SHAPING SOCIAL IDENTITIES AFTER VIOLENT CONFLICT

YOUTH IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

Edited by Felicia Pratto, Iris Žeželj, Edona Maloku, Vladimir Turjačanin, Marija Branković

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ISBN 978-3-319-62020-6 ISBN 978-3-319-62021-3 (eBook)
DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-62021-3

Library of Congress Control Number: 2017953929

Cover illustration: klikk/Alamy

Printed on acid-free paper

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by Springer Nature
The registered company is Springer International Publishing AG
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

Foreword

A number of Enlightenment philosophers and classic social scientists thought that as a result of social and economic progress, ethnicity would over time lose its allure, disappear, and become a phenomenon of the past. If these classic writers were right, the present book that focuses on social identities of young people in ex-Yugoslavia in the early twenty-first century would have studied other identities, and ethnicity would have been of no concern to young people. This book, however, shows that most, if not all, young people today in ex-Yugoslavia have to grapple with issues surrounding ethnic identity, ethnocentrism, and ethnic prejudice across many situations and, for many of them, ethnicity is possibly the most prominent category when it comes to central life decisions, such as whom to marry and whom not to marry, whom to befriend and whom not to befriend, and where to live and where not to live.

Ethnicity has not disappeared in the regions that constituted Yugoslavia, but in the 1980s, it strengthened and made a tremendous comeback, and in the 1990s it was responsible for the worst intergroup violence in Europe in the last 70 years. Previously, and for several decades, Yugoslavia was a country where many ethnic groups happily co-existed. In certain ways, Yugoslavia was a rarity in Europe, where most national states have been dominated by a single ethnic majority group. A visitor to Yugoslavia in the 1960s and 1970s encountered a tolerant and successful multi-ethnic country. A visitor to Yugoslavia in the 1990s, however, encountered

a very different country—a country torn by ethnic conflicts and wars, a country that most ethnic groups wanted to leave in order to create separate and ethnically homogeneous national states.

Contemporary social psychological consequences of the wars in the 1990s and other inter-ethnic conflicts for young people are detailed in this book written by Iris Žeželj, Felicia Pratto, and their colleagues. This book presents results of an ambitious research project that studied a very large sample of young people from both ethnic majority and ethnic minority groups in eight cities and towns within four regions of ex-Yugoslavia. The researchers used a sophisticated research design that included various methodologies, such as self-reports, focus groups, interviews, videotaping, and document analyses. They obtained very rich data, both quantitative and qualitative, to thoroughly document what it means to be a young person in a part of the world that consists of mutually hostile and suspicious ethnic groups, with a recent history of inter-ethnic conflict. This research depicts how young people deal with a world where there are low levels of contact and trust between ethnic groups, and where people exhibit strong preferences for, and idealization of, ethnic ingroups, as well as outgroup hostility and even at times dehumanization of ethnic outgroups. As a result of living in such a world, ethnic identity for many young people may translate into rejection of those who are different.

This book also shows that ethnicity in ex-Yugoslavia cannot be understood without reference to two other large-scale social identities, namely those related to religion and national state. Although Yugoslavia was a secular state propagating Marxism and atheism, in the 1980s and 1990s, religiosity emerged as powerful force in the ethnic groups. Since classic writings on ethnocentrism by Gumplowicz, Sumner, and Adorno and his colleagues, we know that ethnocentrism, ethnic prejudice, and religiosity reinforce each other, and that ethnicity has historically been often closely aligned with religion. Although it is difficult to disentangle which comes first, one may assume that ethnicity is more basic and ethnic groups use religion to justify their own importance. As shown in the book, for Serbs, ethnicity and religiosity are almost the same, and ethnic and religious identification overlap to such an extent that they are indistinguishable: being a Serb means being a Serbian Orthodox, and being a Serbian Orthodox means being a Serb.

Another central large-scale social identity for young people in ex-Yugoslavia is related to national states. A long time ago, Gestalt psychologists introduced the concepts of psychological and sociological groups. Psychological groups are those in which the members feel a sense of togetherness, a sense of "we," whereas sociological groups are those into which people feel to be externally categorized. These concepts later became central to the social identity tradition, where psychological groups are fundamental to our understanding of the self, group processes, and intergroup relations. Research in this book shows that ethnic minorities do not perceive their own national states as psychological groups, whereas ethnic majorities tend to perceive an almost complete overlap between national and ethnic groups, and for them both are psychological groups. Further, for most ethnic minorities, there is a clear preference for the national state where their ethnic group is dominant, but not much attachment to or liking for their own national state. Not perceiving their national state as a psychological group may fuel an individual decision to leave the country, but it can also lead to intergroup conflicts and irredentism. National states, therefore, mean something positive to people in the region only to the extent that they overlap with ethnicity, but on their own, they have little positive connotations.

Accordingly, this book shows that ethnic identity is a central large-scale identity in ex-Yugoslavia, and the two other large-scale identities, related to religion and national state, appear subservient to ethnic identity. A broader question that can be asked is why ethnicity has become such a dominant force in a region where the ethnic groups for decades happily co-existed. One answer is related to the influence of the political elites in ex-Yugoslavia, who, starting in the 1980s, emphasized ethnic politics. This is, however, only partly an answer. Another answer is related to the question about why ethnicity is such a potent mobilizer and why politicians throughout the world regularly exploit its power. Is it because of the psychological appeal of ethnicity (e.g., its essentialism, its entitativity, its ability to make us feel good about ourselves, or its ability to help us defend against intrapsychic fears, such as the fear of mortality)? Or is it because social norms surrounding ethnicity are often very difficult to transform and transcend? Or is it principally because of evolutionary causes where ethnic groups are extensions of kinship groups, as advocated

by evolutionary theorists? We still do not know the answer, and different theorists offer different answers, but the power of ethnicity has been surprisingly persistent across cultures and time periods.

One thing that is, therefore, clear is that ethnicity is here to stay, and its power needs to be investigated and understood. This book makes an excellent contribution to a further social psychological understanding of the appeal of ethnicity and its consequences. The explicit power of ethnicity, although always dormant, is becoming visible again in Western democracies, as evidenced in the rise of Donald Trump, whose election was largely due to the support of many US Anglo-whites and their ethnocentric attitudes; as evidenced in Brexit in the United Kingdom, which was influenced by ethnocentrism and anti-immigration attitudes of the White English; or as evidenced in the rise of authoritarian populist politicians in other Western democracies, which also draw their support from ethnocentrism of the ethnic majority groups. The work in this book is a well-timed addition given that ethnicity is resurfacing and is important for understanding the contemporary world. The book is also very useful in that it includes suggestions, based on research, for reducing the negative consequences of ethnicity and transcending the narrowness of ethnocentrism.

Finally, it is important to point out that most contemporary mainstream work in the area of intergroup relations, prejudice, and ethnocentrism is primarily from the United States, and to a lesser extent from other English-speaking countries and several Western European countries. The United States has a very specific history of intergroup relations, which is dominated by the relationship between Anglo-whites and blacks. Like the United States, the other countries are wealthy and politically strong democracies, to which many people around the world want to migrate. These countries are, in certain ways, historical exceptions and not representative of human groups everywhere. We, therefore, need more work in the area of intergroup relations, prejudice, and ethnocentrism from other countries and ethnic groups that have different histories and are characterized by a different nature of intergroup relations. To fully understand intergroup relations, prejudice, and ethnocentrism, we need to study them in all human groups. It is, therefore, of utmost importance that theories are studied and research replicated in all human

groups. The research reported in this book is a step in the right direction as it sheds light on fundamental social psychological phenomena and processes in a region that mainstream social psychology has not sufficiently studied.

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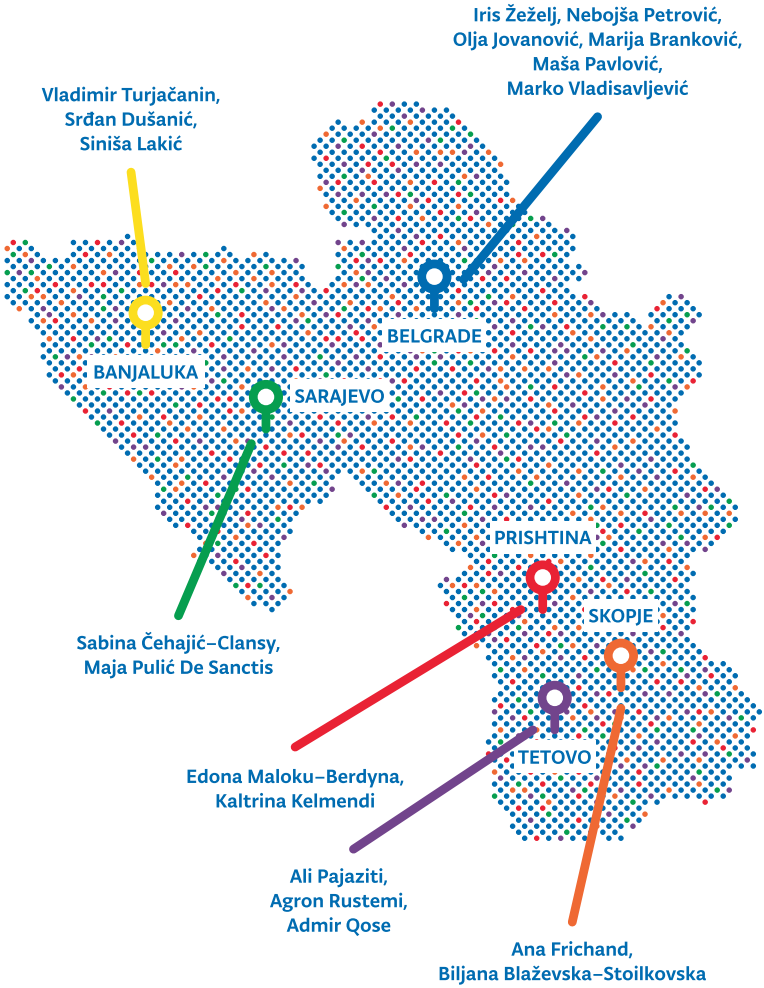
Preface

This book emerged out of a regional research project "From inclusive identities to inclusive societies: Social identity complexity in Western Balkans (SIBY)" that brought together scholars of different disciplines to study social identifications of young people in their countries.

The team consisted of scholars from four Balkan countries: Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo* and Macedonia (Picture 1), and it was very diverse: ethnically, linguistically, and gender-wise. The researchers aimed to explore the way young people perceive themselves and the social world around them, especially the way they construe their identities based on their group memberships, and how that translates to their acceptance of the adversarial outgroups from the region.

For a reader unfamiliar with the region, the book will portray complex intergroup relations in the aftermath of violent conflicts. Only in the twentieth century, the Balkans was in the heart of two world wars. After several peaceful decades, the so-called Yugoslav wars—a bloody dissolution of a multicultural state of Yugoslavia—followed.

All ethnic groups in the region suffered at one point in recent history; the number of military and civilian casualties (proportional to population sizes) in the two world wars was highest in Europe (Jelavich, 1983a, 1983b; Pavlovich, 2014). In comparison to, for example, colonial relationships in which there was a clear power asymmetry between the groups, in the Balkans it is the case that the same groups were perpetrators



Picture 1 The research team

and victims in different circumstances. This fact makes it easier for outgroup violence to be justified as defensive and triggers the competition for historical victimhood ("competitive victimhood" is a term coined by Noor, Shnabel, Halabi, & Nadler, 2012).

The difficult history affects even the generations born after the conflicts, as it is re-lived in the official ingroup narratives through education

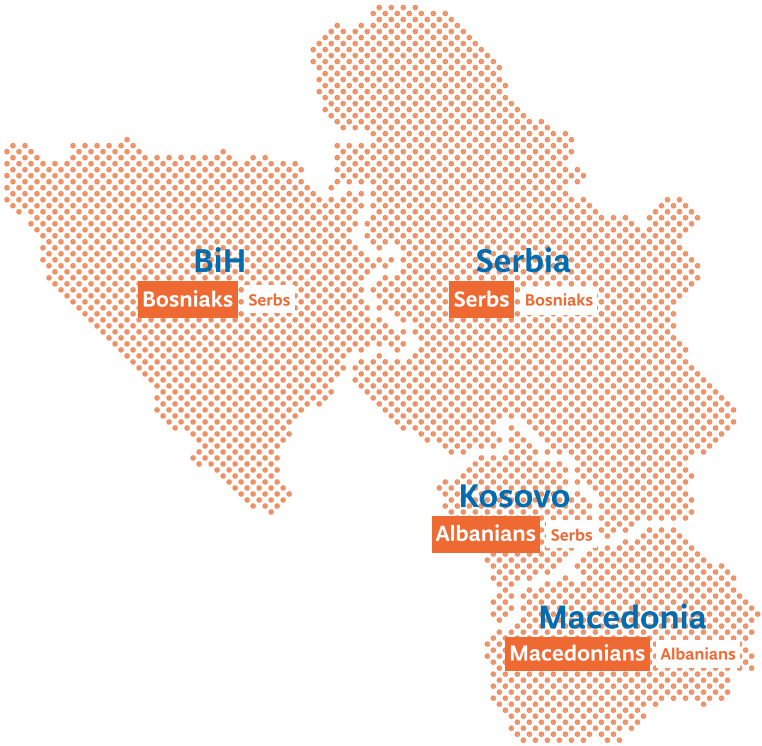
and media. Young people living in Western Balkans are at present mostly living in ethnically segregated societies (with the exception of Macedonia), without the opportunities for intergroup contact and without the glimpse of the other group's perspective. Although the region is labeled as "post-conflict"—indeed, more than 15 years has passed since the last military clashes, and all the countries are somewhere en route to European Union membership—the intergroup tensions are still easily fueled by current political events.

The psychological outcome of this context is a rigid worldview: essentialization (i.e., perception of social groups as natural and unchangeable) of ethnic and religious identities (Majstorović & Turjačanin, 2013; Milošević-Đorđević, 2007), their high perceived overlap (Branković et al., 2016), mutual stereotyping (Maloku, Derks, Van Laar, & Ellemers, 2016; Turjačanin, 2004), and reluctance towards reconciliation (Bar-Tal & Čehajić-Clansy, 2013; Petrović, 2005).

The SIBY project addressed the construction of social identities in young people—how strongly they identify with certain groups (family, peers, city they live in, ethnicity, religion, country, Balkans, and Europe), but also, the content of those identifications, how they are integrated and which processes are shaping them. To do so, a multi-method approach—a combination of quantitative and qualitative—was warranted (see Umana Taylor, 2015, for a discussion about the need for mixed methods in studying ethnic identity). The standard rating scales on a large quota sample were complemented with focus groups and case studies conducted in all countries.

When designing the research, the researchers wanted to give voice to the ethnic minorities within each country (Picture 2). In each country, they choose an "adversarial" minority, that is, the ethnic outgroup with whom the majority group had a history of violent conflicts or tensions. That gave a unique perspective beyond the ethnic one, as the same groups (e.g., Serbs or Albanians), had a majority status in one of the countries and minority status in others.

Furthermore, although ethnic minorities in the newly formed Western Balkan countries are granted special rights or even recognized in special constitutional acts, their relationship with the country they live in remains burdened by the tensions of the past. The research aimed to explore if



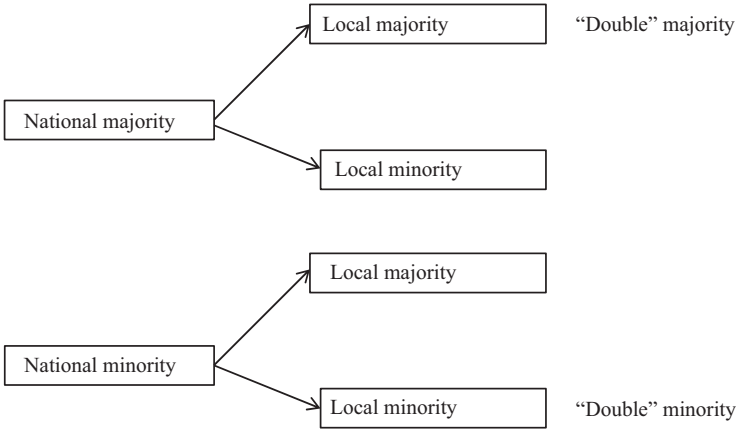
Picture 2 Ethnic majority and minority groups in each country

there are different patterns of identification with the country (national identification) for the majority and minority groups. While the majorities, as constitutional ethnicities, typically strongly identify with their country, since they often extend their ethnic to national identity, the minorities could identify more strongly with their ethnicity and/or religion. For the minorities, national identification is often ambivalent, as they might have divided loyalties: they can be attached to both the country they live in, but also, and sometimes even more, to the country of their ethnic origin.

If minority perspective is addressed in research on intergroup relations, it is typically the perspective of state-level (national) minorities. So far, when ethnic minorities were discussed, it was the case of national

minorities. However, people's worldview might differ even more depending on the local status of their ethnic group. To test this, the research design included both national and local minorities by surveying two cities in each country of different demographic composition: one typical, in a sense that state-level majority is also a local majority, the other atypical, as the state-level minority is a local majority (Graph 1). This time, too, this enabled the researchers to go beyond ethnicity, as the same ethnic group was a majority in one region/city but a minority in the other.

The book starts with an Introduction that provides the overview of the concepts and main theoretical viewpoints on religious, ethnic, and national identities, their formation, and interrelation. It proceeds with a comprehensive integration of the research on this topic in the Balkan region (setting the stage, research on national, ethnic, and religious identities after the recent violent conflicts in the Western Balkans), especially in the countries surveyed in the SIBY project. The showcased research is organized by countries, so the following four chapters address the identification patterns in each country separately, highlighting the universalities, but also bringing the unique perspective for each. In the concluding chapter, the results are integrated, and policy recommendations are drawn from them. The authors were careful to acknowledge potential obstacles



Graph 1 Types of majority/minority groups included in the survey

and stay sensitive to the context, but did not shy away from thinking about the potential application of the results, even in relatively unstable and politically turbulent circumstances.

Let me finish by sharing my personal experience from working on this project and the book. Doing research and writing within such a mixed team was an opportunity for professional and personal growth: perspectives of the other authors made me discover a manifold of my own hidden biases, taught me to choose the wordings not to reflect anyone's standpoint, and to interpret the results more neutrally. Although it was difficult at times, I believe the end result profited immensely because of this diversity, and that the book in front of you is one of the rare attempts from scientists studying intergroup relations to actually study them in cooperation with "the others."

