



Youth Ethnic and National Identity in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Social Science Approaches

Danijela Majstorović and Vladimir Turjačanin



Youth Ethnic and National Identity in Bosnia
and Herzegovina

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Social Science Approaches

Danijela Majstorović and Vladimir Turjačanin

University of Banja Luka, Bosnia-Herzegovina

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*To our students, citizens, ethnicities and peoples, both constituent
and non-constituent, those who are not afraid, who love
themselves and others, who know about the past, live in the
present and look ahead to the future*

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Preface and Acknowledgments

Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H), a country situated somewhere between the land of a dark *vilayet* and a multi-cultural oasis, inhabited by those who live there because they love it and those who have no other choice but to live there, abounds in good people and unfortunate circumstances. Living in B&H, we daily encounter a specific social context in which ethnicity and politics intertwine to the extent that we can no longer clearly identify the boundaries of the two phenomena. As people living in such a society, we are inspired by everyday political affairs, discussions about ethnicity and interpersonal relations shaped by the ethnic and political. As members of the academic community, we are fascinated by the fact that others write more about us than we do. What kind of society is this, and who are the people that constitute it? How do people experience ethnicity, how do they represent it in public and personal domains and how does it affect their relationships with others? With no ambitions to provide the 'ultimate answers' to these questions, but with a strong desire to shed some light on these phenomena from the inside, in the way we experience them, we have undertaken a multi-method study of the social construction of the ethnic and national in our society. We hope the book will be an interesting read for the academic community as well as the wider community.

We would like to thank those who have helped this book see the light of day, most of all the Regional Research Promotion Programme in the Western Balkans (RRPP) for operational and financial support, especially Anđela Lalović. Furthermore, many thanks go to the tireless Professor Ruth Wodak for her optimism and assistance with the publication; without her energy and ideas the entire book would have been far less interesting. We are deeply grateful to Maja Mandić for her commitment, effort, analytical reasoning and detailed observations in research, and we thank Siniša Lakić for his assistance with statistical data analysis. We thank Eric Gordy, Stef Jansen and Siniša Malešević, academics and scholars with great theoretical knowledge of and insight into local context, who have read our text at different stages and helped us sharpen our ideas. Many thanks go to Asim Mujkić and Jasmina Husanović, whose chapters appeared in the first version of the book in Serbo-Croatian. We thank all those who agreed to participate in this research as 'subjects', who are also the co-authors of this book. Finally, we thank our families and friends, who listened to our countless discussions and dilemmas related to life in B&H while working on the book.

The book before you is a result of the research project 'Construing ethnic and national identity of the young in Bosnia and Herzegovina', implemented in the period 2010–2011, supported by and prepared within the

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The views expressed in this book are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent opinions of the SDC and the University of Fribourg.

Introduction

If, for example, Eurasia or Eastasia (whichever it maybe) is the enemy today, then that country must always have been the enemy. And if the facts say otherwise then the facts must be altered. Thus history is continuously rewritten.

George Orwell, 1984

In Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H) only a few are doing well – not simply in terms of mere survival, although that is the main issue. ‘To do well’ entails the right to a normal everyday life, not only for us, but also for those who live with us. If others are deprived of their rights, how can we be all right? If the main issue in B&H today is to make things work for ‘me’ and ‘my people’, not for everyone, something is wrong. And what has ‘my people’ come to mean? Can it be that ethnic identifications are the strongest identity markers in the now transitional, post-socialist and post-war B&H that is a part of the global community 20 years after the war broke out? Why are they so central in a Europe that is getting more and more united? And how come we, as B&H researchers who live in this country, think this is an important subject matter that requires further inquiry and an interdisciplinary approach?

