, then Bosniaks voted against it in the House of Peoples. (...)There you go. Lawmakers reasoned it... it does not matter how. This issue also went all the way to the Constitutional Court. And now listen to what happened... Croatian and Serbian judges voted for the TV, but Bosniaks judges voted against, of course. There were also those foreign judges, you know and they voted for guess what...they voted against it and their vote is worth two votes...This is why we can't protect our basic national right and our identity.”(R2). One testimony showcases a number of aspects through which respondents perceive their values and worldviews to be threatened: *More and more Bosniaks are greeting each other by saying 'Selam Alejkum', no matter where they are. I hear it in banks, in shops, everywhere, even at the University. They even say it to me. You know...University is closed whenever there it is a Ramadan, but my friend, who is a Croat, had to go to the exam on Christmas, Christmas, I mean...! 'Selam Alejkum' is an Islamic greeting. It would be the same if I would go to a bank and said 'Hail Mary'! You could never hear this in a public institution before the war. It was either a decent 'Good day' or 'Hello'(...)Every day, I think, you see a new mosque rising somewhere. Soon every house will have a mosque of its own. Fine, I don't pay for it, some sheik pays for it because they come here and they give money for their mosques. But what does that mean? Someone can just come here and build religious building wherever he pleases. The irony is that many Bosniaks do not appreciate this so much either, but everyone is afraid to raise a voice, because a good Bosniak is a good Muslim. Also Croats are afraid to say anything about that, because than they are accused of being fascists. Some fascists, I say”(R4). In SIT terms the perceptions of symbolic threats effect the social identity construction through which this identity becomes more in-group oriented and thus ethno-centric. Data**

suggests that respondents perceive themselves as members of a group that is rather more in tune with civic worldview and that their values and worldview represent a lesser obstacle to a shared identity. They perceive religious and cultural expressions of Bosniaks as direct provocations and exercise of power and domination. Some of them are eager to state that the value system and worldview of certain Bosniaks is rather incompatible with the notion of civil society and liberal democracy. However, most respondents did not generalize and many emphasised that there are Bosniaks that do not pose such threats and are do not publicly demonstrate and/or impose their religious and/or cultural views. The perception of identity threat is considered the best single predictor of various forms of exclusionism and intolerance (Canetti-Nisim et al., 2009; Stephan and Stephan, 2001). Political consequences that are likely to occur from perceptions of national identity threat are numerous forms of protective policies which can furthermore be reflected in terms of reduction of certain civil rights and acceptance of repressive protective measures (Cameron et al., 2005). However, it appears that Croats from central Bosnia do not actively engage in protectionist measures and exclusionism, despite their perceptions of threat in terms of economic discrimination. Croats from central Bosnia do not have their own territorial unit they can govern autonomously, and they lack appropriate institutional representation that might help in reducing their economic discrimination. Furthermore, data suggests that Croats in BiH lack a sense of political unity among each other what all together might in part explain the lack of social actions that would aim at protecting their national integrity in the country. One cannot argue that Croats from central Bosnia ultimately benefit from their membership in their own group. In SIT terms the lack of benefits that stem from a group membership might result in conversion to a dominant group or engaging in protective mechanism. However, data suggests, conversion of Croats to dominant group is rather implausible due to impermeability and unstable status relations. The coping strategy in which Croats try to re-establish their positive self-concept are reflected in their efforts to identify with Croatia. However, when it comes to identity threats, which in the case of Croats relate predominantly to the issues of economic discrimination, consequences appear to be far greater. ITT presupposes the existence of inter-group conflict over scarce resources (jobs). This type of conflict increases ethnocentrism, intragroup cohesion, and the maintenance and/or emergence of negative stereotypes and prejudices. The research indicates that the existence of realistic threat perceptions among interviewees doesn't necessarily enhance in-group cohesion amongst Croats in central Bosnia. A more prominent reaction, data suggests, to the perception of threats is a desire to leave the country and seek opportunities elsewhere. The situation in which Croatia is a part of EU and the fact that most Croats in BiH are entitled to Croatian citizenship (and passport) might only help the utilization of these reactions. Thus, if such perceptions continue to prevail, they will arguably pose a serious obstacle to the prospects of shared sense of identity and cooperation among ethnic groups in central Bosnia. In connection to Integrated Contact Hypothesis (Allport, 1954), trust and cooperation is encouraged there where people have more opportunities to get to know each other, understand each other and share different views on