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Acknowledgments

We would like to thank Ajša Ćorić, Maida Kolić, Bojan Lalić, Aleksandra Lazić, Florent Osmani, Nedim Prelić, Sara Ristić, and Irena Teofilović for their help with data collection. We would also like to thank Nebojša Petrović for initiating the project and contributing to the development of research design. The team is greateful to Jelena Gledić for editing the text.

This material is based upon work supported by the Regional Research Promotion Programme in the Western Balkans (RRPP). The authors thank RRPP for their generous support.

DISCLAIMER: The RRPP promotes social science research in the Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia). Social science research aids in the understanding of the specific reform needs of countries in the region and in identifying the long-term implications of policy choices. Researchers receive support through research grants, methodological and thematic trainings as well as opportunities for regional and international networking and mentoring. The RRPP is coordinated and operated by the Interfaculty Institute for Central and Eastern Europe (IICEE) at the University of Fribourg (Switzerland). The programme is fully funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Federal Department of Foreign Affairs. The views expressed in this study/project/publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent opinions of the SDC and the University of Fribourg.

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Introduction

Felicia Pratto

Introduction

The question "Who am I?" presses on human beings. Even people with severe amnesia appear to want answer this question—to understand who they are (Sacks, 1979). Social scientists from all disciplines recognize that people almost always answer this question with reference to other people (Cooley, 1992; Mead, 1934) and to groups of people (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). A person might answer this question, "I am a mother. I am a Muslim. I am Croatian." People's social identities—how they think of themselves in relation to others—are central aspects of people's self-concepts and are also central to how moral people view themselves as being, to their close relationships, to the obligations and responsibilities they perceive themselves to have, and to their sense of connections to some or all other people.

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F. Pratto et al. (eds.), *Shaping Social Identities After Violent Conflict*,
DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-62021-3_1

A Brief History of Identities

Although all people and societies rely on social identities, identities have become more complex with modernity. In small and physically separate societies, people can have a personal relationship with each member of the tribe or community, and play specific roles within it (e.g., cook, daughter). In this case, nearly all identities are local (and communal). For example, aspects of one person's identity could include her ability to farm or other skills, her connections to relatives, and her pride in upholding her culture's morals. If small communities rarely have contact with one another, people would have little need of conceiving themselves as different from other groups, except on rare occasions of contact.

As the human population and societies have grown, people's local identities remain relevant, but the concept of "local" begins to expand. For example, in European medieval city-states, people might identify as Florentines or Venetians but know only some of the people in their city. Because city-state identities had very much to do with people's beliefs about whom they thought was appropriate to rule, urban identities became political identities (e.g., Strathern, 2015). When the Pope and various monarchs in Europe sought to govern Florence and Venice, political opposition made a city identity not only concern who one was, but also who one was *not* (e.g., King, 2003). Political contests over rulership and power have often led identification with one's own group (the "ingroup") to extend to *non*-identification with outsiders ("outgroups").

One of the most important aspects of modern identity history is the invention of nationalism, which on each continent often had to do with consolidating smaller political entities into larger and imperial ones, or it had to do with resistance to empires by people sharing approximately the same language (Breuilly, 1994). Napoleon, for example, was able to recruit the psychological bonds of the identities that people had with their families and localities in the service of the new identity: being "French." In doing so, he could convert people's sense of loyalty to family and community, their willingness to give and sacrifice for the same, to loyalty and generosity and self-sacrifice for the nation. In doing so, Napoleon created a "fictive" collective identity, that is, identification with

people who mutually imagine themselves to be part of a group, although they may never know or even indirectly interact with one another. True to its imperial origins, nationalism or *chauvinism*, the sense that one's nation is and ought to be superior, is different than affectionate attachment or pride in one's nation, which is called "patriotism" (Kosterman & Feshbach, 1989). In our time, national identification and nationalism spur people to endorse the morality of violent actions that people might otherwise view as wrong, such as terrorism (Tausch et al., 2011) and killing civilians in war (Pratto & Glasford, 2008).

Identities can be formed in reaction to the formation of other identities. For example, people whom Napoleon attempted to dominate using French nationalism formed other collective identities based not only on having somewhat common languages, but also on having common enemies: German and Italian national identities (Breuilly, 1994).

Even broader concepts of identity have been set forth throughout much of human history. King Cyrus of Persia set human rights in Babylon in 539 BC, and his principles influenced other ancient civilizations and parallel part of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Ancient and medieval peoples established like principles, but issues about subordination (including patriarchy and slavery) in modern times were the focus of new political and philosophic thought just prior to American independence. Thomas Paine, the US Constitution, and the Napoleonic Code are among those articulating rights due to human beings or citizens. Holding a recognized national identity (rather than belonging to a royal or leading family or the upper class) became a means of making modern citizens equivalent in their protections from powerful others and equivalent in the protections and services their governments are obliged to provide. Naturally, tensions between rights of citizens and rights of humans and rights of nations remain. Regardless, from medieval times through the modern era, the possibility of social identities becoming more inclusive has grown both due to human contact and to new ideologies.

In parallel with the historical development of identities are the psychological possibilities for identities. Just as the collective that one could identify with has expanded beyond family and neighbors to ethnic or religious group, nation, and humanity, so too may any individual's level of psychological inclusiveness of various identities vary from those of

other people. People who include many categories of people within their concept of ingroup make the psychological boundary for their "ingroup" broad and weak. Such people are said to have high *social identity inclusiveness*.

Identities at Present

Rather than having broader identities, such as national identity, replace narrower ones, such as neighborhood identities, at present people can identify simultaneously with family, locality, nation, the world, or other levels of group inclusiveness (McFarland, Webb, & Brown, 2012). This is one reason that identification has become much more complex. In addition, because of the history of migration, of religious conversion, of imperial conquest, there are many identities that transcend region and national boundaries. For example, "Arabs" are represented on two continents and across what other people call "races" and are not ensconced in nationhood. Christianity and Islam have both spread to all continents from the same small territory. And people in parallel roles in completely separate societies (e.g., merchant, political leader) can view themselves as sharing a common identity. Anyone now has numerous group and role identities, and identities become more or less salient in different contexts. People who think of themselves as having a common identity with several other groups of people are said to have a more *complex social identity* (Roccas & Brewer, 2002).

Identities and Social Cohesion or Intergroup Conflict

Identities are important for societal cohesion for several reasons. People who think of themselves as having a common identity will be more generous to other members of their "ingroup," (e.g., Tajfel, Billig, Bundy, & Flament, 1971), feel emotions on behalf of their ingroup (Mackie & Smith, 1998), including threat to the group (Stephan &

Stephan, 2000). It is also the case that people who identify with "all humanity" are likely to work in international aid agencies (McFarland et al., 2012). In other words, having social identity inclusiveness will promote good will between groups. Indeed, groups who have solidarity with outgroups support autonomy for the outgroups (Stewart et al., 2016). A different likely way of measuring people's tendencies towards group prejudice is to measure the breadth or narrowness of their social identity inclusiveness.

Alternatively, narrow ingroup identification is correlated with prejudice against outgroups. Indeed, one cannot have prejudice against a group without presuming there is a group boundary. The association of ingroup identification and prejudice against outgroups serves more powerful groups more; it activates psychological motivations that promote maintaining ingroup power (Pratto, Sidanius, & Levin, 2006). Around the world, members of higher-powered groups tend to be more prejudiced against other groups than members of lower-powered groups are (Lee, Pratto, & Johnson, 2011). In fact, people with the tendency to be prejudiced against lower-power groups in general, a personality trait called *social dominance orientation*, identify more with their ingroups if those groups are higher-power groups (Sidanius, Feshbach, Levin, & Pratto, 1997).

Social identity complexity, or how much people view their own identities as overlapping with multiple other groups, is also important to understanding prejudice between groups, and therefore to understanding social cohesion (e.g., Prati, Crisp, Pratto, & Rubini, 2016). A recent study by Prati, Moscatelli, Rubini, and Pratto (2015) measured social identity complexity in a sample of 123 Italians with respect to three identity groups: nation, political affiliation (left-right), and profession. Those who had more complex representations of their identities using these three identity groups were less likely to view Arabs as less than human, and more likely to support Arab autonomy as in the recent Arab uprisings. Note that none of the group identities employed to measure each person's level of identity complexity (profession, nationality, political affiliation) had anything at all to do with Arabs. This suggests again that there may be a general orientation towards intergroup relations that can pertain to new collective identities.

Group and Identity Threats at Present

An ocean of research in intergroup relations finds that people are especially prejudiced and discriminatory when they sense a threat to their group, and/or sense uncertainty for themselves (e.g., Hogg, 2007). There are a number of aspects of the present-day that produce uncertainty: the rapid pace of technological change, more extreme climate events, and increases in economic inequality. Despite technological advancement, people's sense of control can be reduced because global news means we all have more knowledge of events we cannot control. Globalization, the rise of China, and the recurrent Cold War also reduce the level of control nations have over themselves. Instead, international agencies such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), International Monetary Fund (IMF), nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and the World Bank have authority over "sovereign" nations. In addition to uncertainty and lack of autonomy producing threat, greater knowledge of other people's ways of life, cultures, and meaning systems can produce identity threats because they demonstrate that there are alternative ways to think and live than the ways in which one does. In other words, openness and comparing one's own life to people who are better off might produce a psychological threat to people's social identities (Bou Zeineddine & Pratto, 2015). For people who feel their culture is disrespected and marginalized, these identity threats prompt reactive identities that are more insular and bigoted (Moghaddam, 2009). Contemporary examples of such fundamentalist identities that are highly intolerant of outgroups include the Taliban, Boko Haram, neo-Nazis, many West Bank settlers, and white supremacists. They are presumably drawing strict moral group boundaries and clinging to simplistic ideologies as a way to bring certainty and meaning back to their lives in the face of change (e.g., Fromm, 1965).

Despite fundamentalists' assertion that there is a pure and uncontaminated people (their own), there is no such thing as a fixed "culture" or "social identity." Peoples always learn from other peoples and incorporate and change what they learn from them. People the world over eat off "china," enjoy Arabic tile patterns, use cell phones, and eat pizza. Thus,

we must remember that it is *psychological* rather than logical when people advocate for the separateness of groups and their purity.

Choosing to adopt other's practices is not, of course, the same as having them thrust upon you. Given that the world is still living with the effects of colonization and decolonization, we must consider what those unfolding histories imply for social cohesion within nations, especially the newer ones. Empires not only exploited and disrupted other societies, they scrambled them, attempting to subsume people with no real ties (e.g., Bosniaks and Syrians), and creating political units that would have little social cohesion. The "unofficial" empires of the United States and the USSR produced similar consequences in their "spheres of influence." Further, when the Western powers began to move towards "de"-colonizing (e.g., the Balfour accords) they still created a number of nations that are not socially cohesive and have no recent history of not being dominated by other empires and nations (e.g., Poland, Western Balkans, Nigeria). The lack of social cohesion has contributed to ineffective government, and to civil wars in Angola, Lebanon, Korea, Yemen, Chechnya, Guatemala, China, Mexico, Russia, and scores of other nations.

Another important factor in social cohesion is how people respond to uncertainty. Uncertainty, as occurs with economic downturns, changes in the balance of super-powers, or the ejection of dictatorial leaders, can provoke people to feel collectively threatened and to rely on narrower identities. Further, we have seen several reasons why states without a long history of sovereignty would have low cohesion, high uncertainty, material insecurity, and identity threat. In fact, the past 40 or so years have seen the dissolution of several political unions including the USSR, Yugoslavia, Timor, Czechoslovakia, and the Sudan into ethno-linguistic and/or ethno-religious groups. A kind of redrawing of national boundaries to reflect ethnic boundaries, as is the desire of many Kurds in Iraq, Turkey, and Syria, may seem to be a good solution to lack of coherence. However, we have also seen that no societal group is "pure," and very few regions have only people whose ancestors hail from that region. So, forming titular states does not necessarily solve the identity and coherence problems that larger conglomerates had. It remains to be seen whether such nations will prove more stable than their conglomerate predecessors.

Identity in Post-Conflict Devolved Nations

A different potential source of incohesiveness in post-conflict and devolved states is that between generations. The nation that parents were raised in may not be the one their children will be raised in because of war-induced migration, but also because of formation of different states with different governments.

Although we can usually imagine that collective identities are taught by parents and ruling organizations, in the former Yugoslav states, none of the national identities that contemporary parents and grandparents grew up with are the same as for their offspring. Further, youth have not experienced the civil and border wars that their parents did. Potentially, this lack of intergenerational transfer may mean that where there were longstanding ethno-religious rivalries, these were not transmitted to youth because they were less relevant. Therefore, youth are an especially important group in whom to examine the nature of social identities.

Agenda of the Present Research

The present study investigated aspects of social identity among youth in four nations: Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, and Serbia. Part of the research allowed participants to speak in their own terms and offer their own insights and ways of conceiving of identities. Another part of the research asked the same questions of all participants, questions that have been used in other nations as well, so that the results can be compared systematically between nations. All participants used their mother tongue and all research teams were headed by academics from the country they studied.

Participants belonging to both majority and minority ethnic groups were included in the study. This is important because the meaning of national identities and perceptions of intergroup relations differ between more and less powerful groups. More powerful groups, who are often but not always majority groups, favor intergroup inequality and are more blind to inequality than people in less powerful and minority groups (Lee et al., 2011). In addition to including national majorities and minorities,

we collected data from two cities in each country, one of which had the national minority as its majority. Numerical minorities almost always have more contact with numerical majorities, and our design lets us compare whether being a local majority or a local minority modifies the contact, identities, and attitudes of national minorities and majorities, respectively. Understanding how much both minorities and majorities concur in the importance of their common identities, how well treated they feel they are in their own country, how much they include others in their identities or have simpler understandings of collective identities can tell us much about the level of social cohesion their nations may have.

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2

Setting the Stage: Research on National, Ethnic, and Religious Identities after the Recent Violent Conflicts in the Western Balkans

Marija Branković, Vladimir Turjačanin, and Edona Maloku

People belong to many different groups. The way they define themselves and categorize others on the basis of shared group memberships is known in social psychology as "social identity" (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1986). Social identities can be conceived of as a link between the individual and the society (Abrams & Hogg, 2006). Social identities are important for how one perceives oneself as much as they are significant in the shaping of the perceptions and understandings of the social world and social behaviors (Abrams & Hogg, 2010; Brewer, 1991; Hogg, Abrams, Otten, & Hinkle, 2004; Turner, Oakes, Haslam, & McGarty, 1994). It is this

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F. Pratto et al. (eds.), *Shaping Social Identities After Violent Conflict*,
DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-62021-3_2

particular link between the identities and intergroup relations that we would like to cast some additional light on in the present book.

The aim of this chapter is to review the relevant empirical literature on three types of identifications of the youth in the Western Balkans: ethnic, religious, and national identities, as well as the literature on the quality of their intergroup relations. This will set the stage for an in-depth investigation of how the two themes are related in the chapters to follow. After a brief introduction to the context of the Western Balkans, we will discuss the topic of identities and intergroup relations in turn, ending with a summary of the knowns and the unknowns.

Being Young in the Western Balkans: Introduction

Recent history and development in the Balkans has painfully taught us the importance of social identifications and the profound effect they have on intergroup outcomes. The ex-Yugoslav region, which was formerly a multi-cultural mosaic of ethnic, religious, and national malleability, remains one of the most troublesome areas in Europe today. The collapse of Yugoslavia in the 1990s saw the splitting of its federal entities into independent states (e.g., Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro) and the creation of new states, like Kosovo[1] that declared independence in 2008. These socio-political changes were put in place either through a fairly smooth transitional process, as was the case for Slovenia, Montenegro, and Macedonia, or through brutality, bloodshed, reprisals, and wars, as was the case with Croatia (1991–1995), Bosnia and Herzegovina (1992–1995), and Kosovo (1998–1999). As part of these processes, ethnic and religious identities became more salient and mistrust grew between groups. The ethnic groups became much more segregated than they had been in Yugoslavia, and this reduced and even minimized inter-ethnic contact (e.g., Majstorović & Turjačanin, 2013; Maloku, Derks, Van Laar, & Ellemers, 2016; Puhalo, 2003, 2009). Today, there is little consensus in how people identify with, and relate to, their ethnicity and nationality, especially in the emerging or redefined countries in post-Yugoslavia like

Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo (for Bosnia and Herzegovina see Majstorović & Turjačanin, 2013; for Kosovo see Maloku et al., 2016).

How do the young people live their lives in this complicated context? Several recently conducted large-scale studies provide important insights into the social lives of the youth in the region (Blagojević, 2013; Pasha et al., 2012; Tomanović et al., 2012; Topuzovska Latkovic, Borota Popovska, Serafimovska, & Cekic, 2013; Žiga et al., 2015) and we will highlight only some of their most striking findings. The youth are described as a vulnerable and marginalized group in the respective societies, not properly integrated in the social and political systems. Some of the most prominent challenges they face are unemployment, unequal access to resources, poverty, and distrust of the democratic system, which result in feelings of existential uncertainty and a lack of long-term planning (Taleski & Hoppe, 2015; Tomanović et al., 2012). For instance, between half and two-thirds of the young not attending school in the surveyed countries are unemployed, peaking with as many as 68 percent in Kosovo (Pasha et al., 2012). The young are mostly skeptical towards the most important institutions in their societies, reporting particularly low trust in political/democratic institutions and more trust in traditional authorities, such as religious institutions and the military. About half of the young are not interested in political issues in their own country and do not believe their vote can influence the governance either at the state level or locally (Pasha et al., 2012; Topuzovska Latkovic et al., 2013; Žiga et al., 2015). They generally demonstrate low levels of civic activism—for instance, less than 10 percent of the young are politically active. Additionally, the young are for the most part not clearly politically profiled (e.g., along the conservative-liberal dimension; Pasha et al., 2012; Topuzovska Latkovic et al., 2013; Žiga et al., 2015), although their attitudes reflect a generally conservative leaning. They show high distance towards marginal groups and unfavorable attitudes towards abortion, euthanasia, and LGBTQ rights, as well as espouse some of the traditional beliefs about gender (in)equality (Bajović, 2013; Friedrich Ebert Stiftung [FES], 2009; Taleski & Hoppe, 2015; Turjačanin, 2011). Perhaps the most dramatic indicator of how the young perceive their future outlook in the region is the alarmingly high intention to emigrate—one in two young people from Macedonia, Kosovo, and Bosnia and Herzegovina are

considering or have already decided to leave their native countries (Pasha et al., 2012; Topuzovska Latkovic et al., 2013; Žiga et al., 2015).

These data paint a grim picture of the context in which the youth in the Western Balkans live and their material and psychological space within that context. In the following section, we will review the research findings about their national, ethnic, and religious identities.