If we concede this to be true, then can there be any hope for the youth who were brought up in an atmosphere of ethnic tensions, in a divided country where there is little feeling of national unity? And to what extent does the national unity matter, given that three peoples in B&H do not share a common denominator in terms of what happened and there is no comparative, multiperspectival history and narrative that would accommodate these post-war identities? How do the young people think? What do those in whose hands lies the future of Bosnian society think about themselves, ‘their people’ and ‘others’? What is considered to be ‘common sense’, ‘logic’, ‘truth’ and ‘general knowledge’? Will the youth repeat the established discourses of the older generations, which reassert that we cannot coexist, or will they create their own language and practices to pave the way to a common future that will embrace the differences and difficult past, and

work towards a common good? We want to pose these questions within our research and then attempt to interpret the answers obtained, using 'the language of science', in order to see what future awaits our country and the region, which, almost 20 years after the war, do not know where or how to move on.

When we talk about the period after the 1992–1995 war or 'Dayton B&H' we cannot escape metaphors such as 'divided society', 'impossible state', 'international community's experiment' and the like. In fact, those who dare grapple with the idea of the opposition between the ethnic and the state or national identity in B&H will find themselves in the deadlock these metaphors imply – in despair of the impossibility of once and for all untying and reconciling the ideological knots and moving towards a 'better future'. Our task within the primary research was not easy – our intention was to present, position and describe the ethnic¹ and national identity in B&H in both public and private domains, using qualitative and quantitative methods, providing main coordinates and interpreting the main trends regarding the two rather conflicting identities, pointing to their inherent dynamisms.

Without embarking on the Balkanistic discourse of 'eternal hatred' and 'time bomb', the key reasons for the existing conflict rest in the breakup of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) and the wars of the 1990s, which, according to some, have not ended. As in other post-socialist countries, nationalism in B&H developed as a dominant political religion, which, according to Čolović (2011), 'contrary to communism, which is offering a promising future, offered a glorious past'. Latent and evident ethnic nationalism has been present in B&H society even more in the post-war period since it was endorsed by the Dayton constitution. As such, it has been communicated not only through the media, education and other state ideological apparatuses, but also in the private domain, in which affectionate relations to myths and truths have predominated. Furthermore, the turbulent history of the 20th century, which preceded and shaped the ethnic nationality of today, is certainly not to be neglected, nor is mythical, compressed time, which can easily be brought back to life and become ideologized (Velikonja, 2003). With few exceptions, 18 years after termination of the last war in B&H, the absence of free media or regional truth and reconciliation commissions, which would make plurality of truths and any form of consensus possible, is more obvious than ever. We believed that the first step to destabilizing the 'truths that divide' would be an attempt to strip them off their argumentative premises by the means of historical, political (philosophical, social), psychological and critical content and discourse analysis, in order to illuminate the nature of particular ideologies that feed off delegitimation of the Other and thus legitimate the division and the power gained through division, upon which the power ultimately rests.

Aims of the research and its grounding

The focus of the study is certainly the youth, the future of this country, but also the people we encounter daily through our academic work at the university. By 'the youth' we refer to the generation born in the late 1980s and throughout the early 1990s, young people who seldom travel across state borders, who live in a divided country, go to divided schools where they study about divided histories and languages, thus becoming socialized in a context where togetherness and history are being dismissed as if they had never existed. How can we then understand the Other in such a context, when it is virtually impossible to learn about the Other?

It should be no wonder that the youth of today feel interpellated by radical right-wing organizations, supporter groups and neo-fascist organizations which call for pure and open hatred of the Other. In fact 'the condemnation of the right-wing youth organizations and their Fuehrers has no effects unless their ideological mentors are indicated' for their ideological responsibility in creating and releasing 'the poison of nationalism' (Čolović in Isović, 2011). Primary and secondary school history textbooks fail to mention the wars of the 1990s, let alone the multiple perspectives of truth on what has perhaps been the most violent fratricide in the contemporary history of the Balkans. Instead, they make the most vulnerable prey and easily become hostage to particularistic tribal ideologies and ever-increasing conservatism and chauvinism. We wanted to find out how the youth in contemporary B&H perceive themselves and others, what standpoints they take in relation to the terms and features of ethnic identity and the state, and how they represent, construe and legitimate their identities and positions in the semi-private domain with regard to the public domain they find themselves in.