what constitutes their values and their way of life. Thus, it can be argued, if intergroup relations in central Bosnia continue to produce negative results, i.e. one group perceives its identity as threatened, the prospects of shared society will ultimately be hampered in other regions that are more ethnically homogenous. Finally, one can argue that the data arguably challenges the claims posed by Belloni (2004) and Bose (2002) that refer to relative harmony of ethnic relations in central Bosnia and exaggerations pertaining to concerns of ordinary Croats regarding their social status.

6. Conclusion

The analysis suggests that Croats in central Bosnia in general lack group commitment to any of the respective groups, be it Croats from Herzegovina or Croats from Croatia. The reasons for this occurrence are based on the group's lack of trust in the stability of status relation, i.e. Croats from central Bosnia perceive their situation within the larger group (Croats in general) to be of relatively lower status what could highly affect their position in the competition for resources. Furthermore, they are a subject to negative social identity and low group self-esteem in relation to Bosniaks. If a group assesses itself positively in comparison to other groups, the identity of that group is determined as positive what in turn contributes to mental health of individuals, giving them a sense of security, self-respect and belonging. In SIT terms, the feelings of negative social identity entail certain coping strategies of the group - converting to dominant group or preserving the existing identity and developing a group defence mechanism. However, in the context of Croats from central Bosnia, we embark on serious limitations of the assumed coping strategies. Given the problems pertaining to permeability, Croats will hardly ever convert to dominant group (Bosniaks). They also seem not to possess any significant defence mechanism by which they can protect their group identity and through that, their group self-esteem. Apart from identification with Croatia, data suggests that Croats from central Bosnia lack the tools that could 'elevate their spirit'. *Through investigation of the everyday aspects in which Croats from central Bosnia perceive their identity to be threatened by Bosniaks, the research identified that the reasons of perceived identity threat predominantly stems from the experiences of economic discrimination on the basis of which Croats from central Bosnia express the need for leaving the country.* The consequences are, however, far greater, because if the intergroup relation in central Bosnia produces negative results for any of the groups, this in turn might send negative signals to the rest of the country where people from a more homogenous areas might perceive further integration as a condition from which they have far more to lose. It can be argued that the idea of further integration will be even more rejected. Thus, the future of a more integrated BiH will highly depend on properly managed intergroup relations that would allow all three groups to achieve equality in various aspects. This research involves the field of human geography through the problematization of ethnic/national identity into the field of international development and its efforts to create a more stable, tolerant and productive global society.

The scope and limitation of this research unfortunately did not allow further analysis of the data, or the analysis of a greater data pool. This research should be conceived more as a preliminary research that tries to tackle the subject of national identity from a broader theoretical approach. Each theme of the analysis could have been more explored in terms of depth and width. For example, in terms of width, each theme could be explored in connection to other ethnic/national groups in BiH. In this way, the problem could be assessed from all angles what would enable potential comparative analysis. In terms of depth, each

theme could have been thin-sliced even further and linked to related and relevant theories, enabling a more comprehensive understanding of the social phenomena and Bosnian-Herzegovinian society in its entirety. Furthermore, issues pertaining to war and collective memory have not been examined and included into the analysis. The above considerations, thus, suggest the necessity and directions for future research.