Social Identities of Youth in the Western Balkans

National Identity

Broadly speaking, nationality can be segmented along two main ideations: on the one hand are scholars in Western Europe and the United States, who define nationality as identification with the state territory or what they call "law of the soil" (McCrone & Surridge, 1998). On the other hand, Central and Eastern European scholars (including the region of the Western Balkans) define nationality within a broader framework that goes beyond state borders. Rather, for them nationality is defined as an identity that unites people through common ancestry, or the "law of blood" (McCrone & Surridge, 1998), and not necessarily through citizenship.

Conceptions of National Identity in the Region

While the first approach—the civic conception approach (Čorkalo & Kamenov, 2003)—equalizes nationality with citizenship (for more on this kind of definition, see Phinney & Rotheram, 1986), the latter approach sees nationality through the lens of a shared group membership based on origin/history, language, and religion, and can therefore be called the cultural-ethnic approach (Čorkalo & Kamenov, 2003). Such an approach seems more plausible for understanding nationality in the Western Balkans, as ethnicities are shared across the borders of many different states. To illustrate, the majority of Bosniaks live in Bosnia and

Herzegovina, but there are also sizable numbers of Bosniaks in neighboring Croatia and Serbia. Likewise, the majority of people living in Serbia are Serbs, but there are also many Serbs living in the bordering areas of Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Kosovo. Similarly, the majority of people living in Kosovo are Albanians, but Albanians are also the majority in neighboring Albania, and there are many Albanians in Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia. Therefore, when referring to nationality, people often think of ethnically inhabited areas that go beyond the borders of the states where they reside (Hronesova, 2012). They identify with and are attached to their nation as an "imagined community" (Anderson, 1983). This ethno-national belonging seems to tap into the current meaning of national identity in the Balkan region better than any of these identities alone (Hronesova, 2012). This form of a combined identification has often been misused by identity politics, for example in mobilizing support for violent conflict (Majstorović & Turjačanin, 2013).

Furthermore, ethno-national identities in the region are aligned with religious distinctions (Majstorović & Turjačanin, 2011): Bosniaks are Muslim, Serbs and Macedonians are Orthodox, while Albanians are mostly Muslim, although there are also Catholic and Orthodox Albanians. For some of these groups, religion has been an important aspect of ethno-national identity, and it has served different political roles for different groups (these will be further elaborated in the section on religious identity).

The Ethno-National Overlap

Because of such convergence of nationality, ethnicity, and religion, it is challenging to describe identities in this region as separate identities in their own right. These identifications, especially ethno-national belonging, sometimes entail pretension towards territories that are not necessarily within the national borders, bringing about the territorialization of national identity (White, 1996). Moreover, throughout the troubled years of the dissolution of Yugoslavia, ethno-national belonging has also been elevated through the legal acts of some of the newly formed coun-

tries by adopting what is known as "constitutional nationalism" (Hayden, 1992). For example, constitutionally speaking, Serbia is defined as a civic state of all citizens; however, citizenship is primarily based on the ethnic foundations of the Serb ethnic majority, as the constitution differentiates the "Serb people" and other "ethnic communities in Serbia" (Vasiljević, 2011). On the other hand, although Macedonia and Kosovo are both defined as multi-ethnic states where citizenship is meant to bring people together (Krasniqi, 2010; Spaskovska, 2010), the situation on the ground reflects a de facto ethno-national separation, with preference being given to the state where one's ethnic group is the majority, rather than the state of one's residence (e.g., an Albanian from Macedonia would relate to Kosovo or Albania, while a Serb from Kosovo would feel more attached to Serbia). Bosnia and Herzegovina is legally more complex, as it is defined through a two-level, ethnic-based form of citizenship (Sarajli, 2010). There is a common Bosnian state identity, but also segmentation along ethnic lines into the two federal entities of Bosnia and Herzegovina: a Bosnian citizen is therefore at the same time also a citizen of one of the entities: the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (dominated by Bosniaks and Croats) or Republika Srpska (dominated by Serbs). Whereas acknowledging more than one ethnicity within a nation may seem to be inclusive, the research we present in this book suggests that the insistence on multi-ethnicity in most of these countries could in fact be further propelling ethnic divisions, by strengthening ethno-national belonging rather than citizenship as an overarching tool.

Conclusions

National identity in the region is still primarily defined in terms of ethno-national belonging that defies the borders of the respective countries. This causes people to feel more attachment to their "mother" states (where their ethnic group is a majority) than to the country they live in. This is why ethnic identity is still politicized and ethnic groups from all over the region are held captive by ethnocentric political agendas. Despite the potential that national identity has for bringing the people of one country together, it has not yet started to serve this function. In the present

volume we will investigate in more depth the diverging perceptions of national identity among ethnic majority and minority groups in different countries of the region, as well as the barriers towards it becoming a truly overarching social identification acceptable for these groups.

Ethnic Identity

In most of the work in the area of social psychology that was carried out in this region in the twentieth century, researchers did not distinguish between ethnic groups and nations (e.g., Čorkalo, 1998; Kuzmanovic, 1994; Milošević-Đorđević, 2003; Turjačanin, 2005). From the standpoint of social psychological analysis, it can be generally concluded that the effects of national and ethnic groups and respective identifications work through similar mechanisms (Billig, 1995; Reicher & Hopkins, 2001). This is largely because the social psychological approach presumes that what matters is how people define themselves as a part of a group, regardless of how that group is constituted (Turner, 1982). Nevertheless, in this study we will distinguish between the sometimes overlapping categories of nation—as the political nation-state for which nationality is the relevant identity, and ethnicity—an identity based in the idea of a shared group membership, based on origin/history, symbolism, a public common culture, and shared language and religion.

Ethnicity and ethnic identity have complex histories within psychology. Ethnic categories are considered to influence people's behavior. If respondents classify themselves as one particular ethnic group, it has repercussions on their perceptions of the self and the world around the self, not only in the research context but also in everyday life (e.g., Sidanius, Levin, van Laar, & Sears, 2008; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Verkuyten, 2005). The experience of societies in former Yugoslavia has shown how these identifications can be significant for the lives of many people.

In the context of socialist Yugoslavia, there was little psychological research on ethnic identity. However, after the dissolution of the state, many studies on ethnic identity were conducted, due to the newly established salience of ethnic borders and their role in the recent conflicts and tensions

in the region. We will attempt to sum up the research on ethnic identity from the region, especially from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Macedonia, and Kosovo, focusing on the structure of ethnic identity, ethnic self-perception, and the social psychological construction of ethnic identity.

Structure of Ethnic Identity

From the early beginnings of research on the psychology of ethnic and national identity in the region, researchers were confronted with the complex structure of the phenomena. Among the early works is the study by Rot and Havelka (1973) on ethnic and national identity among youth in Serbia that was at the time still a part of the former Yugoslav state. The authors discussed two dominant aspects of social identifications: the national (ethnic) and the Yugoslav (state) attachment. They asked participants a broad scope of questions about identity and found the underlying conceptions that people seem to have by using a method called factor analysis. They concluded that the most common attachment was a combination of an attachment to the own ethnic group with a will to cooperate with the other ethnic groups. In several cross-cultural studies of ethnocentrism done in Serbia and a few other countries after the dissolution of the former state, Popadić and colleagues (Bizumic, Duckitt, Popadić, Dru, & Krauss, 2009; Popadić, 2004) found that the structure of ethnocentrism consisted of notions of ingroup cohesion and dedication, as well as ingroup preference, along with the superiority and purity of the own group. The factor analysis showed an existence of two independent factors: the idea that our group is better than the others, and that the collective is more important than the individual.

Franceško, Kodžopeljić, and Mihić (2005) identified three groups of respondents with different social identity profiles in their Serbian sample: national exclusivity, multi-layered identity (which entails that the European and the national identity are perceived as compatible), and undifferentiated social identity (reflecting a high level of attachment to both the national and the European identity, but without true integration).

Studies focusing on the relations between multiple social identities, conceptualized as social identity complexity (Roccas & Brewer, 2002),

have been relatively rare in the region although this strikes as a particularly useful perspective, given the established complexities in perceptions of the singular identities. One of such studies was done in Serbia by Dulanović (2012). The research included a task of categorizing fictitious persons based on information about their gender, nationality, ethnicity, and religiosity. The findings revealed a relatively high degree of complexity and a host of differing structures of nationality, ethnicity, and religiosity, without an apparent dominant model. More research is clearly needed to further specify the identity structures among the present-day young generations.

In a recent Macedonian study (Hristova, Serafimovska, Markovic, & Cekic, 2014) of ethnic and national identity, the researchers explored social identity complexity and found different patterns of identification among minority and majority participants. In the Macedonian (dominant ethnic group) sample the dominant form of identification was a merger of ethnic and national identity, while in the Albanian (the largest ethnic minority) sample the most frequent form was ethnic domination, that is, the ethnic identity was perceived as the most important.

Findings from a recent study of social identity complexity in Kosovo (Maloku et al., 2016) show that for the Kosovar Albanian majority, ethnic and national identity are essentially the same. This group views Kosovar national identity largely as Albanian ethnic identity (therefore, the national identity excludes fellow citizens if they belong to the Serb ethnic group). On the other hand, Kosovar Serbs as a minority do not see their ethnic identity recognized within the national identity, and therefore ethnic and national identities are independent identities to them. Following these findings, in the present volume we espoused a multiple-identity perspective to further elucidate the construction of social identities and also looked at these from the perspectives of both minority and majority groups.

Self-perception

Ethnic self-stereotypes, that is, the tendency to ascribe certain characteristics to the ethnic ingroups, constitute an important element of ethnic

identity. Some of those self-stereotypical images and attributes make group prototypes, but more often they are simply a form of the evaluative dimension of collective identity. Research conducted in 2003 (Turjačanin, 2005) on a sample of youth from Bosnia and Herzegovina illustrated the stereotypical and self-stereotypical images of young Serbs and Bosniaks. For both Bosniak and Serb respondents, self-perceptions abounded with exclusively positive attributes. Among the most frequent traits were those of libertarian character and openness: brave, proud, and patriotic, but also hospitable, sensitive, cheerful, witty, gregarious, communicative, flexible, and open. The perception of others was not as favorable. Almost identical patterns of stereotypical self-descriptions and descriptions of others were noticed in consequent studies in the area (Majstorović & Turjačanin, 2013; Turjačanin, 2007). In a similar study on stereotypes conducted with Serbs living in Serbia, Popadić and Biro (2002) revealed a black-or-white perspective, where one's group is idealized, while other groups are perceived as extremely negative. Furthermore, the authors of the study concluded that stereotyping is largely mediated by former and current conflicts among ethnic groups.

Social Psychological Construction

Social identities do not exist in isolation from the influences of the wider social context. Ethnic identity—being one of the most important political identities in the regional countries—is especially liable to political and social influences. Hence, ethnic identity is sometimes objectified by manipulative political elites, and at other times its construction is the result of a set of circumstances including psychological needs and local beliefs, attitudes, and other social factors. In an anthropological study, Bougarel, Helms, and Duijzings (2007) dealt with the ethnic, social, and cultural realities of Bosnia and Herzegovina. They discussed how, due to the experience of war and ethnic cleansing, ethno-national categories became more rigid and permeated many aspects of life, at the same time drifting closer towards religious institutions. Mujkić (2008) suggested that the exclusive collectivist representation, along with the emphasis on ethnic affiliation, discourages every civic initiative and—in a legitimate

way (free and fair elections)—dismisses the individual's (or citizen's) political power. In that sense, the political practice in Bosnia and Herzegovina can be described as a democracy of ethnic oligarchies, not a democracy of citizens. In a study of narratives about the everyday ethnonational identities of the youth in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Hronesova (2012) proposed that the improvement of the poor economic situation could be an important force, with the potential to weaken the salience of nationalist ideologies. Under conditions of economic instability and malaise, ethnic identities become "thicker" because they provide a sense of security and durability. Thus the improvement of the economic situation could also result in diminishing the salience of ethnic identifications.

In her studies of the construction of national (i.e., ethnic) identity in Serbia, using qualitative and quantitative methods, Milošević-Đorđević (2005, 2007) discovered the dominance of a primordial concept of ethnic identity among the respondents. Identity was seen as an unchangeable, unyielding, and basic human category, given by birth and colored with irrational feelings. Also, the author found positive correlations between ethnic identity, primordialism, religiosity, and ethnocentrism.

Another line of research (Međedović & Petrović, 2012) was done in the northern part of Kosovo, in areas still mostly populated by Serbs. The study was based on examining the ethos of conflict as a set of societal beliefs generated by the members of society involved in protracted violent conflict (Bar-Tal, Sharvit, Halperin, & Zafran, 2012). These beliefs primarily serve as a psychological adaptation to the conflict situation and are an essential part of ethnic cohesion and identification in these areas. Once developed, they become the factor that prolongs the conflict and slows down the reconciliation process when the violence stops. Comparing the samples from Serbia and Kosovo, the researchers found significant differences in six societal beliefs, all of them having higher means in the group of participants living in Kosovo. The highest effect sizes were detected on the components of ethos of conflict, such as patriotism, positive self-view, and beliefs of safety. The authors suggested that the physical closeness of a conflicted context has a high impact on the creation of societal beliefs, which then feed the conflict itself.

Analyzing media construction of ethnic identities in Macedonia, Serafimovska (2005) found that the media is flooded with simplified us-

versus-them messages. She argued that hate speech, based on black-and-white images, created an aroused and conflicted ethnic public in the country.

Conclusions

The nature of ethnic identity in the region is complex, much more complex than the single self-categorization often measured by social scientists. Luckily, researchers from the region recognized that fact and many of their studies do examine multiple kinds of identification and several facets of ethnic identity. Findings from the different countries show that there is a social psychological and political interplay in each context, constructing the identities, the way they are. Some research shows that there is an almost complete overlap between ethnic self-categorization and religious self-categorization. Likewise, data on the dimensionality of ethnic identity shows that it shares a space similar to that of ethnocentrism, but also religious identity or national identity. The research we will present in this volume aims to bring additional light to intricate relations and overlaps between the national, ethnic, and religious identities and the identity structures emerging from these relations. We investigated these issues qualitatively as well, hoping to gain additional insights into which identities are perceived as compatible and which contexts encourage or discourage formation of more complex identity structures.

The previous research finds that ethnic identity is highly salient and important for citizens in the region. In most of the countries, ethnic identification is the most important one, compared to religious, national, or supranational identities. Usually there is the presence of a local set of beliefs, such as the primordiality of ethnic identity, which are amplified by the history of conflicts and the simplified media images, and/or mobilized by political forces. Being such an important source of identification, it is no wonder that ethnic self-descriptions are very positive, almost idealistic, for all the groups analyzed.

The effects of politicized ethnic identities do not portend well for intergroup relations. Most of the studies show negative outcomes of emphasized ethnic identities: intensified prejudice, stereotypes, and social

distance. Some data show that ethnic group members are willing to interact on an interpersonal level, but the moment that ethnic identity becomes salient as a political one, chances for positive interactions are decreased. In the struggle for political power over state and national identity, ethnic majorities aspire to master all the power and claim all the positive aspects of this identity, while ethnic minorities choose to withdraw from the state or to search for a separate identity. In this volume, we will try and probe into how these political influences resonate in perceptions and behaviors of individuals—in which context and why the young feel particularly identified with their ethnic groups and dismissive of others.

As we said at the beginning of the section, there is both particularity and complexity when it comes to ethnic identity, and this requires sophistication in examining it. The research this book presents will allow us to understand both the country-specific and the general patterns of group behavior between the examined countries. Although there is cause for concern, by understanding the nature of current identities in youth, we may be better able to suggest social and economic policies that can improve interethnic relations for the future.

Religious Identity

One of the most striking changes in the socio-political landscape of the region in recent decades has been a revival of religiousness, observed irrespective of the religious or ethnic group. The processes that can be termed "desecularization" started to take place in the latter half of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s (Blagojević, 2013; Markešić, 2010). The levels of religious identification have remained stable since the changes of the late 1980s and 1990s, and are a common feature of all the countries relevant for this study. Following the strongly secular and atheistic profile of the ex-Yugoslav society, today it can be claimed that religion plays a prominent role in the lives of people in the region.

Desecularization processes can be characterized as somewhat of a reversal of patterns of religious dis-identification that characterize life in the Soviet satellites and modernity in Western Europe: from a pronounced non-religious or atheistic majority to an equally pronounced

majority identifying with religion. It is particularly the youth who underwent the development—from being one of the most atheistic parts of the society to being among the ones most attached to religion (Blagojević, 2013; Dušanić, 2005; 2007; Pajaziti, 2003; Vasić, 2013).

The religious upsurge was related to a period of economic and societal instability in former Yugoslavia, although an important impetus was also provided by the process of ethnic mobilization and homogenization, leading to violent ethnic conflicts in the region (Blagojević, 2013). Religion, as well as religious institutions, assumed a previously unimaginable role in the society, in most cases intimately connected with the political leaders who used religion to legitimize their political programmes (Bieber, 2002; Dušanić, 2007, Markešić, 2010; Pajaziti, 2003). Religion was ultimately used to articulate a host of deeper and more intricate reasons for conflicts in simplified terms (Vasić, 2013).

Structure of Religious Identity

The answer to the question of how religious the youth are today depends on how religious identity is defined. Blagojević (2013) describes three important levels (indicators) of religiousness: identity (confessional self-identification and self-declared religiousness), acceptance of religious doctrines, and active religious practice. The described indicators provide significantly discrepant conclusions about the levels of religiousness.

On the one hand, in all the countries of present interest, more than 90 percent of the young are confessionally identified that is, identified with a certain religious affiliation: 96 percent in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Žiga et al., 2015), 98 percent in Macedonia (Topuzovska Latkovic et al., 2013), and 99 percent in Kosovo (Pasha et al., 2012), whereas the most recent study in Serbia reveals a somewhat lower percentage (86 percent) of the religiously affiliated among students (Blagojević, 2013). Similarly, around 70–90 percent of the young declare themselves to be religious (see also Dušanić, 2007; Jashari, Zhoglev, & Abdullai, 2008). Roughly the same percentage accepts the most basic religious doctrines, such as belief in God (87 percent students in Serbia, 94 percent of youth in Bosnia, and 78 percent youth in Macedonia).

However, other forms of religiousness are not equally widespread. For instance, belief in particular religious doctrines is significantly lower, reaching as low as 30 percent among students in Serbia (Blagojević, 2013). Following of the religious practices is also much less frequent than confessional identification—most youth report practicing their religion only rarely (on special occasions, such as important religious holidays, weddings, or christenings) or moderately frequently. For instance, less than one third of the youth go to church or mosque on a regular basis (e.g., once a month) or pray on a daily basis (Blagojević, 2013; Dušanić, 2007; Pasha et al., 2012; Topuzovska Latkovic et al., 2013; Žiga et al., 2015).