In addition to the declared ideologies that Čolović recognizes, Althusser (1970) teaches us that ideology functions in more subtle and less determined ways through state apparatuses such as the media, religious institutions and education. In line with Gramsci (1971) we could argue that hegemony, as a temporary fixation of meanings, creates consent to a dominant truth that we internalize as 'our own' or as the truth of 'our people' and we 'hook on' the emotional rhetoric, arguing that the entire world is against us. If we then apply Foucaultian discourse/power model and reassert that power resides everywhere and the discourse of resistance can be heard if we listen to it, we can accept that ethnic identity need not be a problem once there are also various other identities in ourselves and in others, in an ideal plurality of circulating points of view, truths and perspectives. The problem occurs at the point when a truth becomes frozen, refined, fabricated and culturally 'inspired' with, in Hobsbawm's words, 'invention of the tradition' as well as re-traditionalization, thus becoming the only 'truth' available. The problem further evolves when such a truth is subtly recontextualized and revises the

past, heroes and battles, and escalates its demand for legitimacy with the inclusion of hatred and exclusion of the Other. The truth need not be as ideologists present it to us, counting on our short memory, our fear and empty wallets. We have, therefore, attempted to identify the dominant discourses in B&H in both the public domain and the semi-public domain – since the no-limits access to the private domain is virtually impossible – and examine how they are construed, maintained, and destabilized.

We recognized the media and its discourses to be one of the strongest ideological state apparatuses, not in terms of theories of direct effects of the mass media, which hit uninformed and gullible audiences like a magic bullet, as much as a means of subtle cultivation (Gerbner and Gross, 1976) of a certain world view and the agenda that the media establishes (McCombs and Shaw, 1972). Although the aforementioned theorists mostly analyzed the effects of American television, the theory that exposure to television media subtly cultivates viewers can be applied to other media and the public domain in general. In order to obtain a timeline for the manner of reporting ethnic/state-related subject matter (due to our time and financial limitations), we decided to investigate five leading B&H dailies in a randomly selected period of ten days. The research helped us identify the reporting norms and the extent to which topics related to the state differ from those dealing with ethnicity when the two are in symbiosis. The timeline presented here is certainly an initial study in terms of content analysis, since a more comprehensive analysis would require much more time and research capacity. In addition to these issues, future study could focus on investigating significant indicators of the dominant discourses in the public domain such as texts/speeches in public institutions, parliament, science academy, university, laws, electronic media content, etc.

In addition to the media research, we focused our research primarily on the youth, applying qualitative and quantitative methods. We attempted to gain access to semi-public discourses through a survey carried out among the student population in B&H, in order to identify how the youth interpret and present not only their own identities but also their everyday lives, how they legitimate their attitudes, and to what extent they include or exclude others. Our aim was to identify the ideological matrices they speak through and pinpoint whose narratives and tropes they take over, the fluidity and dynamics of their discourses when they talk about themselves and others, sometimes to articulate their resistance to dominant truths. Furthermore, we were interested in the convictions and doubts they have when they talk about themselves, others and the country they live in.

In addition to the empirical research, the book contains several theoretical chapters that discuss relevant theories and research approaches related to ethnicity. Since the interdisciplinary approach makes it equally difficult to determine the boundary and absorb the richness of the variety of methodologies and approaches, the book also offers several theoretical chapters that

investigate the foundations, preconditions and issues of ethno-nationalism in B&H as well as the consequences of the narrow political imaginaries that B&H ethno-nationalism entails.

Pre-war B&H was one of the more tolerant regions in SFRY, at least with regard to attitudes to ethnicity. The dissolution of the country, followed by a bloody war not only in B&H but also elsewhere, resulted in lost lives, a shattered economy and other consequences felt in everyday relationships among the people. Post-war B&H was described as a federal state based on ethnic divisions of political power, where the members of the largest peoples gathered in territories where they constituted an absolute majority. Such politicization of ethnicities (i.e. identities), along with the fact that multi-ethnicity became a form of parallel life of ethnic communities, led to a state in which the experience of other peoples is construed to be distant and strange. Identifying the ethnic with the political made the peoples in B&H contesters in the struggle for political power, which was inevitably reflected in social–psychological relations. The study of ethnic distance in the post-war period showed a high level of psychological and social distance among the members of society.