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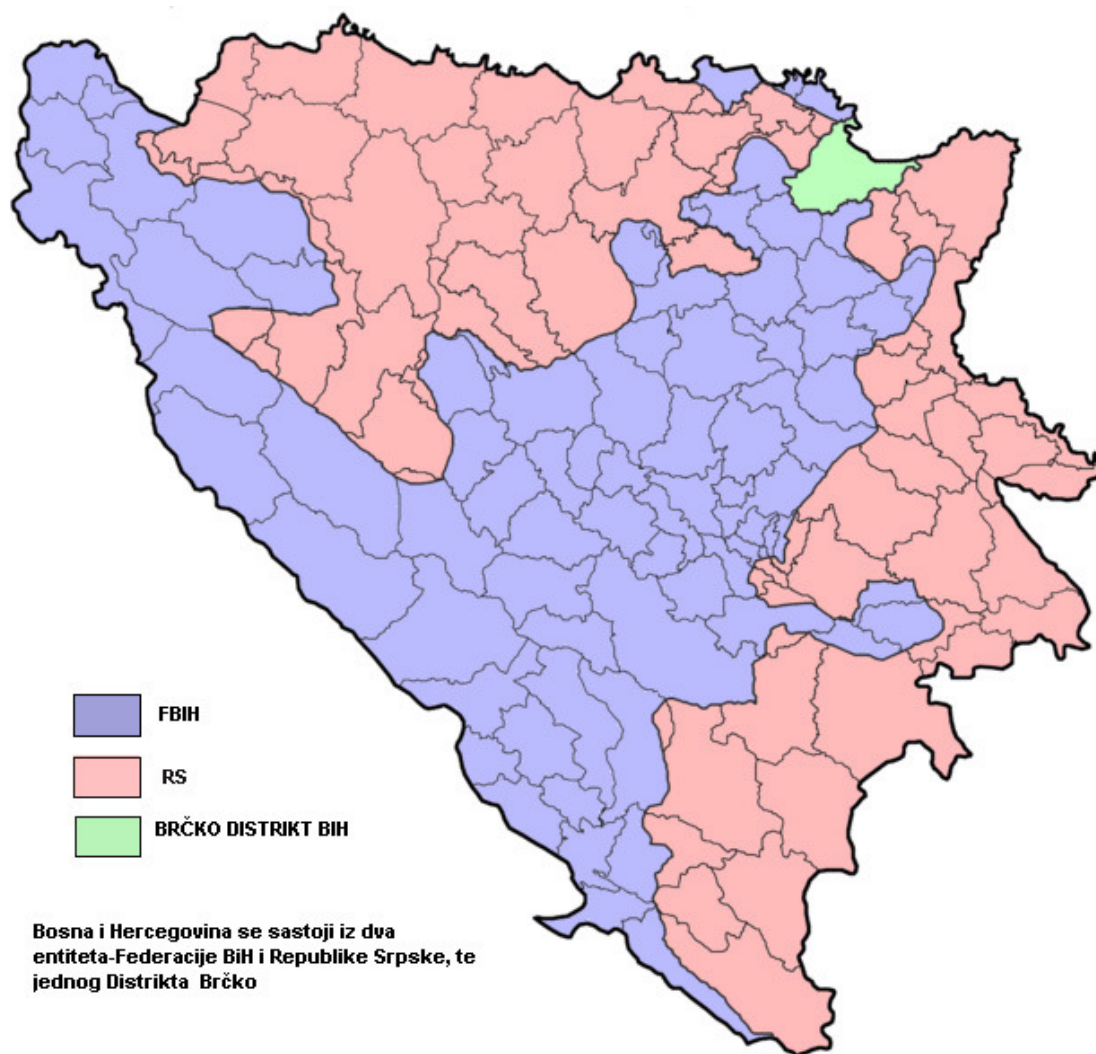
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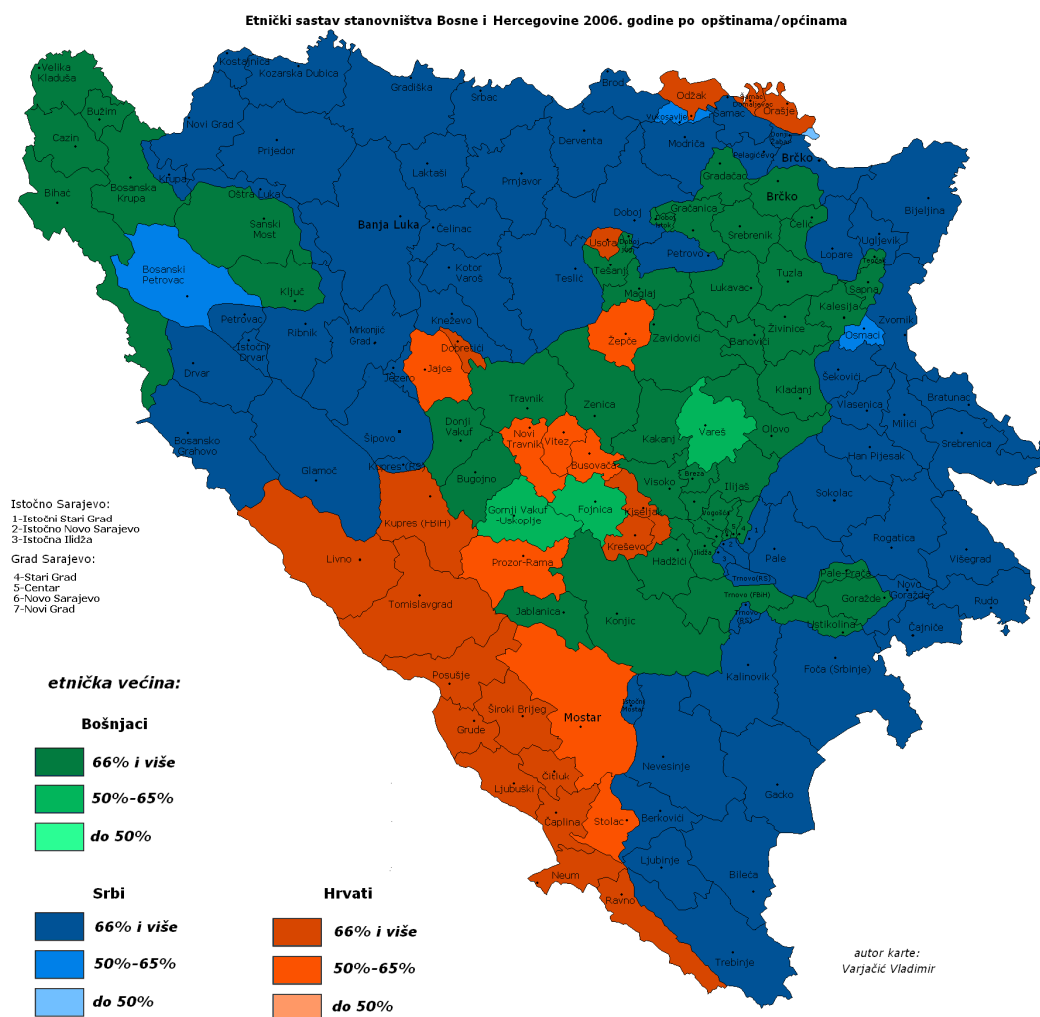
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8. Appendix 1



- A map of Bosnia and Herzegovina representing BiH Federation (blue), the Republic of Srpska (light red) and Brcko District (light green). Source: *The Centre for Refugee and IDP Studies, University of Sarajevo*. (Online) Available at: < http://cesi.fpn.unsa.ba/?page_id=601&lang=en >



- An ethnic map of Bosnia and Herzegovina . Croats (Hrvati) are represented by red, Serbs (Srbi) represented by blue colour and Bosniaks (Bosnjaci) represented by green colour. Source: *The Centre for Refugee and IDP Studies, University of Sarajevo*. (Online) Available at: < http://cesi.fpn.unsa.ba/?page_id=601&lang=en>