Religiousness has thus not emerged as a coherent system of beliefs and behaviors. The more detailed the questions about the essence of religious beliefs, the lower the percentages of those accepting them (Dušanić, 2007). As we have seen, religious doctrinal beliefs and practice contrast starkly with the prevalent self-declared religiosity. On the whole, the studies suggest that religion can be best understood as an important social or cultural identification for the majority of the youth, as an important belief system for a much smaller group, and as an active practice for an even smaller circle (roughly, one third) of the youth (Blagojević, 2013; Dušanić, 2007).

Individual and Social Roles of Religious Identity

Research on the psychological meaning of religion and religious identifications is still rather scarce in the region. An important exception is the comprehensive research program conducted by Dušanić (2007), investigating the psychological dimensions of religion in the youth of Bosnia and Herzegovina. At least two important aspects of religion emerged as psychologically relevant: a personal and a social one. The personal role of religiousness reflects the need of an individual for meaning and security, and is related to reduced feelings of helplessness, anxiety, and alienation. The social role of religiousness stems from its embeddedness within the social context: the family and other social groups, particularly the ethnic group. Along these lines, religiousness was found to be related to identi-

fication with the ethnic group. The forms of religious attachment that were most closely related to ethnic identification were those of religious fundamentalism—an exclusive form of religiosity. Religiousness was also shown to be related to some potentially conflictual societal attitudes, such as authoritarianism, pro-war attitudes, and distance towards other ethnic or religious groups.

It is interesting to note some additional findings highlighting the social role of religion: half of Serbian students believe that religion plays an important role in their personal and social lives (Blagojević, 2013). Also, almost half of them (44 percent) report high levels of trust in the church, in stark contrast to their lack of trust in most societal institutions. Youth in Kosovo also express an above-average level of trust in religious leaders (Pasha et al., 2012). These findings indicate that youth perceive strong ties between religion and society: religion is not confined to the personal or private sphere, and religious institutions are perceived as important social actors.

Relations Between Ethnic and Religious Identities

A particularly important issue related to the social identity role of religion—not least in the context of understanding the recent interethnic conflicts—is its relation with ethnic identity. In her ethnographic study of youth identities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Hronesova (2012) emphasized the social and cultural role of religious identity. For her participants, religious identification emerged as an expression of a specific cultural heritage and tradition, as well as of values. Even non-religious participants preserved some attachment to the traditional religion of the group. The author advanced the explanation that religion is the crucial content of ethnic identity, that is, a marker of distinctiveness among groups with otherwise similar origin, language, and appearance. The Muslim identity has been strengthened as a result of the experience of the recent war and collective images of Muslim victimization. For the Christian Orthodox, religion emerged as a symbol of a perceived superior tradition of resistance towards Islamization during the Ottoman period (from the late fourteenth through early twentieth century in the Balkans) and as a keeper of the ethnic identity.

Other authors also explain the role of religious identity as inextricably linked to the processes of ethnic homogenization and mobilization during the previous decades. Markešić (2010) interpreted the role of religion as "the essential substance in the creation, maintenance, and preservation of national identity" (p. 542) and delineated the parallel processes of "sacralisation of the nation" and "nationalization of religion." One of the empirical arguments he offered is the correspondence in the percentages of citizens who declare themselves as Bosniak and Muslim, Serbian and Orthodox, and Croat and Catholic in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Another empirical argument supporting this relation is that the perceived importance of ethnic belonging (of oneself and as a basis of acceptance of others) is greater among religious students, particularly those who are traditional, who believe in God, and plan to christen their children (Vasić, 2013).

However, research on the religious identity of Albanians in Kosovo and Macedonia gives a somewhat different account of the role of religious identity. Babuna (2000; 2004) argues that the interpretation of religious identity is specific in these groups for at least two reasons: firstly, historically speaking, Albanians did not share one but three different religious identities—predominantly Muslim, but also Catholic and to some extent Orthodox Christian, and secondly, Albanians are a group with a distinct ethnic background and language, so in this case religion does not need to be emphasized as a distinguishing feature, unlike for the Muslim and Orthodox Christian people of the region. The ethnic identity is therefore the most prominent one for Albanians.

On the other hand, the high levels of religious identification in Kosovar and Macedonian Albanians (Hristova et al., 2014; Pasha et al., 2012; Topuzovska Latkovic et al., 2013) suggest that, at a psychological level, these identities can still hold a prominent place. This may be particularly true of the situation in Macedonia, where the Albanians are an ethnic minority in an otherwise Orthodox country that itself is undergoing a process of ethno-national homogenization (Krasniqi, 2011). Krasniqi suggests that the political role of religion in Kosovar and Macedonian Albanians has not been prominent, given the pro-Western orientation among Albanians and the existence of different religious communities within the Albanian ethnic group. However, this does not preclude reli-

gious identity from assuming an important role as a psychological identification. Ethnic and religious identities appear to be closely related in these groups as well.

Conclusions

We can conclude that more empirical research is needed to clarify the issues of the psychological functions of religious identity and its role within the broader context of social identifications, particularly from a psychological perspective. Nevertheless, the research reviewed in this chapter provides several important insights: religion is today an important part of life for most youth in the region; generally speaking, religion is important as a form of socio-cultural identification; religious identity has close ties to other social identifications, primarily ethnic identity; and religion is not confined to the private sphere, but has a strong presence in the social lives of the youth. In the present volume, we will investigate the religious identity in the context of other important social identities to further elucidate its psychological functions and societal roles and uses.

Interplay Between Identities in Minority and Majority Groups

Social identifications that are in the focus of this chapter show intricate patterns of interplay with both individual and other social identities. These patterns are especially interesting in the case of ethnic majorities and minorities in local contexts, because they reveal not only the nature of ethnic identity but also the struggles for political and social power. In a recent study conducted in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Majstorović and Turjačanin (2013) found that among the youth the highest attachment was attributed to religious affiliation, followed by attachment to the ethnic group. Other forms of attachment (to the state's territorial entities, the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Europe) proved to be less salient. Within the sample of Bosniak respondents, the affiliation to reli-

gion and the attachment to ethnic group and to the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina were regarded as the most important categories, while attachment to the state's territorial entity and to Europe scored relatively low. The Croat and Serb respondents found attachment to their relative ethnic groups and religious affiliation to be of the highest importance. These categories were followed by the attachment to their territorial entity and to Europe, while the Croat and Serb respondents placed the importance of attachment to the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina at the bottom of the scale. Also, the study found that a primordial understanding of ethnicity prevailed among the youth: it was perceived as almost impossible to be a member of a people if both parents (or at least one of them) are not members of that people. The authors concluded that the widespread essentialization of ethnic identity in Bosnia and Herzegovina—and in general—is mostly caused by the contextual and political influences.

The results of a study of ethnic identifications in Serbia (Miladinović, 2006) showed that ethnic minorities from Serbia and Montenegro (which were at the time still united within the same state) primarily identified with their hometown and their nation, then with the European Union, while they identified with the Republic of Serbia and the Union of Serbia and Montenegro the least. The strongest reluctance to identify with Serbia and the highest identification with their own ethnicity, hometown, and the European Union was found among young Albanians living in Serbia. A similar tendency, although not so prominent, was found among young Hungarians and Bosniaks. Stjepanović Zaharijevski (2008) explored different kinds of group identifications in Serbia. She found that identification with the family was the most important, while ethnic and religious identification also played a prominent role. Mihić (2009) found that the strength of ethnic identity among the Serbian majority positively correlated with a general preference for hierarchical relations between groups, positive evaluations of the ethnic group, and negative attitudes towards European integrations. In a broad study of attitudes towards the society in Serbia, Vasović (2010) found that ethnic and national identifications were stronger among religious individuals and members of the ethnic majority.

In a recent study of ethnic and national identity in Kosovo, Maloku and associates (2016) aimed to understand the processes of interplay of the identities of Albanians and Serbs. The authors argued that Albanians, being low in identity complexity, could develop more positive intergroup attitudes by increasing their identity complexity. On the other hand, Serbs, who are low in superordinate (state) identity, could benefit from strengthening their superordinate identity, because this identity is related to a number of positive intergroup attitudes. In the Albanian group, national identity positively correlated with ethnic identity and negatively with the feelings towards Serbs. Serb ethnic identity correlated with negative perceptions of the outgroup and higher concerns for maintaining the distinctiveness of their ethnic group.

Kenig (2000) conducted a study on ethnic and individual identities and their correlates among Macedonians and Albanians in Macedonia. The results showed that, in general, ethnic identity was highly prominent in both ethnic groups compared to individual self-conceptions. Viewing one's own ethnic group as positive was higher among minorities. This result was replicated by Hristova and associates (2014), who found significant differences between national, ethnic, and religious identifications between the two groups: Macedonians were higher on national identification and Albanians were higher on ethnic and religious identifications.

On the whole, majorities and minorities in the region tend to favor different identities and show different patterns of national identification. The reason for this might be the recent history and the fact that in most cases, the ethnic ingroup is not only present in one's own nation, but in other nations in the region as well. A troublesome general finding is that identities are not just positive reflections of the collective self, but are also associated with prejudice against outsiders. Since minority and majority groups have not been systematically compared in all of the previous research, in the studies presented in this volume we explored both minority and majority perspectives on identity. In the qualitative portions of the study, we also had an in-depth focus on individuals coming from minority groups and displaying some unexpected and complex combination of identities that will help further understand the meaning of these identities at both the individual and group levels.

Interethnic Relations

An important reason to understand the nature of people's psychological identification is that it connects to how they live their lives and to their relationships with other people. We now turn to what research has shown about the interethnic relations in the region, focusing on contact between groups, degree of social distance between groups, as well as images of the own and of other groups. We will also highlight some mechanisms that mediate the influence of identities on the quality of relations with others.

Contact Between Ethnic Groups

Contact with other groups is considered to be one of the most important determinants of prejudice reduction in social psychological literature (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2000, 2006). The role of positive interethnic contact in the development of favorable interethnic relations and the readiness for reconciliation has also been demonstrated in the local context, primarily in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Čehajić, Brown, & Castano, 2008; Puhalo, Petrović, & Perišić, 2010, Turjačanin & Majstorović, 2013).

Research on contacts across interethnic borders is still not quite systematic in the region. However, the dominant pattern of ethnic homogenization—on both the state and the local level—appears to have become prevalent in the region in the post-war period, with ethnically diverse contexts being the exception rather than the rule. Ethnic segregation is particularly conspicuous in housing and schooling, even in ethnically diverse contexts. For instance, schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina are divided along ethnic lines, with different schools sometimes being located under the same roof (Turjačanin et al., 2009). Even in Macedonia ethnic divisions are prevalent in the school system, with little contact among pupils and ethnocentric curricula that teach children to view the other groups in a negative light (Petroska-Beska & Najcevska, 2004).

Studies that have investigated interethnic contact generally reveal that it is limited. Maloku and associates (2016) reported that, in general, there has been little contact between Albanians and Serbs in Kosovo, with

slightly more contact on the part of the Serbs, since they are a minority group in this context. Both groups reported little willingness to have contact with each other. The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina is rather similar: the knowledge about the other ethnic groups is demonstrated to be poor, as is the interest in learning about others. For instance, citizens are mostly informed through the media that belong to their own group. Travelling within Bosnia and Herzegovina, which could improve the level of knowledge about other groups, is relatively rare (Skoko, 2011). In Macedonia interethnic relations are characterized by segregation and a model of "peaceful co-existence," that is, the groups are living side by side and not disturbing each other (Anger, van't Rood, & Gestakovska, 2010). This lack of genuine contact and cooperation is interpreted as a rather negative trend in interethnic relations and a fertile soil for nurturing negative perceptions and feelings between groups. In the present study, we attempted to reach a more fine-grained understanding of the effects of contact or lack thereof, looking at both frequency and quality of contact, identifying a wider range of forms that contact can take, as well as the perceived barriers to contact.

Feelings of Closeness/Distance Towards Other Groups

One of the most frequently used measures in investigating interethnic relations is social distance (Bogardus, 1926), indicating how close or distant one feels in relation to different groups. The level of social distance towards other groups is relatively high in the countries of interest. For instance, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, less than half of the young from different ethnic groups would welcome a family of a different ethnicity as their neighbors (Žiga et al., 2015). Similarly, the youth in Macedonia and Kosovo generally do not trust people of different ethnicity or religion (Pasha et al., 2012; Topuzovska Laktovic et al., 2013). Students in Serbia also demonstrate large social distance towards other groups, particularly towards ethnic minority groups: the Roma, Albanians, and Bosniaks (Kalaba, 2013; Kandido-Jakšić, 2008).

When looking at ethnic outgroups, which is the focus of the present study, there is still considerable distance in mutual relations, although not

as high as it is towards the marginalized groups in society (Turjačanin, 2011). Researchers in Bosnia and Herzegovina agree that, considering the three constitutive ethnic groups, Bosniaks and Serbs feel the largest distance towards each other (Puhalo, 2003, 2009; Skoko, 2011; Turjačanin, 2004, 2011). Turjačanin (2011) provides some general indices of the distance: 63 percent of the proposed relationships with Serbs are accepted by Bosniaks, while Serbs accept 55 percent of the relationships (to put it differently, three to four out of six proposed relations). Some research has observed a growing distance between Bosniaks and other groups (Puhalo, 2009), while others trace a tendency of decreasing distances (Turjačanin & Majstorović, 2013). These differences can be attributed to different samples—while the studies that found increasing distances were conducted on the general population, the research showing decreasing trends was mostly done on student samples. This could mean that at least some optimistic trends can be observed in the youth, students in particular.

In Serbia, the largest distance is felt with regards to the closest relations—dating or marrying a person from another ethnic group. Only one third of students would date or marry an Albanian, while somewhat less than half of them would consider dating or marrying a Bosniak. However, it is striking that a large number of students even expressed reluctance to have people from different ethnic groups as citizens in their country (38 percent of students expressed such distance towards Albanians and 23 percent towards Bosniaks; Kalaba, 2013).

In Kosovo, the most recent data show that both young Kosovar Albanians and Serbs are reluctant to have each other as neighbors—only 36 percent of Albanians and 26 percent of Serbs would accept this (Pasha et al., 2012). Another study done by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP, 2013), which examined the types of contact that these ethnic groups would consider to engage in, showed that the highest preference is for contact in formal settings (e.g., work, about 40 percent), followed by a willingness to live in the same town (about 30 percent for both groups) and on the same street as neighbors (only about 28 percent in both groups). It was found that the most unacceptable type of contact between ethnicities is marriage, with less than 5 percent of Albanians and less than 20 percent of Serbs being willing to marry someone from the respective ethnic outgroup (UNDP, 2013).

In Macedonia, research focusing on mutual distances between ethnic Macedonians and Albanians revealed that only one in 10 citizens, in both groups, would like their children to go to a school where the other ethnic group is the majority (Maleska, 2010). When we look at how young Albanians and Macedonians feel about each other, an indicative finding showed that they were rather unwilling to have people of the other ethnicity as neighbors (ethnic Macedonians to a somewhat larger extent, the averages being around the center-point of a five-point scale; Topuzovska Laktovic et al., 2013).

All of the reviewed studies reveal a similar pattern of distances, with two particular areas of pronounced distance. Firstly, the young are the most reluctant to accept the closest relations with other ethnic groups, namely becoming a part of the same family by marriage. Interethnic marriages remain highly problematic for all the ethnic groups in the region, and according to different studies from only 10 percent to one third of participants are inclined to the idea of interethnic marriage (Perišić, 2012; Puhalo, 2003, 2009; Skoko, 2011; Turjačanin, 2004; Turjačanin & Majstorović, 2013). Similarly, most of the youth stated that religious or ethnic background is an important characteristic in choosing a future partner (Pasha et al., 2012; Topuzovska Latkovic et al., 2013; Žiga et al., 2015). There appears to be an excessive politicization of ethnic identities, which often results in fear and biased behavior, where even marriage is seen as a form of intergroup relations. Another important domain of clear and pronounced ethnic distance is politics—that is, the reluctance to accept the idea of people from other ethnicities assuming political leadership in one's country (Kandido-Jakšić, 2008; Puhalo, 2009; Turjačanin & Majstorović, 2013).

On a more positive note, most studies have shown that friendship is the relation with less distance than would be expected considering its intimate nature (Puhalo, 2009; Skoko, 2011; Turjačanin, 2011). In fact, Maleska (2010) demonstrated that a majority of Macedonians (more than 60 percent) have friends from different ethnic groups. O'Loughlin (2010) concluded that half of his respondents from Bosnia and Herzegovina wanted more friends from different ethnic groups. Since friendship is a relation that is based solely on personal choice and is perceived as more individually based than other relationships (for instance, in choosing a marital

partner the acceptance of the family is also warranted), this appears to be a potential resource for improving intergroup relations. In his research on personal perceptions of attractiveness of people from different ethnic groups, Puhalo (2012) concluded that two levels of social perception can be distinguished: a collective and a personal one. Predominantly, social distance can be interpreted as more reflective of collective stereotypes than of personal aversion or dislike, which is a clear result of the political construal of interethnic relations. These findings, taken together with the indices of decreasing trends in social distance, provide some optimism about the interethnic relations in the region.

Images of Others: Ethnic Stereotypes

Psychological research has revealed that different ethnic groups are perceived as being characterized by specific traits and characteristics, with a clear positive or negative evaluation. To briefly summarize the findings, ingroups are mostly perceived in a positive light, even idealistically, while the perceptions of other groups can be rather negative. Having in mind the focal ethnic groups of interest for the present study, research done in different countries has demonstrated similar and predominantly negative mutual stereotypes between the groups (Maloku et al., 2016; Petroska-Beška & Kenig, 2002; Petrović, 2003; Puhalo, 2009; Skoko, 2011; Turjačanin, 2011; Turjačanin & Majstorović, 2013).

Some of the authors observe that stereotypes about different groups have rather similar contents. For instance, Bosniaks, Serbs, and Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina all perceive their own group as prevalently being righteous, honest, brave, and hospitable (Puhalo, 2009; Skoko, 2011), while all outgroups are characterized as hypocritical (Skoko, 2011), or dishonest, mean, and quarrelsome (Puhalo, 2009). Most researchers suggest that the stereotypes about other groups are almost exclusively made up of negative traits, but Turjačanin and Majstorović (2013) observe that the most recent research reveals at least one positive trait in the contents of these stereotypes.