Chapter overview

This book consists of three main parts – an introduction and theoretical background, qualitative research and quantitative research.

The first chapter, entitled ‘Troubles with Ethnicity: Theoretical Considerations’, provides a preliminary introduction to ethnic conflicts and related issues and a thorough overview of relevant national and international reading of the terms ‘nation’, ‘ethnia’, ‘ethno-nationalism’ and ‘nationality’. The chapter considers various approaches such as primordialism, instrumentalism and constructivism as well as a wide range of post-essentialist approaches, which advocate dismissal of the terms of national identity and embrace the anarchy of definitions. Nationalism is considered to be the focus of identity and loyalty, and thus represents the basis of collective activity; at the same time, it represents a nation-oriented heterogeneous string of idioms, practices and possibilities, either omnipresent or ‘endemic’ in modern political and cultural life. Ethnic nationality, which is deprived of its own state and represents loyalty to an ethnic group connected to ancestors, heritage and preservation of the continuity, becomes an organizing and legitimating principle characterized by delegitimizing and re-legitimizing practices, which is reflected in concrete discourse (i.e. in the construction of ‘us’ and ‘them’).

The second chapter, entitled ‘Interdisciplinary Study and Conceptualization of Ethnic Identity: Socio-psychological and Discourse Analytical Approaches’, analyzes theoretical and methodological approaches to the ethnic and national domain and identity in B&H, reviewing relevant theories

and empiricism in the context of interdisciplinary study of the phenomena in psychology, social psychology, sociolinguistics and critical discourse analysis.

The third chapter, 'Measuring Ethnic Identity: Methods and samples', introduces the research conducted and discusses the methods applied and the samples. The chapter discusses the approach, sample, instruments, variables, data collection procedures (questionnaires and focus groups), coordination (content analysis part), preparation of a guide with questions for focus groups and data processing by means of interpretive methods of content analysis and critical discourse analysis and data processing via the statistical software R and spreadsheet LibreOffice Calc program. Furthermore, the chapter turns to the issues of statistic and dynamic 'measurement' of identities, identitarian attitudes and ethnic distances.

The second section of the book opens with the fourth chapter, 'Ethnic and National identity and Ethnic Nationalism in the Public Sphere in Bosnia and Herzegovina: The Case of Major Print Media', which analyzes the content of five major B&H dailies in order to determine the manner in which ethnic and national identities are construed through the discourses in B&H public domain, or more precisely to define the discourses upon which rests the construction of the ethnically divided society, that is, of the ethnically divided state. The analysis of the dominant discourses in the B&H public domain examines how mainstream media interpellates its audience by discussing primarily the re-feudal system of postwar and state-building amidst rampant capitalism harbored by the new ethno-nationalist elites, so typical for post-socialist societies, along with the absent and overtly commercialized public domain. It then turns to specific discursive matrices of representation, legitimation and coercion that ethno-national identities are built on and upon which ethnic nationalism rests. Such a content analysis thus aims to provide destabilization of the myths, metaphors and other cognitive linguistic resources, which, depending on the 'timing' of certain newspaper articles, and especially at a time of increased media activity, enables the unhindered preservation of power of the ethno-nationalistic elites in B&H. The chapter also offers a specific critically oriented code list with regard to ethnic, national, entity and common interpretative frames and uses textual examples to describe their structure.

The fifth chapter, entitled 'More than Blood and Soil? Ethnic and National Discourses of Youth in Bosnia and Herzegovina' analyzes how the youth perceive issues and attitudes towards the affiliation to the state of B&H, and how it relates to their ethnic identity. The chapter analyzes the discourses of the youth in eight focus groups guided by terms such as 'soil' (territory, history and reasons) and 'blood' (identity, performance and legitimation of identities), in relation to their perception and standpoints towards the state of B&H (particularly the 'post-Dayton' B&H), the international community and Dayton Agreement, entity division, state (national) B&H identity, and finally, ethnic identities and (im)possibilities of coexistence in B&H.

The chapter also turns to legitimations supporting these attitudes, which generate their argumentative and rhetoric power from the general knowledge and interpretation of history and popular myths, everyday life and current political issues.

The third section of the book consists of three chapters. The sixth chapter, 'Forms and Salience of Ethnic Identities in Bosnia and Herzegovina', investigates whether it is possible to construe a non-conflicting ethnic identity in a society such as B&H. There is an evident problem regarding the coexistence of ethnic and national identities in B&H today, which is primarily reflected in groups of respondents of Serb or Croatian ethnicity, who do not perceive B&H as their own state, that is, they do not exhibit any significant identification with the country. In the B&H public domain there are two possible models for a solution to this problem: the first is nation-dominant, which focuses on the primacy of the national identity and suggests that all groups should identify primarily with the dominant identity. The other one is a model based on ethnic division, which gives exclusive legitimacy to ethnic identity, completely rejecting national identity (i.e. it is accepted only as a formal guideline) without any feeling of genuine identification. However, the existence of these strong tendencies does not mean that it is completely impossible to create a new form of identity that would bring these two opposing tendencies together. With regard to forms of national attachment, our respondents, the young citizens of B&H, most commonly exhibited so-called multiple attachments, that is, identification with one's ethnic (national) group and mankind in general. Such an identity is sufficiently wide to gather all human values, without endangering any of the existing local identifications. Therefore, the answer to the question of whether non-conflicting multiple identity is possible, is the following: not only is it possible, it already exists. However, such an identity cannot develop unless politicization of ethnic identities is abolished, which, at this point, seems to be mission impossible. What this study certainly cannot provide is a recipe of how to avoid politicization of any identity, including ethnic identities; it can, however, show that the potential for positive change is inherent to all people and all communities; we simply have to work on creating a favorable atmosphere in society.

Chapter 7, 'Perception of Ethnic Groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina', analyzes stereotypes in the context of investigating ethnicity since ethnic stereotypes, as part of the cognitive-evaluative structure of perception of ethnic categories, affect the construction of social reality. Ethnic stereotypes represent a cognitive image of 'others' (or 'us'), composed of various attributes, followed by an evaluation on the scale of values ranging from positive to negative (i.e. from good to bad). The chapter examines the perception of one's own group and the characteristics of an ethnic auto-stereotype as an integral part of social identity. The perception of other ethnic groups in B&H has become slightly more positive than in previous research, which can be accounted for by the fact that the field survey was

conducted at a time when no election or other intense political activity took place; or it can be perceived as an indicator of a gradual decrease of ethnic and political tensions in society. One of the findings of the survey shows that the more salient ethnic heterogeneity of a social cycle co-exists with a more positive perception of other groups since familiarity with the members of those other groups or cultures will most probably result in at least slightly more positive perception of those group. However, in post-war B&H there is also a distinct homogeneity of ethnic groups based on territorial principles, within entities, cantons and municipalities respectively.

Chapter 8, 'Socio-psychological Characteristics of the Ethnic Distance in Youth in Bosnia and Herzegovina', focuses primarily on the analysis of ethnic attitudes, conceptualized by the readiness to establish social contacts with members of other peoples, and the relationship of the forms and salience of ethnic identity to the forms and salience of national attachment. In the social-political domain it is clear that there is a cluster of ethnic attitudes which includes ethnocentric attitudes, distinct religiosity and refusal to establish relationships with other ethnic groups. On the other hand, the respondents' experience of making contact with other peoples and the fact that they identify with both their own people and mankind in general enables the youth to develop openness to the idea of communicating with others. The trends in ethnic distances in the past ten years, alongside the barriers in terms of sample representability, provide an optimistic outlook for inter-ethnic relationships at this point in time. The youth are more open to contact and communication than they used to be, which, for a society in which ethnic division is conducted from primary school, is a major achievement. The one missing aspect, which to a large extent is crucial in determining whether things will continue to develop in this direction, depends on defining social values outside the domains of politics and ethnicity, that is in the possibility of accepting oneself and others as equals, on the one hand, and defining identity in terms, not of politics, but of personal development and development of human relationships in general, on the other hand.