How do the groups perceive each other? An early postwar study from Bosnia and Herzegovina (Turjačanin, Čekrlija, Powell, & Butollo, 2002)

dealing with the perception of ingroups and outgroups showed that Bosniaks (from Sarajevo) and Serbs (from Banja Luka) described each other using markedly negative attributes. Among Banja Luka respondents, Bosniaks were perceived as religious, nationalist, conservative, backward, and fanatical, while the Sarajevo respondents described Serbs as nationalistic, aggressive, belligerent, ruthless, and cruel. On the other hand, self-descriptions revealed excessively positive pictures. This pattern of perceptions has not changed much since (Turjačanin, 2011). Skoko (2011) found that Serbs were perceived as cruel and nationalistic by the other two constituent ethnic groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Croats were perceived as hypocritical, insincere, and arrogant by both other groups, while Bosniaks were perceived as hypocritical and backward. The author emphasized that the stereotypes about other groups are heavily influenced by the experience of war and the perceived responsibility of the other groups in the conflicts.

Maloku and associates (2016) investigated the mutual stereotypes of Albanians and Serbs in Kosovo. Kosovar Albanians perceived Kosovar Serbs as relatively high on the competence dimension but low on warmth (morality and sociability); in other words, they were perceived as cold and competitive. On the other hand, Kosovar Serbs perceived Kosovar Albanians as low on both competence and warmth. The stereotypes about Serbs can, according to theoretical accounts (see Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2007), be connected with feelings of envy and harmful and ambivalent behaviors, including scapegoating. On the other hand, the stereotypes towards Albanians can be related to contempt and disgust, and distancing, excluding, and demeaning behaviors.

Research on the mutual stereotypes of ethnic Macedonians and Albanians in Macedonia also confirms the negative mutual perceptions (Petroska-Beška & Kenig, 2002; Petroska-Beška, Popovski, & Kenig, 1999). The members of both groups develop an idealized image of the own ethnic self, Albanians to a slightly greater extent than Macedonians. Ethnic Macedonian students view the ethnic other as being bad, powerful, and active, meaning a dangerous enemy, whereas Albanian students see the ethnic other as being bad, powerless, and passive—an opponent with whom it is easy to cope.

Petrović (2003) investigated the mutual stereotypes of Serbs, Croats, and Bosniaks and observed that ingroup stereotypes were relatively posi-

tive whereas outgroup stereotypes were relatively negative, particularly the mutual stereotypes of Serbs and Bosniaks. The author found that the differences were most prominent along the warmth dimension, that is, the other groups were mostly seen as cold, but equally competent.

Identities and Relations Between Groups

The literature reviewed in the previous sections suggests that a strong and exclusive attachment to social groups—in particular the ethnic and the religious group—coincides with negative perceptions of others and distance towards others. Some studies provide more direct empirical evidence on this issue. In one study, higher ethnic and religious identification were related to more interest in the ethnic and religious background of others (Stjepanović Zaharijevski, 2008). O'Loughlin (2010) found that religiousness and ethnic attachment predicted having fewer friends, and less desire to have friends, from different ethnic groups. Turjačanin and Majstorović (2013) found that the most important predictors of social distance towards different ethnic groups were nationalism and religiousness. The strength of attachment to the ethnic group and religion also reduced the willingness for reconciliation in post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina (Puhalo, Petrović, & Perišić, 2010). These findings corroborate the hypothesis that social identifications are inextricably linked to perceptions and experiences of the social world, particularly to how one perceives the groups different than one's own. In the present volume we seek to provide a richer understanding of these links, based on both quantitative and qualitative study of the importance of social identities, as well as the perceptions of (un)malleability of identities and (im)permeability of intergroup borders.

Conclusions

The composition and the intensity of social identifications have salient effects on the everyday lives of citizens living in the region of the Western Balkans. Sometimes these effects seem to have a protective function for the individual, making the environment predictive and safe. More often,

these effects prevent members of one ethnic group from interacting freely with members of other groups, due to a widespread atmosphere of fear and prejudice. The interplay between the social identities of the individual, contact with other groups, images about others, and feelings towards others shows a multifaceted pattern. Firstly, the dominant pattern of interethnic segregation in the region prevents learning about others. Negative stereotypes also preclude contact across ethnic borders, while the lack of contact facilitates the perpetuation of the negative beliefs. Widely shared beliefs that the other group has negative characteristics can be used to legitimize animosities, ranging from distancing to harmful action. In this vicious circle resulting in ever worsening interethnic relations, socio-political factors can be singled out as the possible source of problems and, at the same time, their potential solution. The political instrumentalization of the psychological importance of identities, along with the role of the media and the educational system in constructing and furthering exclusive identities and negative images of others, can be recognized as crucial to the issue of improving interethnic relations in the region. In the chapters to come, we will look into how these influences are seen through the eyes of the youth—whether they recognize them, whether they are embraced or critically questioned and, finally, how the youth themselves see ways to go forward towards improving interethnic relations.

Summary: Identities and Intergroup Relations

The reviewed research from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, and Serbia is of pivotal importance for understanding social identities of the youth in the region. We believe that it offers insights that will not only add to the existing literature on social identity in the region, but also point out how the matters of social identity are reflected in intergroup relations within these countries:

- Ethnic identity is a highly salient and important source of identification for the youth in the region. It is predominantly understood as an

inherited identity, deeply rooted in the origin and traditions of the group—thus largely unchangeable, which is compatible with perceiving interethnic borders as impermeable.

- The role of religion has risen significantly in the last decades throughout the region and today most of the young declare themselves as religious. However, this self-declaration is for the most part reflective of perceptions of religion as a form of socio-cultural identification rather than a strong spiritual belief or active religious practice.
- Ethnic and religious identities are perceived as closely intertwined, even overlapping, resulting in simplified views of multiple social identities. Religion is for the most part understood as a marker or the crucial content of ethnic identity and it is used to legitimize divisions. However, this understanding is more prevalent in countries where religion was emphasized as a distinctive element between ethnic groups (e.g., Bosnia and Herzegovina) and less so in countries where this was not the case (e.g., Kosovo).
- Since ethnic and religious identities are perceived as largely unchangeable, the youth are motivated to protect and enhance a positive collective self-image, which is often coupled with negative characterizations of other groups.
- National identity, in the sense of shared civic identity or citizenship, is still not a grounded identity in the Western Balkans countries. Identification with the nation, defined as citizenship, is relatively weaker than ethnic or religious identifications. For majority groups, ethnic identification is often projected to national identity, while minority groups distance themselves from it or seek alternative identities (e.g., identify with neighboring countries, where their ethnic group is a majority). For countries with a recent experience of violent conflict (Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo), the issue of constructing an overarching national identity is particularly problematic.
- Even though interethnic tensions have been somewhat reduced in comparison to the period of open conflicts, they still permeate much of the everyday life (e.g., ethnic divisions are still present in schooling, politics, everyday contacts). Ethnic segregation is a common feature of the social landscape in most of the region. Contact across interethnic

borders is limited, the youth are both physically and psychologically distant, and they mostly hold mutual negative images of one another.
- Identities have real-life consequences. Strong identification with ethnic and religious groups, along with the simplification of multiple identities to highly overlapping categories, are consistently found to be related to more distance towards outgroups, more negative images of others, and less willingness for intergroup contact. These are, therefore, the crucial risk factors in the process of improving intergroup relations.
- On a more optimistic note, frequent and positive intergroup contacts and the acceptance of super-ordinate identities are possible resources that could lead to improved intergroup relations in the region.
- The current socio-economic situation in the region (instability and lack of future prospects) and the continuing political instrumentalization of identities in all of the countries further supports the exclusivity of the identities. The educational systems and the media, being in the service of ethnocentric agendas, are some of the notable agents of deepening interethnic divisions.

We have also discussed some issues warranting further research, which we summarize here.

(a) psychological aspects of identifications have not received proportional attention in all the countries of interest; particularly, some aspects of religious and national identities should be more thoroughly investigated;
(b) only a few studies have investigated relations among all the relevant identities (ethnic, religious, and national); the processes and consequences of constructing these multiple identities are in need of further clarification;
(c) the processes and mechanisms through which socio-political influences are reflected in individual perceptions and behaviors need to be documented in more detail;
(d) finally, more research is needed to further the understanding of the possible resources that could be used for improving intergroup relations.

In the following chapters, we will present studies investigating youth identities in each of the countries of interest in an attempt to provide answers to the stated questions. Drawing upon a combined research approach including quantitative and qualitative data, we will try to shed light on the crucial issues of national, ethnic, and religious identities and outline their consequences. This will enable us to highlight specific features and issues for each of the contexts, while at the same time presenting a broader regional perspective on the issues at hand.

Notes

1. This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSC 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

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3

Methods Section: Quantitative and Qualitative Examination of Social Identities and Their Mutual Relations

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In the present study, we opted for a multi-method approach to examining social identifications of youth. As the research on social identities typically encompasses conceptual and methodological challenges, a combination of different methods has been proposed as one of the approaches well suited to the topic (Abdelal, Herrera, Johnston, & McDermott, 2006; Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007). Therefore, we combined a quantitative survey with follow-up focus-group discussions and case studies, in order to gain a comprehensive insight into how the youth construct their identities. We envisioned this study as tapping into the issues of youth identity through several steps—building from the most global issues that surfaced in the survey to the most specific ones reflected in the case studies.

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F. Pratto et al. (eds.), *Shaping Social Identities After Violent Conflict*,
DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-62021-3_3

The quantitative survey was meant to provide the basic framework for mapping the importance of various social identities. We included the most personal identities (identification with the own family and group of friends), those focal to our study (ethnic, religious, and national identification), and also extended our scope to more inclusive identifications (e.g., with the region, Europe, etc.). Apart from the strength of identification, we registered the level of intergroup contact as a possible predictor, and also the trust in social institutions—all to provide us with information about the wider context in which young people live. The focus groups were meant to allow a more thorough investigation of the personal perceptions of the focal identities, for example, how they relate to one another, whether they are perceived as changeable or not, and what are the contexts in which they become salient, as well as how they relate to the perceptions of and relations to other groups. The case studies, on the other hand, were designed to investigate the perspectives of people with complex identities (e.g., participants from ethnically mixed families, participants who converted from one religion to another, or participants whose ethnic and religious identities do not overlap in a typical manner). We explored how such people perceive their multiple identities (e.g., whether one is dominant or if they are perceived as equally important) and how they are viewed and treated by their social surroundings.

The Quantitative Survey

Respondents and Sampling

We interviewed 767 young people (aged 20–30 years), from eight cities in the Western Balkans region: Serbia (Belgrade, Novi Pazar), Macedonia (Skopje, Tetovo), Bosnia and Herzegovina (Banja Luka, Sarajevo), and Kosovo (Prishtina, Mitrovica).

In each country, two locations were chosen: one in which the ethnic majority on the state level had a majority status, and the other in which it had a minority status. We aimed to have 100 participants per location, 70 from the local majority and 30 from the local minority. The sample frame within each city was balanced gender-wise. We also aimed to

include participants of diverse education levels, so we further divided the quotas based on educational attainment.

The sample was collected via a passive snowball method. In each city, the researchers assigned university students to find respondents to participate in the survey, broken down by quotas. The respondents participated in the survey voluntarily. They were required to come to the prearranged facilities (rooms), which were equipped with computers with Internet access. A maximum of five persons were tested simultaneously. The data were collected via electronic questionnaire, hosted on the Qualtrics survey platform. Table 3.1 details the sample structure.

Instrument

The master questionnaire was developed in English and translated into local languages using the back translation procedure (Brislin, 1970). One bilingual local translator translated it from English to local language, whilst another translated it back to English. Local research coordinators compared the two versions and corrected minor discrepancies.

Identification with Social Groups

Participants were asked to rate the extent to which belonging to each of the listed groups is important to them personally. Respondents rated each item on a scale from 1 (*of no importance*) to 5 (*highly important*). The strength of identification was measured for the main identities that we focused on in this study: ethnicity, religion, and nationality, but also for the personal groups (family, group of friends), other regional identities (city/town of origin, the Balkans, and Europe), as well as gender.

Furthermore, we measured several potential correlates of group identifications. We also developed a complex set of measures to assess the *quantity and quality of contact* with outgroup members (as in Binder et al., 2009; Brown, Eller, Leeds, & Stace, 2007) and the number of friends in the outgroup (as in Pettigrew, 1997; Schmid, Hewstone, Küpper, Zick, & Wagner, 2012; Zagefka & Brown, 2002); we also added the number of online friends, as an important indicator of reaching out to the outgroup in the virtual world.

Table 3.1 Sample structure

	Country/city							
	Serbia		Macedonia		Bosnia and Herzegovina		Kosovo	
Ethnicity	Belgrade	Novi Pazar	Skopje	Tetovo	Sarajevo	Banja Luka	Mitrovica	Prishtina
Serb	50	*32*	0	0	*26*	69	66	*39*
Bosniak	*26*	68	0	0	59	*40*	0	0
Albanian	0	0	*15*	76	0	0	*36*	59
Macedonian	0	0	77	*29*	0	0	0	0
Total per city	76	100	92	105	85	109	102	98
Total per country	176		197		194		200	
Total	767							

Note: The italics fields mark the ethnic minority group in the city

Within each country, we studied the ethnic majority and an ethnic minority that had been seen as their adversary in the recent past (i.e., during the armed conflicts of the 1990s). That way, for Serbs in Serbia, the ethnic outgroup was Bosniaks; for Bosniaks in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the ethnic outgroup was Serbs; for Macedonians in the Republic of Macedonia, the ethnic outgroup was Albanians; for Albanians in Kosovo, the ethnic outgroup was Serbs.

The measures were as follows:

(a) *Contact quantity* was assessed as the frequency of the participant's exposure to ethnic outgroup members in three different settings (university, neighbourhood, free time). The scale ranged from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*very often*).
(b) The *contact quality* scale comprised four emotions that the contact elicits: two positive (pleasant, respected) and two negative (nervous, looked down upon). The scale ranged from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*very much*). Those who had no direct contact with the ethnic outgroup could choose the N/A option.
(c) *Direct intergroup friendship* was measured by the reported number of friends from the ethnic outgroup.
(d) *Online intergroup friendship* was measured by the reported number of friends from the ethnic outgroup within the social network used most often by the participant.

The *trust in institutions* scale consisted of a list of 13 institutions adapted from the European Values Study 2008 (EVS, 2016): armed forces, religious institutions, education system, media, police, Parliament, European Union, NATO, United Nations, health care system, judicial system, political system, and government. For each institution, the respondents rated how much confidence they had in it, using a five-point scale ranging from 1 (*none at all*) to 5 (*completely*).

Data Analysis

We created an integrative SPSS database comprising the data from all four countries, and a generic syntax for analyzing the data. The questionnaire

did not allow non-responses, so there were no missing data. The distributions were analyzed for normality; we calculated summary scores and tested for reliability with Cronbach Alphas for all scales. We followed this up with a descriptive, correlational, and regression analysis.

The Qualitative Study

Focus Group Discussions

A focus group is a structured or semi-structured small-group discussion on a certain topic that uses the content of interaction among participants as a source of data (Willing, 2008). The group's size (typically six to 12 persons), composition, and the way topics are to be addressed should be carefully planned in order to create a nonthreatening environment. The participants should feel free to talk openly and express their honest opinions, but also to respond to the other members and to the additional questions posed by the moderator. As it is guided group conversation with its internal dynamics, focus groups yield a lot of information in a relatively short time. Thus, this technique adds depth and variety to the information gathered through surveys.

Goals

The central topic in the focus group discussions was to explore the relations between the three focal identities (ethnic, religious, and national), and also how they function within the social context (e.g., in which situations they become salient and how they are expressed in relations with others). The focus groups were meant to produce cues for developing policy recommendations on ways to enhance the social identity complexity of youth.

Participants

Eight focus group discussions were conducted, one in each of the cities included in the quantitative survey. The focus groups included participants

from ethnic groups that were the majority at the local level, for example, ethnic Serbs in Belgrade or ethnic Bosniaks in Novi Pazar. In each of the cities, eight to 11 participants took part in the discussions. We recruited participants between the ages of 20 and 30 years, balanced by gender (male/female), and of diverse educational and employment status (both students and high-school graduates, employed and unemployed). We did not recruit psychology students for the discussions. Participants were given vouchers for coffee for their attendance.

Procedure

Each discussion was led by a trained moderator and an assistant. The discussions were recorded and later transcribed for analysis. During the discussions, the assistants took notes of the main points raised and of their observations of the participants.

On average, the discussions lasted between 1.5 and 2.5 hours. To facilitate the expression of attitudes and feelings that could be difficult to articulate verbally, we employed techniques such as free associations, unfinished sentences, and collage techniques (i.e., representing perceptions of identities through materials clipped from newspapers and magazines). As prompts for discussion, we also used recent media materials, for example, a newspaper article about a person who converted from one religion to another to be able to be the best man at a friend's wedding, or about a theatrical interpretation of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* depicting the love between a Serbian girl and an Albanian boy.

The Instrument: Discussion Topics

After a brief introduction, participants were asked questions about several topics, formulated within a rich theoretical framework from the field of intergroup relations:

(a) *Structure of social identity*. We explored the structure of youth social identities and their importance for how participants perceive themselves. To gain insight into their spontaneous perceptions, we asked

the participants to answer the open-ended question "Who am I?" by stating their self-descriptions. This helped to reveal the position of the focal social identities within the wider context of self-perception.

(b) *Malleability of social identities*. Next, we explored the way in which the participants perceive the changeability of their social identities and the factors that could contribute to their change. We prompted them to focus on the focal identities (religious, ethnic, national) and to elaborate on the reasons why they could or could not be changed.

(c) *Contexts that trigger different social identities*. We then investigated how different contexts made different social identities salient. We asked the participants to tell us about the situations in which they particularly strongly identified with their national, ethnic, and religious groups. Through follow-up questions, we also learned about the extent to which these identities were context-independent.

(d) *Social identity complexity*. We sought to explore the way in which the participants construct multiple social identities and the factors that can influence this process. We based the discussion on two theoretical concepts: social identity complexity (Brewer & Pierce, 2005; Roccas & Brewer, 2002)—the perceived overlap between the national, ethnic, and religious groups to which one belongs—and social identity inclusiveness (Dommelen, Schmid, Hewstone, Gonsalkorale, & Brewer, 2015)—the number of people individuals identify with among those who share all, some, or none of their identities. Participants were presented with visual aids—schematic representations of various levels of overlap between ethnic, religious, and national identities (represented by circles)—and were asked to choose the ones they felt best represented their self-perceptions.