In Chapter 9, 'Wrapping It All Up', we provide and comment on the implications of these findings, between the 'big talk' of the media and political discourses, and the 'small talk' of youngsters speaking about and between themselves, and give possible predictions for the future.

Part I

Ethnicity in Theory

1

Troubles with Ethnicity: Theoretical Considerations and Contextual Background

The story of the recent socio-historical context of Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H) (and the entire region, for that matter) begins with the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the entire Eastern Bloc, and the segregation of Yugoslavia into its constitutive parts – federal republics. While 1992 is the year when national frontiers in united Europe ceased to exist, paving the way for the free movement of people, goods and capital, and when Europe seemingly transcended nationhood and nationalism (Brubaker, 2009), in that same year B&H became an independent state for the first time in modern history. Shortly afterwards, following the outbreak of conflict in Croatia, one of the bloodiest conflicts in post-World War II Europe permanently marked the country with uncertainty, impoverishment and fear. The war ended in 1995 with the so-called Dayton Peace Agreement, after which B&H became defined as a tri-nation state.¹ The war had dire and long-term consequences for the society of B&H. Before the war it had a population of about 4.4 million. The largest percentage of the population consisted of the members of the three dominant constituent peoples: Bosniaks (called Muslims at the time, about 44%), Serbs (about 31%) and Croats (about 17%). In addition to the dominant peoples, there existed about 6% of Yugoslavs and about 2% who were considered others. Since a census has not been taken since 1991, the current population size can only be estimated. According to the data from the B&H Statistics Agency, B&H has a population of about 3.8 million. It is composed of three territorially and politically distinct units: two entities (the Federation of B&H (FB&H) and the Republika Srpska (RS)) and the Brčko District. The Federation of B&H comprises ten regions (cantons); the Republika Srpska is divided into municipalities, whereas the Brčko District consists solely of the city of Brčko. The ruling bodies are established at the cantonal, entity and state level, and each of these regions further has its own administrative structures, which contributes to a system of authority that is rather complex, expensive and slow.

Unique to B&H is the institution of the Office of the High Representative, with the highest legislative and executive authority in the state, whereby B&H is a type of protectorate (Bieber, 2008). Administrative divisions also reflect ethnic divisions; thus, the majority of the RS population are Serbs (about 81%), while the majority of FB&H are Bosniaks (73%) and Croats (17%).² In terms of its economic development (UNDP Human Development Index) in 2011 B&H ranked 70th in the world, and was among the ten least developed countries in Europe. It is estimated that there are about 500,000 unemployed in B&H, and that the average wage is about 780 KM (398 €). The educational system is also based on ethnic principles. Ministries of Education are established in all cantons and entities. The curricula in the primary and secondary schools are designed around the same core subjects and ethnic-specific groups of subjects (language, history and geography), defined as the subjects of constituent peoples. Due to the specific character of the educational system, specific phenomena occur, such as 'divided schools', where children of different ethnicities attend the same schools but are separated from each other in order to take ethnic-specific classes. Such an organization of the entire political and social system, based around the principles of 'constituent peoples', creates a special framework, not only in terms of political structures, but also in terms of interpersonal relations, which are inevitably affected by ethnic borders.

Interethnic relations (primarily conflicts) are not restricted to this area only – the late 20th century witnessed a shocking increase in ethnic-based conflicts: Hutu and Tutsi conflict in Rwanda, Chechen and Russian conflict in the Russian Federation, Kurd and Turk conflict in Turkey, Kurd and Iraqi conflict in Iraq, Arab and Jew conflict in the Middle East, Tibetan and Chinese conflict in China, European conflicts in Northern Ireland, Basque separatism in Spain and 'peaceful tensions' between the Flemish and the Walloons in Belgium. If we agree that nations and ethnicities are not fixed categories of analysis but, rather, categories of practice structuring our perception, informing our thoughts and experiences and organizing discourses and political actions (Brubaker, 2009: 7), then why is it important to study ethnic identity in B&H today and how should we go about it? This question is actually rhetorical, since the division of political power in B&H today is based exclusively on ethnicity, which, as performative as it may be, continues to mobilize ethno-politics. Due to the fact that it has been inscribed in laws and the constitution, we now have representatives of the 'constituent peoples', that is, Serbs, Croats and Bosniaks, acting as presidents and vice-presidents of the state and entity political bodies. If you do not identify with any of these three categories, then you are Other, and as Other you have no political rights. The judgment of the European Court of Human Rights in the case of *Dervo Sejdić (a Roma)* and *Jakob Finci (Jewish)* versus Bosnia and Herzegovina, which established that there is systemic constitutional discrimination against all persons not belonging to the constituent