(e) We then turned to the *factors that foster complexity* when constructing multiple social identities. The discussion was focused on the circumstances in which the participants would include an outgrouper in their ethnic, religious, or national group.

(f) *Opportunities for intergroup contact and quality of contact*. Next, we explored the factors that could influence the quantity and quality of contact between members of different ethnic groups. We asked the

participants about the frequency of contact across ethnic and religious borders, the barriers they perceived or felt, as well as the contexts that fostered contact.

(g) *Permeability of intergroup borders*. Lastly, we investigated how the participants felt about the boundaries between different ethnic and religious groups, the meaning they attached to them, and the factors enhancing their permeability.

Data Analysis

The discussions were transcribed verbatim in the local language and then translated to English. The transcriptions served as the basis for qualitative analyses, aided by notes taken during the discussion. We started by reading through the complete material, and then we coded the material according to common topics, which was followed by an analysis of the common patterns and variability for each of the topics in turn. When analyzing the data, we took into account the context of the conversation, so we could correctly interpret specific answers (e.g., about the salience of specific identities). We also took care to note the instances of reactions that challenged the framing of the issues we introduced, as well as the unexpected answers (Mason, 1996).

Case Studies

Keeping in mind the purpose of this study, we decided to use the case study method as a type of empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (Yin, 2014). One of the methodological characteristics of case studies is that they rely on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion (Yin, 2014). Therefore, our case study design comprised different research methods (e.g., semi-structured interview, photo elicitation) to provide a multifaceted perspective of the phenomena (Willing, 2008). Furthermore, the multimodality of our case study

design enabled us to focus on the specific case while at the same time retaining the background information.

Goal

The main goal of the case studies was to illustrate how different aspects of a person's social identity are related to each other, and the way in which this affects a person's everyday life.

Participants

As in classic case studies, we focused on an individual person as the case. Eight participants were purposefully recruited from different cities in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, and Kosovo. The case study participants were selected so that they represent a member of a minority ethnic group who shows high social identity complexity in terms of religion, ethnicity, and nationality, aged between 18 and 35 years. An example of a participant eligible for the case study is a person who converted from one religion to another, or a person living in/originating from an interethnic family. Participants were given financial incentives for their participation.

Procedure

Data collection—and in general the execution of a good case study—crucially depends upon the competence of the researcher. This means that the researcher undertaking the data collection needs to be able to ask good questions, to listen, and to interpret the answers (Rowley, 2011). Therefore, the data collection was conducted by trained researchers with a sound grasp of qualitative methodology, as well as social identity issues. On average, the amount of time spent for gathering data was three days, but this varied depending on the availability of the participants. The methodology included six distinct phases summarized in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 The framework of the case study procedure

Research phase	What?	Who?
1	Selection of the case	Researcher
2	Initial meeting Interview	Researcher and participant
3	Photo-elicitation Collection of relevant documentation	Participant
4	"A day in the life" video recording	Researcher and participant
5	Reflection on data collected	Researcher and participant
6	Data analysis	Researcher

Special attention was paid to the issue of confidentially, and therefore all participants signed a written informed consent.

The Instrument: Case Study Protocol

Data for the case studies were collected using primary and secondary sources, allowing the researchers to explore the complexity of influences and the manifestations of youth social identities within the unique contexts in which the participants live. The methodology was largely based on "A Day in the Life" studies (Cameron, Tapanya, & Gillen, 2006) and the Negotiating Resilience Project (Didkowsky, Ungar, & Liebenberg, 2010). This study included: videotaping a day in the life of the participant, a photo-elicitation procedure, document analysis/analyses, and semi-structured interviews with the youth(s).

Interview. To gain in-depth insight into the participants' perspectives and experiences related to complex social identity, the participants took part in an audiotaped semi-structured interview. Open-ended semi-structured format questions were used flexibly, being omitted, adapted, or elaborated according to the demands of individual context (Taylor & Ussher, 2001).

Photo-elicitation. Participants were asked to take photographs of anything they wished to talk about, including places, people, or objects significant for the way they perceive themselves, obstacles to personal

development, social support, as well as how they navigate their way through the challenges they face.

Collection of relevant documentation. Participants were asked to prepare different kinds of documents that they considered important for them and for the topic. These could be essays, social network posts, personal letters, photographs, notes, official documents, or excerpts from their diaries. In the instructions for the participants, we emphasized that these documents should illustrate the fact that they have overlapping and complex social identities.

"*A Day in the Life*" *video recording.* In the recording procedure (adapted from Gillen et al., 2006), four to six hours were filmed. We did not record a typical day in the participants' life, but the participants were asked to show—on film—their strengths, the challenges they face related to the overlap of their identities, and how they overcome these challenges. The opportunity to repeatedly view the recordings was very helpful for achieving deep analyses and rich interpretations of the participants' experiences.

Reflection on data collected. As the final phase in the data collection process, the participants were invited to critically comment on the explicit and implicit interpretations of the collected data. This process of involving the participants in making sense of the data allowed for a more detailed understanding of the contextual processes that might have otherwise gone unnoticed (Cameron, Theron, Ungar, & Liebenberg, 2011).

Data Analyses

The case studies reported here represent an attempt to explore complex social identity phenomena grounded in the actual lived experience of youth living in the Western Balkans. Therefore, we adopted a general strategy of developing qualitative descriptive studies with phenomenological overtones (Sandelowski, 2000; Smith, Osborn, & Jarman, 1999). The analyses involved repeated reading/listening/watching of collected data to identify recurrent themes. Four themes were identified from analysis of collected data. These were: (a) personal information on participant, (b) factors influencing the development of highly complex social

identity, (c) aspects of everyday life affected by high social identity complexity, and (d) key messages/recommendations for stakeholders. In the final step, a narrative account that presents the elicited themes, along with verbatim extracts from participants were prepared.

In the following chapters, we present the integrated findings from different phases of research that we described here. The qualitative and the quantitative portion of the study essentially served to obtain answers to different research questions, albeit all related to the same phenomena. While the quantitative data revealed general common patterns of identifications and their relative importance, described the country contexts, and allowed for comparisons across contexts, the qualitative data helped us to understand the content of social identities, perceptions of their (un) changeability, and their salience in specific social circumstances. The case studies were especially helpful as they reversed the perspective: instead of exploring the perceptions of complexity in the post-conflict societies, they showcased the experiences of people with complex identities in such societies. Taken together, these insights elucidated in greater depth *when* and *why* ethnic, religious, and national identities are important, which would not have been possible to understand from quantitative data only. In this book, we chose to present a combination of the two types of data, hopefully enabling the reader to fully grasp all the nuances related to context and the identities it imposes on young people.

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4

Ethnic, Religious, and National Identities among Young Bosniaks and Serbs in Minority and Majority Contexts in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Vladimir Turjačanin, Srđan Dušanić, Siniša Lakić, Sabina Čehajić-Clancy, and Maja Pulić de Sanctis

The social context of Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H) today is inseparably related to the dissolution of the Eastern Bloc and socialist Yugoslavia. While 1992 was the year when national frontiers in united Europe started to decline, that same year Bosnia and Herzegovina became an independent state for the first time in modern history. Shortly afterwards, following the outbreaks of conflicts in Slovenia and Croatia, one of the bloodiest conflicts in the post–WWII Europe started in B&H. This conflict left its effects, permanently marking the country with casualties, uncertainty, impoverishment, and fear. The war ended in 1995, after which B&H was defined as a state of three dominant peoples or ethnic groups.

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F. Pratto et al. (eds.), *Shaping Social Identities After Violent Conflict*,
DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-62021-3_4

The war had dire and long-term consequences for the B&H society. Before the war, B&H had a population of about 4.4 million, and the largest percentage of the population consisted of the members of the three dominant constituent peoples: Bosniaks (called Muslims at the time)—about 44 percent—Serbs—about 31 percent—and Croats—about 17 percent. Today, according to the B&H Statistics Agency (Milinović, 2013), B&H has a population of close to 3.8 million. Territorially and politically, B&H is composed of three distinct units: two entities (the Federation of B&H and the Republika Srpska) and the Brčko District. The Federation of B&H (FB&H) is composed of 10 regions (cantons) and the Republika Srpska (RS) is divided into municipalities, whereas the Brčko District consists solely of the city of Brčko. Administrative divisions mirror ethnic divisions; thus, the majority of the RS population are estimated to be Serbs (about 81 percent), while the majority of FB&H are Bosniaks (73 percent) and Croats (17 percent) (The World Factbook, 2013). In terms of its economic development, in 2011 B&H ranked 81st in the world and was among the 10 least developed countries in Europe (UNDP, 2015). The same source estimated that there were about 500,000 unemployed in B&H, and that the monthly average wage of those who were employed was approximately 780 KM (398 €).

The division of political power in B&H today is based almost exclusively on ethnicity. Due to the fact that it has been inscribed in laws and the constitution, B&H now has representatives of the "constituent peoples" (i.e., Serbs, Croats, and Bosniaks), who act as presidents and vice-presidents of the state and entity political bodies. In this manner, the political organization of the society basically draws from ethnic, religious, and national identities. In B&H, social cues for ethnicity, religion, and nationality are everywhere; and they are more or less subtly incorporated into the daily lives of its citizens. Sometimes they are pretty obvious: for instance, when one watches the central news on local TV stations or reads the press, one instantly notices the main theme—ethnicity-based politics. On the other hand, sometimes the marks of collective identifications and attitudes are subtle and may not be recognized by foreigners, such as is the case with the colors of yard fences (the color green being associated with Muslim Bosniaks). The curricula in the primary and secondary schools are designed around the same core subjects and ethnic-specific

groups of subjects (language, history, geography), defined as the subjects of constituent peoples. This means that children are taught only about their own ethnic group and that other groups are mentioned only sporadically and mostly in a negative context (Turjačanin et al., 2009). Due to the specific character of the educational system, distinct phenomena—such as "divided schools"—occur. This term is used to denote that children of different ethnicities attend the same school, but are separated from each other so that they can take ethnicity-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.

Ethnic, religious, and national identities take different forms in majority and minority groups in society. Identifications in majority groups tend to take assimilative and expansive forms, whilst identification processes in minority groups lean towards autonomy. A recent cross-cultural study of ethnocentrism, nationalism, and other types of attachment to different social categories showed that most often there is a strong link between the identity of the majority ethnic group and nation-state identity, a relation usually absent in minority groups (Staerklé, Sidanius, Green, & Molina, 2010). This study, based on a sample of 33 countries, showed that the majority ethnic groups are more likely to identify with the state, and to embrace the state national ideology. Ethnocentrism of minority groups is more likely to result in the absence of the attachment to a state, and sometimes it is followed by embracing separatist tendencies. This was confirmed in recent research in the Bosnian context, as Bosniak respondents identified with the state significantly more than Serbs and Croats (Turjačanin, 2011).

With regard to the markers of collective identities, there is a particularly close overlap of religion and ethnic identity among the B&H population, which was recently explored by Majstorović and Turjačanin (2013). This study showed that religious denomination is almost an exclusive marker of ethnicity in Bosnian society. Specifically, there was about a 95 percent overlap between ethnic identification and religious denomination. Thus, virtually every Bosniak is Muslim, every Serb is Orthodox Christian, and every Croat is Roman Catholic Christian. The source of this overlap is sometimes traced back to the time in which

B&H was part of the Ottoman Empire, and the political units were organized as religious communities (*millets*), which were later transformed into ethnic and national groups (Velikonja, 2003). At present, religious markers (e.g., religious symbols and practices) are the most conspicuous differences between ethnicities in B&H.

With the present study, we wanted to further probe into the interrelationship of ethnic, religious, and national identities in B&H two decades after the end of the war. The focus was the youth between 20 and 30 years of age, and the study used both qualitative and quantitative methods. A battery of self-report measures was administered individually in a computer-assisted setting to a sample of 203 participants. The sample consisted of members of ethnic groups: Bosniaks (country majority) and Serbs (country minority), from different contexts: Sarajevo (Bosniak majority, Serb minority) and Banja Luka (Serb majority, Bosniak minority). They came from the two largest cities in B&H—Sarajevo in the FB&H and Banja Luka in RS. Ninety (44.3 percent) respondents were from Sarajevo, whereas 113 (55.7 percent) were from Banja Luka. The cities were also selected because they have the largest youth populations of the two most dominant ethnic groups in B&H, Bosniaks and Serbs. We used purposive quota sampling to recruit the participants in order to keep the gender ratio balanced in both cities (Sarajevo—females 51.1 percent; Banja Luka—females 48.7 percent) and to have approximately one third of the participants representing a local ethnic minority (Sarajevo—Serbs 30 percent; Banja Luka—Bosniaks 35.4 percent). We further explored the effects of context on the salience of different social identities by additionally conducting two focus groups (n = 6 in Sarajevo and n = 9 in Banja Luka) with young persons coming from locally (i.e., city-wise) dominant ethnic groups.

Importance of Ethnic, Religious, and National Identification

Within the quantitative part of our study, we assessed the importance of ethnic, religious, and national identities by using a simple five-point scale where participants were asked to rate the extent to which belonging to a

particular group was important to them. Response categories ranged from "not important at all" (score 1) to "highly important" (score 5). Figure 4.1 shows that among the selected groups being a part of their family, their circle of friends, and coming from a particular city/town meant most for our participants. The mean values suggest that they only moderately value their national, religious, and ethnic identity. Interestingly, when a sample is taken as a whole, these averages do not differ statistically (Pillai's Trace = 0.01, $F(2.201) = 0.76$, $p = 0.471$; ethnicity M = 2.77 (SD = 1.32), religion M = 2.85 (SD = 1.41), and nation M = 2.90 (SD = 1.42)), but the situation changes markedly when our sample is disaggregated by the ethnicity of the participants (elaborated later in this chapter). Furthermore, we noticed an apparent inter-individual variability in responses to these items. Apparently, the distribution of identifications was bimodal, forming two distinct groups: between 40 and 45 percent of the whole sample responded that the aforementioned three attributes were of no or low importance for them, whereas at the same time roughly 30–35 percent thought of the attributes as fairly or highly important.

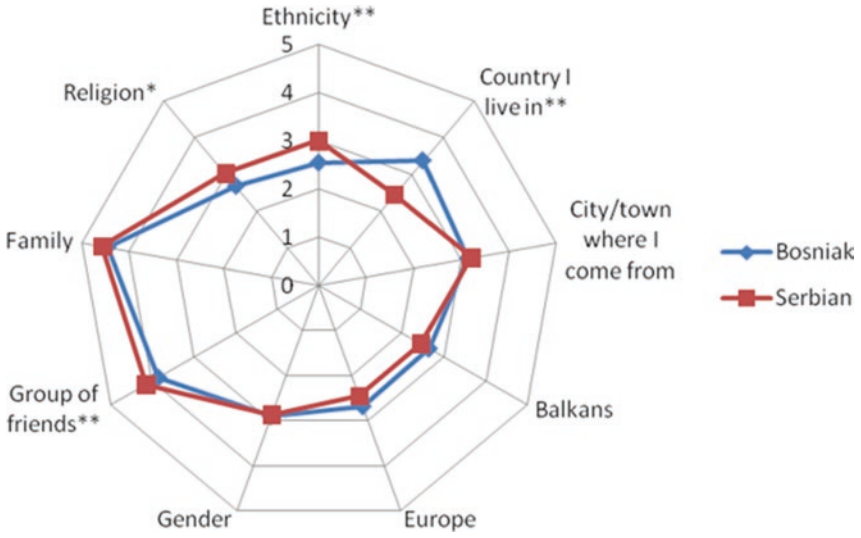

Fig. 4.1 Identifications of young Bosniaks and Serbs with different social groups. Note. Asterisk denotes statistically significant differences (*$p < 0.1$; **$p < 0.05$)

The two focus group discussions provided us with further insights on this finding. We started with an introduction in which we asked the participants to describe themselves using ten words. What we found remarkable is that our participants put an obvious emphasis on their personal characteristics, rarely mentioning social identities. Out of fifteen participants, only one—who was also a member of a political party—spontaneously referred to his ethnicity and religion as being a part of his core attributes. Nevertheless, awareness and significance of ethnic, national, and religious identities emerged in the narratives of all the participants in the ensuing discussions. The following excerpts illustrate the magnitude of this phenomenon and the complex relation some of our participants have towards the observed social identities:

We all belong to some group, to some people, I am Bosnian, Bosniak. I love my country and my people. Regardless of everything, regardless of the very bad situation, I feel I belong here. I was born here and I live here. I would not like to leave it all behind that easily. (Bosniak, female, Sarajevo)

I, for example, really love my ethnicity and, you know, the people I originated from…I don't like to idealize…I like to, somehow, critically take into consideration specific historic moments, you know, about which I might not agree for the most part…But I love it [my ethnic group] *to distraction! …However, I like to take a look from another angle sometimes*. (Serb, male, Banja Luka)

Furthermore, focus groups revealed the contexts that typically activate these social identities. Here are some examples:

I feel Muslim mostly during religious holidays or prayers. (Bosniak, male, Sarajevo)

I feel Bosniak when constitutive peoples [meaning Serbs and Croats] *are around and when political topics are present*. (Bosniak, female, Sarajevo)

I feel as a citizen of B&H mostly when leaving the country. (Bosniak, male, Sarajevo)

I experience it [feeling as a Serb] mostly through sports …In 2009, Partizan versus Cibona [referring to the finals of a basketball regional league where a team from Serbia played against a team from Croatia] *and the three-pointer from Kecman from the half-court* [a game-winning shot]*…I cried like a baby* [out of thrill, positive feelings she feels as a supporter of a winning team]. (Serb, female, Banja Luka)

It seems that wider contexts trigger different social identifications: when one meets in person and communicates with members of other ethnic/national groups, when one relates himself to representatives of national/ethnic group in competitive events, when one is involved in religious practice, and when one comes into contact with historic, political, and religious events. These contexts amplify a whole spectrum of emotions in participants—mostly positive ones, such as pleasure, thrill, pride, but also negative emotions, such as frustration, embarrassment, discomfort, and shame, which can stem from confrontational circumstances. The following examples illustrate experiences involving negative affect:

> *I was in Mostar* [a city in FB&H] *and I went to a store, where I automatically asked for a* "*hleb*" [the word for bread in the ekavica dialect characteristic of Serbia], *well, because I speak ekavica. And a woman* [working there], *replied to me bluntly: There is no* "*kruh*" [the word for bread in the ijekavica dialect characteristic of Croatia] *for you! And then she pointed to me the way out.* (Serb, female, Banja Luka)
>
> *Well, I had a really bad situation, as well. You know, when I was with this girl* [romantically involved with a Bosniak girl] *we didn't want to go out immediately because we were classmates. We were surprised that everyone knew about us at the moment we made it public, and a colleague who used to hang out with us, you know, he commented on it* [on her ethnicity], *something really naughty, vulgar, rude, better not to tell what exactly. That really, you know, shocked me. How can you say that, man?!* (Serb, male, Banja Luka)

How Majority/Minority Status Moderates the Significance of National, Ethnic, and Religious Identities

"Country Minority" Status

As mentioned, the ethnicity of participants (Bosniak or Serb) had a significant effect on the rated importance of the group identities. Bosniaks, being a country majority, rated their national identity (being Bosnia-Herzegovinian) as being far more important to them ($M = 3.37$, $SD = 1.43$), than it is to Serbs ($M = 2.41$, $SD = 1.24$; $t(201) = 5.09$,

$p < 0.001$, $d = 0.71$). On the other hand, Serbs, who are a country minority, rated their ethnicity as being somewhat more important (M = 3.00, SD = 1.39) compared to Bosniaks (M = 2.54, SD = 1.22; $t(201) = 2.49$, $p = 0.014$, $d = 0.35$). When it comes to religion, Serbs reported higher average scores (M = 3.01, SD = 1.37) than Bosniaks (M = 2.69, SD = 1.44), but the difference was small in magnitude and it did not reach statistical significance ($t(201) = 1.63$, $p = 0.105$, $d = 0.23$).