peoples on account of their inability to stand as candidates for positions in the Presidency of B&H and the B&H House of Peoples, undoubtedly poses a veritable challenge to the theory and practice of constitutional engineering in divided societies (Hodžić and Stojanović, 2011). Again, here, we are not asking whether there is more or less nationalism in post-war B&H today (in fact, it would be absurd to measure such a force, given its heterogeneous and polymorphous nature (Brubaker, 2009: 10)), but with what structure and in what style ethnicity in B&H has come to be such a major organizing principle for discourses, actions, and attitudes in the country? Our main question is: how, exactly, is the state of political and ethnic intertwinement reflected in the behavior, thinking and affective experience of the youth in B&H? On the one hand, our study should lead to a better understanding of the society we live in, while, on the other hand, we contribute to the social sciences by providing a description of the specific context found in B&H, challenging a Western bias when it comes to researching postwar B&H as the object. That is precisely why we wanted to change embarking on this research as two scientists from the region. Knowing it is a challenge worth taking, we hope to pave the way for further investigations of these complex phenomena and learn important lessons for a hopefully better future.

Terminology confusion: ‘Ethnicity, people, nation’ in theory

In the abundance of literature on nations, nationalism and national, that is, ethnic identity, terminological confusions often occur. We have, therefore, in order to avoid any semantic detours, decided to provide theoretical explanations of what these terms signify in contemporary theory. Historically, the nation has meant a citizenship relation, presuming the nation to be a collective sovereignty emanating from common political participation, and a relation of ethnicity, presuming a common language, history and cultural identity (Verdery, 1993: 180), the latter relation being more common in Central and Eastern Europe and usually associated with nationalism (ibid.). Verdery contends that how a polity defines the relationship between its ‘ethnic nation’ and ‘citizenship’ deeply affects its form of democracy (ibid.: 181), but we would like to add that negotiation between the two, in a situation when they are diametrically opposite, and in fact threaten to annihilate one another, is crucial for the future of B&H.

The term ‘ethnicity’ comes from the Greek word *ethnos*, meaning people. The original use was to demarcate pagan peoples of non-Hellenic origin. Later uses of the term had similar connotations: to denote non-Jews (Gentiles) by Jews, or pagans and barbarians by the British. As Malešević (2004) accurately observes, we can still find some of these derogatory meanings in modern use, even in academic contexts. In current Western academia, ethnicity (or ethnic group) is almost universally a term for ethnic or racial

minorities in the majority society of the nation-state. So today you can find *Ethnic and Minority Studies*, in which people of Africa, Asia and Latin America are widely 'studied'. Then there are journals such as *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology* or *Journal of Multicultural, Gender and Minority Studies*, which publish articles on the issues of ethnicities/minorities. Very rarely do we find a German, French or English ethnicity. Recent studies of ethnicity in ex-Yugoslavia all imply the bloody ethnic conflicts. Basically, we can observe at least three general uses of the term ethnicity in Western literature: to denote long-existing minorities in the territory of a nation-state, to denote newly arrived immigrant populations, and as a general term for groups/peoples whose behavior is interpreted as irrational, regressive or violent.

Even though the terms 'ethnicity' and 'ethnic group' were occasionally used before the wars of 1992–1995 in our³ literature on sociology, psychology and science in general, the main use came during and after the 1990s. Before that, in Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY), the usual term was 'nations' and 'nationalities' for ethnic groups, nations referring to larger and nationalities referring to smaller groups. The terms nation and nationality also denoted ethnicity; rarely were they signifiers of a national identity. Rot and Havelka (1973), for instance, distinguish between two types of identifications: national and Yugoslavian attachment (which could be interpreted as ethnic and state). On the other hand, one of the first authors to use the term 'ethnic' as a synonym for 'national' was Đurić (1980) in his monograph *Psychological structure of ethnic attitudes in the youth*. Even the term 'nationalism', notorious in SFRY since it signified a stamp on a prison admittance form, actually stood for dissemination of ethnically based hatred, that is, the subversion of the foundations of the federal state. The term 'ethnocentrism' was first used in Western literature rather early (Sumner, 1906), referring to extreme affiliation to one's group and a tendency to undermine other ethnic groups. The term entered our literature much later. In a way, it was almost logical to use national instead of ethnic in the context of Yugoslavia: it was a federal republic consisting of republics with somewhat nation-state-like statuses.

Most of social science articles from our region do not make a clear distinction between ethnicity and nation (e.g. Kuzmanović, 1994; Čorkalo, 1998; Milošević-Đorđević, 2003; Turjačanin, 2005), but there is a general consensus on using the distinction between ethnic/ethnic group and nation in relation to the development of a political state, that is, a more or less finished *nation-state* in the modernization period. Although the use of the term 'ethnic' as a signifier of specific ethnic groups, and 'national' as a signifier of a state affiliation, is preferred, we have, at times, an obviously different understanding of the term ethnicity, in particular when it refers to ethnic minorities, and the overlapping of racial and ethnic identities, especially in literature originating from the USA (Phinney, 1996).

It should be noted that one frequently finds discrepancies in terminology in Western literature as well. The term ethnicity, which could be translated as *etničnost*, refers to a set of traits that a group/community/collective possesses; a nominal signifier of a group itself is the term *ethnie*, a word of French origin, often used by English-speaking authors (Smith, 1998: 40). Such confusion in terminology stems from the ambiguousness of the very term *ethnie*, that is, nation or people, and an array of theoretical definitions of the term, as we shall see later in this and other chapters in the book. We will, therefore, in the spirit of the local context, still use the terms ethnicity/nation/people as synonyms, but we will give preference to the term 'ethnicity', due to the specific situation in B&H. In contrast, in cases when we want to refer to identification with wider communities such as state or higher-level communities (e.g. Europe), we will stress it appropriately.

Defining ethnicity

Modernists and post-modernists define identity, whether ethnic or gender, as a social construct produced through a discourse based on the subjective imagining of the nation as a community, with the mother tongue serving as the core of the ethnic identity (Anderson, 1983), although many members of the nation will never meet other members of the community; it is also perceived as performative and is exhibited through stylized repetition of acts (Butler, 1990) of that identity. Fishman (1980: 63–68) argues that ethnicity entails 'being, doing and knowing'. The 'being' of an ethnicity is an inner feeling which goes beyond death and promises eternal life, since 'origin and mutual roots can be proven' and metaphors of 'blood, bones and flesh' clearly demonstrate this. The principle of 'doing' means that, if we identify ourselves as Bosniaks, Serbs or Croats, it entails certain practices such as poems, jokes (which are not told before the members of 'Other' ethnicities), cheering, rituals, especially religious rituals and many other rites and ceremonies where Serbhood, Croathood or Bosniakhood are performed; otherwise, the tradition is imagined in other ways, and national myths are 'modified, institutionalized and ritualized' for other purposes (Hobsbawm and Rangers, 1983). According to Fishman (*ibid.*: 66), in addition to being and doing, classic Hebrew and Greek theories define ethnicity as a form of 'knowing', and go further to claim that philosophy, and even cosmology, originate from ethnicity. This knowledge includes history, myths and legends which transfer intergenerational knowledge, which provides a world view and the language of an ethnic group, which the group then uses to transfer collective memory and history. The word 'identity', however, tends to ascribe essential importance to the group, instead of analyzing it. Therefore, a number of contemporary scholars suggest using the term 'identifications', which refers to 'doing', not the 'state', or 'being'.