Our results confirm that national identification is the most salient identity dimension dividing Bosniaks and Serbs. Here are some examples of embracing national identity and interconnecting it with ethnic and religious identity among Bosniak focus groups participants from Sarajevo:

> *We can always leave our country, we can live in another country, but I will always be and stay Muslim in my heart, B&H is my homeland and I will always be Bosniak wherever I live*. (Bosniak, female, Sarajevo)
>
> *I am at the same time Muslim, Bosniak, and a citizen of B&H*. (Bosniak, female, Sarajevo)

In contrast, a majority of the Serb participants in Banja Luka conveyed a lack of emotional attachment to B&H, with some of them explicitly articulating their neutral stance towards it. However, in some situations it was revealed that being a national of B&H can also invoke positive attachment feelings among them. Primarily, those were situations where they themselves had represented B&H at cultural or sports events. Here is an illustrative example of one ethnic Serb participant's strategy to incorporate B&H identity into his personal identity:

> *But towards the concept of B&H I don't feel any discomfort. Simply, it is the country where I live. And you know, if we, Serbs, now learn a history of us establishing the country, which is our official history, why should we reject it*. (Serb, male, Banja Luka)

One of the obvious reasons for the aforementioned difference is the fact that Bosniaks represent the majority of the B&H society, which means they also represent the most politically influential ethnicity of the B&H society. Several studies (Dovidio, Gaertner, & Saguy, 2007; Wenzel, Mummendey, & Waldzus, 2007) showed that in situations where the

majority and minority groups need to embrace a new, superior identity, it is usually less of a problem for the majority group. Members of majority groups expect the new superordinate identity will consist mostly of their particular group identity. Minority members are those who are concerned about the identity of their group within the broader identity. Furthermore, these kinds of attitudes could be found in the belief that Bosniaks do not have a "backup" homeland, while for Bosnian Croats and Bosnians Serbs the neighboring Croatia and Serbia are often referred to as "backup" or even "true" homelands (Majstorović & Turjačanin, 2013).

"Local Minority" Status

To further disentangle different types of minority identities, we explored whether the majority/minority status on a local, city-level predicts the importance of group identifications. The analysis of variance with country- and city-level majority/minority status as independents demonstrated no statistically significant effects on ethnic, national, and religious identity ratings (all p-values > 0.05). As the sample of local minority was relatively small (30), the analyses were relatively underpowered, so we will present the descriptives for the subsamples. Overall, ethnic minorities at the local level valued their ethnic identity less (see Fig. 4.2); when we compared

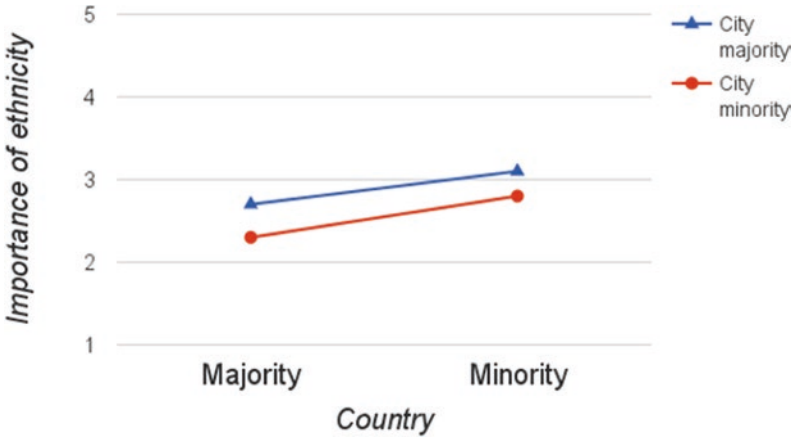

Fig. 4.2 Effect of country and city majority/minority status on the importance of ethnicity

different types of minorities—Serbs from Sarajevo (double minority) and Serbs from Banja Luka (national minority, local majority)—we found that the former valued their national identity more than the latter. This tendency needs to be further explored with larger samples.

A Special Kind of Love: Association Between Ethnic and Religious Identification

Further, we wanted to explore to what degree religious identification is associated with ethnic and national identity. In the quantitative part of our study, most participants identified themselves with the expected dominant group associated with their own ethnicity: 92.2 percent of Bosniaks viewed themselves as Muslims and 92 percent of Serbs viewed themselves as Orthodox Christians, much like national statistics. The percentage of non-religious participants was 7.8 percent among Bosniaks and 7 percent among Serbs. Only one participant of Serbian ethnicity responded as belonging to some other religion. In addition, the correlation between the importance of ethnic and religious membership was strong and significant ($r(201) = 0.70$, $p < 0.001$).

This overlap of ethnicity and religious identification is not a new phenomenon in the region. For instance, a study conducted in 1988 with a sample of 3120 adults from 37 B&H municipalities found that 89 percent of Croat respondents said they were Catholic, 82 percent of Muslim respondents opted for Islam, while 77 percent of Serb respondents said they were Orthodox (Bakić, 1994).[1] By the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s of the twentieth century, there were great social changes. The strengthening of ethnic identity was followed by the rediscovery of religious identity and members of ethnic groups practically started to identify with religion as well. Religion became more present and important in people's lives and it became a socially desirable norm (Dušanić, 2007).

Based on the aforementioned data it seems that the signifier of ethnicity in B&H has not changed much compared to the period before the war—it is still largely attached to religious identification. We must stress

that this is not due to the experiences of our respondents' during the war, as it occurred before most of them were born. Here are the focus group examples of ethnic/religious overlap and its justifications:

> *…a Muslim and a Christian Orthodox…I mean, Bosnian or Bosniak and a Christian Orthodox…that is…you cannot go that way*. (Serb, female, Banja Luka)
>
> *People here do not know the distinction between religion and ethnicity*. (Serb, female, Banja Luka)
>
> *You're right, it's not the same!* [meaning religious denomination and ethnicity] *But it is so here…one goes with another and that's the end of the story*. (Serb, female, Banja Luka)
>
> *All three groups overlap in my case, but I think that the fact that I am Muslim and Bosniak is an even bigger overlap than being a citizen of B&H*. (Bosniak, female, Sarajevo)
>
> *I am all three* [Bosniak, Muslim, and a citizen of B&H] *in one*. (Bosniak, male, Sarajevo)

It is notable that most of our respondents comprehend that religious and ethnic identities do not overlap and need not necessarily overlap; however, they find it difficult to imagine the atypical identity combinations, and they do not expect them in their social environment. Respondents from Banja Luka tend to overlap ethnic and religious identity, while Sarajevo respondents add state/national identity as well.

Born This Way: Group Essentialism and the Importance of Collective Identifications

Group essentialism, as a set of implicit lay beliefs about the essentiality of one's social identity, usually involves the perception of ethnic, religious, and national communities as biologically founded or based on deep and unbreakable cultural connections between community members (Haslam, Holland, & Karasawa, 2014). The function of this set of beliefs may be social, because it enhances group cohesion, but it could also be individual, because it provides a sense of stability and security. In the

B&H society, ethnic and religious groups are very salient because they represent the basis of the political group relations. Thus, we expected these group identifications to be related to essentialist beliefs. We measured group essentialism with respect to ethnicity, religion, and nation, in order to probe beliefs about the malleability of group boundaries of ethnic, religious, and national categories (see items in Table 4.1).

As we can observe in Table 4.1, in general there are prevalent essentialist beliefs about the nature of ethnic, religious, and national identities among the B&H youth. The respondents from both Bosniak and Serb ethnicities have similar beliefs about the malleability of ethnic and religious borders, but differ mostly on the interpretation of national essentialism, so Bosniak respondents perceive nationality as something deeply rooted in humans to a significantly higher degree.

Group boundaries are typically perceived as rigid and unmalleable; when our focus group participants were asked about the possibility to change their own identities or whether they approve if someone else changes his or her identity this is how they reacted:

> *I would never change my religion. If the other person wants to change to my religion, I would not have anything against that, but I would also not have anything against that person if we have common topics, if we agree. But it's very*

Table 4.1 Essentialist beliefs about social identities

	Ethnicity				
	Serb (n = 100)		Bosniak (n = 103)		
Item	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*d*
A child becomes a member of an ethnic community (e.g., Serb, Bosniak) by birth.	3.48	1.32	3.50	1.34	−0.02
A child becomes a member of a religious community (e.g., Orthodox, Muslim) by birth.	3.21	1.40	3.46	1.41	−0.18
One can change their citizenship, but in essence remains attached to the country one was born in.	3.39	1.21	3.83	1.15	−0.37**

Note. Response scales ranged from 1 to 5
**$p < 0.01$

important that that person does not have nationalistic attitudes. (Bosniak, female, Sarajevo)

Well, I don't approve it. Everyone has his own…but I think that if you were born as such, you should… [interrupted by other discussants] *…I say, I am a churchgoer and I believe. To change now…I don't approve it*. (Serb, female, Banja Luka)

The primordial explanations of ethnic, religious, and national identifications can justify the rigidity in identity perception, and the low complexity—their perceived overlap. When our respondents say "I was born as such" or "I don't approve the change," it is clear that they perceive these identities as innate or natural. Even though they sometimes perceive these identities as somewhat changeable, they sense there is a strong social pressure to keep to your own group. Here is an example of such a pressure from one of our respondents from Banja Luka commenting on a story on religious conversion:

This is, don't know, lovely, sweet—as one said, but if we had read the opposite, how a Serb converted to a Protestant…to go there and sing, for example, gospel and go there [to be a best man] *at an Afro-American wedding, we'd say that it is terrible, terrible*. (Serb, female, Banja Luka)

We expected the essentialist group ideas to be related to social identities, especially knowing the importance of these identities. Although, there are statistically significant correlations between the importance of all identifications and group essentialism on the whole sample, as shown in Table 4.2, we can see some differences in the subsamples. There was a significant correlation between group essentialism and the importance of national identification in the Bosniak subsample ($r(101) = 0.29$, $p < 0.01$), but not among Serbs ($r(98) = 0.14$, $p = 0.16$).

It seems that primordialism as a lay way of defining the origin of social identities is surprisingly strongly ingrained in general social beliefs (Phinney & Ong, 2007; Worchel, 1999). Such a primordial conception of ethnic, religious, and national communities is one of the important factors that contribute to essentializing identity.

Table 4.2 Intercorrelations between group essentialism and importance of identifications

	Group essentialism	
	Serb	Bosniak
Ethnic identification	0.41**	0.40**
Religious identification	0.46**	0.36**
National identification	0.14	0.29**

Note. **$p < 0.01$

Conclusion

In this chapter, we described some aspects of ethnic, religious, and national identity of youth in B&H using qualitative and quantitative methods where the participants informed us about all three of these identities. We found that ethnic identification is most salient in political contexts, that is, when politics or history are discussed. Religious identity becomes salient during religious holidays or celebrations, and national identity when one travels abroad. The changing importance of each identity in different contexts illustrates that identity salience is quite social and dynamic (e.g., Turner & Oakes, 1986).

Then, we explored local and national minority/majority statuses and their impacts on how strongly participants identified with these groups. Those who had majority status at the local level identified equally with all three groups. However, local ethnic minorities had somewhat lower average scores on their ethnic identity and higher average scores regarding national identity. On the other hand, national minority/majority status, meaning ethnicity of participants, had a visible effect on the rated importance of the group identities. While Bosniaks (state majority) rated state-national identity as being more important to them than ethnic identity, Serbs rated ethnicity as being more important than national identity. This is more or less expected, because—as we discussed previously—forms of majority and minority differ when there is a new overarching identity in play. A lot of research suggests that the views of these groups usually differ. In most cases, members of the minority are those who prefer integration or separation, while members of the majority favor the assimilationist option as appropriate for the minority group (Arends-Toth & Vijver,

2003; Staerklé et al., 2010; Verkuyten, 2006). These differing perspectives are not the best environment for the development of intergroup tolerance in society. This difference in belief about which identities should matter is the main issue of the present political and social context in B&H.

We did not find differences in the ascribed importance of one's religion between Christians and Muslims using our quantitative scales. Nevertheless, we found certain differences between Bosniaks and Serbs in focus groups. On one hand, for Bosniak respondents from Sarajevo, Muslim identity is one of the most dominant social identities. They saw religion as a way of living and as a tradition that is essential for their way of life. On the other hand, Serb participants from Banja Luka expressed the view that religion is a matter of choice.

One of the specificities of collective identities in B&H is an almost complete overlap of religious and ethnic identity. We found that 92.2 percent of Bosniaks view themselves as Muslims and 92 percent of Serbs view themselves as Orthodox Christians, and the rest identify as non-religious. Using qualitative data, we observe that our respondents perceive religious and ethnic identities as somewhat different, but in day-to-day life they seem inseparable. Nevertheless, this overlap of religion and ethnicity is not characteristic only for the observed region—it is used to construct ethnic borders in other post-conflict societies, most notably in Northern Ireland (Mitchell, 2005; Ysseldyk, Matheson, & Anisman, 2010). Religion was taken as an almost exclusive indicator of ethnicity in the wake of the war in Bosnia. This could be a result of the fact that religious identities had been the only possible political identities during long historical periods (e.g., during the 500-year-long Ottoman rule). Thus, in recent history, religious narratives became the clearest and easiest ways of interpretation of historical myths about collective struggle and suffering (Kaplan, 2007; Ramet, 2005; Velikonja, 2003). While intergroup tensions were building, the groups developed other markers of ethnicity, such as language and political views, but the primacy of religion remains mostly unchallenged. A negative side of this overlap is that religion becomes the main criterion of group differences, and the result is the politicization of religion and religious conflict (Altermatt, 1996). The psychological explanation of this phenomenon lies in the nature of social

identity complexity. Because there are almost no cross-categories to ethnicity and religion in local context, their overlap results in increased social identification effects (Brewer, 2010; Brewer & Pierce, 2005).

We expected the group identifications to be related to essentialist group beliefs, in line with their perception of importance. Generally, we learned there are prevalent essentialist beliefs about the nature of ethnic, religious, and national identities among the B&H youth. Participants of both ethnicities had similar beliefs about the firmness of ethnic and religious borders. However, the group differed on national immutability—Sarajevo respondents perceived national groups as more immutable. Furthermore, among both Bosniaks and Serbs, group essentialism was related to the importance of ethnic and religious identities, which means that, among both groups, those individuals who considered ethnicity to be primordial also felt it was very important for their sense of who they are. In contrast, we found a significant correlation of group essentialism and importance of national identification in the Bosniak subsample, but not in the Serbian subsample. This was expected, as we noted previously, because identification with the state is more important to Bosniak respondents than to Serbs.

If the social function of essentialist beliefs is enhancing group cohesion, this finding makes sense (Haslam et al., 2014; Reicher & Hopkins, 2001). In B&H society, ethnic and religious groups are very important political groups for both ethnicities, but the nation-state has been more important to majority group of Bosniaks (Turjačanin, 2011). Thus, we come to a situation where ethnic, religious, and national collectives become constructed as brotherhoods of blood or communities of inseparable common destiny, where members of different collectives become "essentially" different. This simplified view of the nature of social identity leads people to perceive their society as homogenous, while also making their self-perceptions rather simple.

In sum, the results of our study demonstrate that religious/ethnic identities are meaningful even to post-war Bosnia-Herzegovinians. Their elders' history demonstrates that the politicization of ethnic, religious, and national identity (Simon & Klandermans, 2001) has been devastating in the context of B&H. The fact is that the politicized identities can be ideologized and manipulated by the ethno-political elites, as well as by

international factors. However, among our respondents we did not see identity being recalled with regard to family suffering in the war or to war events, but rather to religious holidays, sports competitions, and contact with foreigners. It should be clear, then, that the meaning of identities is not given. The psychological and social consequences of politicization are often destructive, leading to the perception of other ethnic groups as the enemy in the political and social processes. But this is far from how our participants framed the meaning of these identities in their lives. As youth do elsewhere, the youth of B&H struggle for finding the meaning of the world around them, as well as their place in it. They may choose the ready-made offerings from the current ethnic, religious, and national identities and continue living in a relatively conflicted society. Or, they could choose to reinterpret and re-contextualize those identities in their collective favor and make the society harmonious for all.

Notes

1. Interestingly, another study from the same period (1989) with youth samples showed that religious beliefs were much less pronounced: only 53 percent of Croat, 34 percent of Muslim, and 21 percent of Serb respondents considered themselves religious (Velikonja, 2003). This contrast illustrates that even religious identification and religious beliefs cannot be considered completely overlapping phenomena.

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5

Is It Always Us or Them: How Do Young Serbs and Bosniaks Perceive Intergroup Borders?

Olja Jovanović and Maša Pavlović

Borders draw from the idea of distinctiveness. We are not what they are. We are the positive pole; they are the negative one.
(participant from Novi Pazar)

The region of the Western Balkans dwells in a long and lasting history of interethnic and interreligious conflicts, intolerance, and misunderstandings. Conflicts in the 1990s left vast and harmful consequences on intergroup relations in this region: ethnic and religious stereotypes and distance between different groups in the region, as well as ethnocentrism, although in a slight decline after the 1990s, have remained very high and prone to sudden changes (Bizumic, Duckitt, Popadić, Dru, & Krauss, 2009; Ivanov, 2008; Kalaba, 2013; Majstorović & Turjačanin, 2013; Petrović, 2004; Popadić & Biro, 2002; Turjačanin, 2004). Although formally supported by national laws and often recognized in the constitutions of the newly formed countries, ethnic minorities that continued to live outside of the country of their ethnic origin (e.g., Croats and Bosniaks

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F. Pratto et al. (eds.), *Shaping Social Identities After Violent Conflict*,
DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-62021-3_5

in Serbia or Serbs and Bosniaks in Croatia) have typically remained unintegrated and discriminated against, as well as socially deprived with unequal access to resources (Bieber, 2004; Matković, 2006).

One of the major ethnic minorities in Serbia are Bosniaks, a South Slavic ethnic group defined by its historic ties to the region of Bosnia and Herzegovina, traditional majority adherence to Islam, common culture, and Bosnian language. According to the last census of population, there are more than 140,000 Bosniaks living in Serbia (Statistical office of the Republic of Serbia, 2011). They represent 2.02 percent of Serbia's population and its third largest ethnic minority after Hungarians and the Roma people. In Serbia, Bosniaks dominantly inhabit the Sandžak region in the south-west of Serbia, where they form a regional majority (Statistical office of the Republic of Serbia, 2011). The Sandžak region hosts the largest Bosniak population outside of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The town of Novi Pazar is the Sandžak region's capital and a cultural center for Bosniaks in Serbia.

The relations between the dominant Serb majority and the Bosniak minority remain complex more than 20 years after the violent conflicts in ex-Yugoslavia, and easily become fueled in the contexts that make certain identities salient. According to social identity theory (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and self-categorization theory (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987), individuals can develop two principal identities: a personal self, which encompasses unique, idiosyncratic information about themselves, and a collective or social self, which encompasses information about the social groups, such as religious or ethnic, to which they belong.

The social self is one of the most important factors influencing intergroup relations, as it has been shown that the desire for positive social identity makes people evaluate one's own group (e.g., national, religious, or ethnic group) more favorably compared to other groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Furthermore, according to the social dominance theory (Pratto, Korchmaros, & Hegarty, 2007; Pratto, Sidanius, & Levin, 2006; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999), this "ingroup favoritism" and biases towards outgroups (e.g., idealistic perceptions of own group and derogatory image of others) are more likely to be expressed if an ingroup is dominant rather than subordinate, therefore deepening the gap between

majority and minority groups in a given context. These tendencies are also confirmed in the context of Serbia, where research considering the social distance between Bosniaks and Serbs in Serbia shows that young Serbs generally demonstrate a relatively large social distance towards Bosniaks, especially with regard to close social relations (e.g., Ivanov, 2008; Kalaba, 2013; Milošević, 2004; Radenović & Turza, 2007). For example, in a study conducted in 2003, 73.1 percent of Serbs reported that they would not marry a member of the Bosniak ethnic group (Milošević, 2004). Correspondingly, research studies on ethnic stereotypes in Serbia, following the end of the conflict, indicated that Serbs held negative stereotypes towards Bosniaks: they typically described them as primitive, dishonest, not fond of other ethnic groups, dirty, and rude. At the same time, Serbs described themselves in a highly favorable manner: as hospitable, proud, sensitive, brave, and fond of other peoples (Popadić & Biro, 2002). There was a black-or-white perspective: the majority members (i.e., Serbs) idealized their own group and perceived the minority group (i.e., Bosniaks) as extremely negative. Research also shows that there are different patterns of social identifications in majority and minority groups. For instance, several studies conducted in recent years in Serbia show that Serbs generally show strong identification with their country and ethnicity (e.g., Mihić, 2009; Milošević-Đorđević, 2007), while minorities who declared themselves as Bosniak showed moderate identification with Serbia (at that time the Union of Serbia and Montenegro) and strong identification with their ethnicity (Miladinović, 2006).

It is especially important to deeply explore the perspectives of young people living in Western Balkan societies today, since—for the most part—they were either very young or were born after the end of the interethnic conflict, so they did not witness its genesis nor were they actively engaged in the violent clashes. However, the impact of the conflict on youth extends beyond the cessation of violence. Maturing and developing in post-conflict contexts means maturing and developing in an environment overburdened with persistent tensions and divisions (Cummings et al., 2011). Therefore, it is important to explore how youth in post-conflict contexts construct the identities of Us and Them—as an opportunity or as an obstacle for developing a more inclusive society (Bodenhausen et al., 1995).

In order to understand the social identifications of young people living in Serbia today, we collected and analyzed data on different social identifications of young Bosniaks and Serbs living in Belgrade (capital of Serbia; $N = 102$) and Novi Pazar (a primarily Bosniak inhabited city in Serbia; $N = 94$). In addition, we conducted two focus groups with ethnic majorities at the local level: one with young Bosniaks living in Novi Pazar, and the other with young Serbs living in Belgrade. In these focus groups we explored in more depth the content of their social identifications and—more importantly—we investigated the factors that contribute to the rigidity of these identifications and those that encourage their flexibility. Through case studies of two young people who have already overcome the dominant ethnic and religious divisions and formed inclusive and flexible identities, we wanted to learn ways and strategies to encourage others to loosen the strict boundaries between Us and Them. We will first describe how our participants define their personal and social identities. Then, we will present our findings on the strength of identification with different social groups and compare the majority and minority perspectives. Lastly, we will focus on the factors that might help make the boundaries between Us and Them more permeable and redefine the identities of young Bosniaks and Serbs living in Serbia.

Portraying Us

Drawing on insights from the social identity approach (Tajfel, 1978; Turner, 1982) and with the aim of exploring the saliency of participants' personal and social identities, an elicitation task was introduced in the focus group discussions. Participants were given the following instruction: "During the next few minutes, think about yourself and try to answer the question: 'Who am I?' Write down ten key words that describe you best. You may begin with 'I am…'" The analysis showed that personal attributes prevailed in describing the self, for example, stubborn, persistent, ambitious, responsible, friendly (Fig. 5.1). Nevertheless, there were several social groups mentioned by participants as identity sources: student, friend, and different family roles (brother/sister, son/daughter).

Fig. 5.1 Frequency of identities mentioned in the elicitation task

Universal identities, such as human being and global citizen, were also mentioned by several participants. Even though they were pressured to comply with national, ethnic, or religious identification by other participants during the focus group discussion, they continued categorizing themselves as a members of a more inclusive category group. For example:

> *I wanted to say that for me the most important thing is to become a good person, no matter if you are disabled or if you are of a different nationality or anything else, I do not make distinctions based on that*. (Serb, female, Belgrade)

In alignment with empirical findings (e.g., Blake, Pierce, Gibson, Reysen, & Katzarska-Miller, 2015; Reysen & Katzarska-Miller, 2013), viewing oneself as a global citizen (or citizen of the world) seemed to be associated with an interrelated set of prosocial values (e.g., valuing diversity, intergroup empathy).

None of the participants spontaneously mentioned national, ethnic, or religious groups as important for describing him/herself, which could be due to the *distinctiveness postulate*. The distinctiveness postulate implies that what is salient in a person's spontaneous self-concept is the person's peculiarities, the ways in which one differs from other people in one's customary social environment (McGuire, McGuire, Child, & Fujioka, 1978). Since the focus group participants were homogeneous in terms of

national, ethnic, and religious affiliation, we could say that in this milieu, participants were less aware of their nationality, ethnicity, and religiosity, and therefore their identifications with these groups were less salient. At the same time, in the context of group similarity, personal beliefs, traits, and attributes took primacy in describing one's self, as a way to satisfy the need for distinctiveness.

However, during the focus group discussions and case study interviews, it was noted that ethnic, religious, and national identities easily become salient and that there is a dense network of identity markers in the wider social surroundings that aim to trigger these identities. For example, in the focus groups, following a discussion on who are the Us and the Them, participants were asked to complete a sentence expressing their immediate, uncensored associations. The participants' associations were mainly related to national, ethnic, or religious groups, suggesting that by altering the frame of reference so that different characteristics become distinctive, the participants' self-concept alters in predictable ways. For example: "*We are… Serbs*; *They are… Ustashe*;[1] *They see us as… Chetniks.*[2] *After the discussion, 'Serb' becomes my first association to myself.*" (Serb, female, Belgrade). These identity markers are usually tailored to the dominant ethnic majority and not inclusive of the minorities: for example, the national flag, which bears Serbian symbols, and the anthem with the chorus "God save the Serbian land and Serbian people." However, they trigger both the dominant and the minority ethnic identity at the same time, consequently making the borders between the groups more visible and stricter.

Although participants mentioned different social groups while describing their identities, they recognized that not all groups are equally important. Family and friends were mentioned as the most important ones. This is also supported with the results that we obtained through analyzing quantitative data. Quantitative data indicate that young people from Serbia generally demonstrate moderate levels of identification with different social categories such as ethnicity, religion, country, region, and so on (see Fig. 5.2). The family group and the group of friends, with which Serbian youth identifies more strongly than with other social groups, stand out from this pattern. Such a trend is not surprising, as other studies from this region also report that family identity typically prevails over

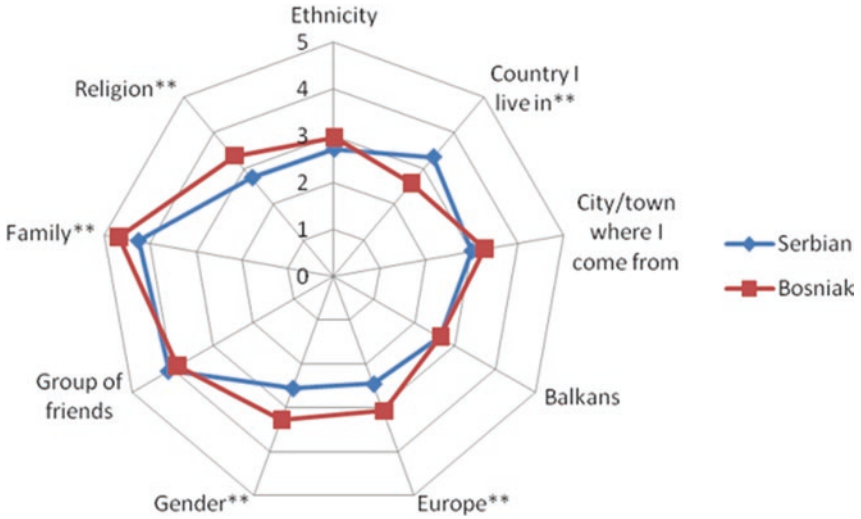

Fig. 5.2 Importance of identifications of young Bosniaks and Serbs with different social groups measured on a 5-point scale with poles 1 = of no importance and 5 = highly important. Note. Asterisk denotes statistically significant differences (*$p < 0.05$; **$p < 0.01$)

other social identities (e.g., Kalaba, 2013; Milošević-Đorđević, 2007; Stjepanović Zaharijevski, 2008). In addition, there is an abundant body of literature indicating the strong tendency of young adults to identify with their peer groups (for a review, see Sussman, Pokhrel, Ashmore, & Brown, 2007).

The trend demonstrated by the majority group (i.e., Serbs) was replicated in the minority subsample (i.e., Bosniaks); they both showed moderate levels of identification with almost all social categories except for the group of friends and family members. In general, family and friendship identifications seem to be the strongest and to prevail over other groups. Nonetheless, there were also observable differences in the levels of social identifications between the Serbs and the Bosniaks. First of all, the minority members (i.e., Bosniaks) in our sample generally demonstrated stronger social identifications with their own religious group, gender, and family, which is in line with previous findings in the Serbian context (Miladinović, 2006). This could be due to the fact that minority members

are typically more likely to perceive identity threat and to feel the need to put in more effort to maintain their identities, in order to avoid the assimilation pressure of majority members (e.g., Majstorović & Turjačanin, 2013; Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007).

Furthermore, Bosniaks were more prone to identify with the broader social instance of Europe in comparison to majority members. This finding, replicated on different ethnic minorities (e.g., Cinnirella & Hamilton, 2007; Mihić, 2009), can be explained through Soysal's (2000) view that the underlying values of multiculturalism formalized in some EU institutions led to the image of the European Union as committed to the preservation of human rights. Consequently, minorities are prone to endorse the concept of European citizenship as more multicultural and to create a perception of Europe as a context characterized by a wide range of possibilities for members of ethnic minorities. For example, the research of Waechter and Samoilova (2014), which included members of 12 ethnic minority groups from Central-East Europe, showed that youths in comparison to adults seem to identify more with Europe. The reason for that is—above all—because they believe that there are more personal (economic) advantages and better prospects for the future related to self-realization (such as educational possibilities) abroad.

On the other hand, young people of Serbian ethnicity were more likely to identify with Serbia (as the country they live in) in comparison to Bosniak minority members. This finding is in line with the documented asymmetry between ethnic minorities and majorities with respect to their feelings towards the nation-state (Cinnirella & Hamilton, 2007; Mihić, 2009; Milošević-Đorđević, 2007; Staerklé, Sidanius, Green, & Molina, 2010). Namely, minority groups may find it easier to relate to a supernational entity, such as Europe, rather than a nation-state, which is often based on an exclusive traits/conceptions group membership that is usually common for members of the majority group (Cinnirella & Hamilton, 2007).

Further analysis of the relationship between the strengths of identification with Europe and Serbia among majority and minority group members provided some interesting insights on the compatibility of these identities. There was a difference in the relation between national and European identity for our two groups of respondents—while Serb

respondents displayed a positive correlation between the strengths of identification with Europe and with Serbia ($r = 0.46$, $p < 0.001$), the correlation between these two identifications in the subsample of Bosniak respondents was not significant ($r = 0.09$, $p = 0.36$). In conceptualizing the different ways in which social identities might be associated with each other in the minds of individuals, we could use Hofman's (1988) terminology: national and European identities appeared to be "consonant" (i.e., compatible) for Serbian and "indifferent" (i.e., unrelated) for Bosniak respondents. Mihić (2009) explains the positive correlation between national and European identities through the tendency of respondents to construe Europe as a context that has shared values with their national culture. In line with this, we could assume that Bosniaks, as an ethnic minority, use a different framework of reference (e.g., ethnicity, religion) when evaluating Europe.

Similar to the findings of previous research in the region (e.g., Mitrović, 2004), identification with the Balkans was found to be the weakest when compared to identifications with all other groups, for both majority and minority respondents (M = 2.65, SD = 1.16). Mitrović argues that the weak identification with the Balkans comes as a result of the low saliency of the Balkans as a framework for discussing wellbeing and prosperity, both at an individual and a societal level. Even more prominently, dominant negative stereotypes of the region as a fragmented territory riddled with violence (hence the term "balkanization" with its negative connotations (Goldsworthy, 2002)) may hinder the identification of youth with the Balkans.

Nevertheless, we have demonstrated that it is not appropriate to assume that the construction of superordinate identities (in this case, Europe, Balkans, and Serbia) in a multicultural nation will be broadly similar throughout different ethnic groups. Having the abovementioned differences in mind, we could ask ourselves what is the path towards building more inclusive superordinate identity. Or, more specifically, is a relatively stable and strong national identity (i.e., identification with Serbia) a precondition for strengthening the Balkan and the European identity? Moreover, we have to consider which superordinate identities have the potential to become common ingroup identities for all members. We could argue that the development of a unifying superordinate

identity requires the different groups to have a shared understanding and consensual representation of the superordinate identity, allowing them to regard differentiations between the groups as legitimate. Finally, for the two groups to arrive at the point where they attribute valuable features to each other, they need to represent the superordinate identity in a way that allows both groups to be regarded as similarly prototypical and normative of the superordinate category (Wenzel, Mummendey, & Waldzus, 2007).

Us Versus Them: Construction of Borders

Despite the fact that drawing a border between Us and Them can lead to intergroup tensions and hostility (Brewer, 2010), the world of social interactions continues to consist of multiple division lines. Since individuals belong to multiple groups (e.g., sexual orientation, gender, profession), in each of these groups we probably have a member with whom we share one common characteristic, but not necessarily the others. However, if one of these identities becomes dominant and overarching, it can become the basis of intergroup hostility.

In order to explore outgroup attitudes or the rigidity of borders between Serbs and Bosniaks in Serbia, we used a social distance scale with four types of social relationships: living in the same neighborhood, working or attending university together, being close friends, and marrying or dating. Based on the results, we could conclude that the borders between Serb and Bosniak youth are still rigid. Namely, 70.2 percent of young Bosniaks from our sample did not agree with the statement "I wouldn't mind marrying or dating a Serb," whilst 43.9 percent of young Serbs would not accept the same relationship with Bosniaks.

In order to enhance the permeability of the borders between groups it is not just important to identify them, but also to understand which psychological functions they serve. According to social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), different social identities may serve different motivational needs. Group memberships provide people with a sense of who they are and satisfy their desire for positive distinctiveness by favorably differentiating them from relevant comparison outgroups. Likewise, social categorization brings about stereotypes and group representations

that tend to favor the ingroup over the outgroup (Fiske, 1998). The perceptions of our participants in the focus groups and case studies are in line with the abovementioned theoretical assumptions.

Within the mentioned process of categorization (social identity theory, Tajfel & Turner, 1986), individuals identify with different social groups and seek to construct a positive view of self, based on advantageous intergroup evaluations. Namely, as the following quotes illustrate, the identification with a specific group is guided by the pursuit of a positive social identity, which, in turn, is motivated by the need for positive self-esteem:

> *The system is bad, and therefore it is important for me to be a rebel against the system, so I can be a good guy*. (Serb, male, Belgrade)
>
> *Being a student means that we have higher self-esteem, since we are entitled to knowledge in a specific area*. (Serb, male, Belgrade)
>
> *It is in human nature to use the divisions to form group identities in comparison to outgroups. You have to think you're better than someone else*. (Serb, male, Novi Pazar)

Borders between groups are seen as a way to define ourselves using group memberships, to develop a sense of belonging to a group, and—most frequently mentioned—to defend our own group from outside pressures. For example:

> [Moderator 1: What is the function of these borders?] *Belonging. If there were no borders, everything would be erased, we would all blend with each other*. (Serb, female, Belgrade)
>
> *It is some kind of defense mechanism—DO NOT ATTACK ME AND WHAT IS MINE*. [Moderator 1: What do you mean under "me and mine"?] *My tradition, my religion, my family*. (Serb, female, Belgrade)

As research shows, borders easily emerge even in ad hoc made groups. For example, Tajfel's classic minimal group experiments (Tajfel, Billig, Bundy, & Flament, 1971) demonstrate that even the categorization into groups that are void of history and prior meaning can instigate bias in favor of one's own group. However, some borders are a consequence of explicit or implicit messages systematically transmitted by prime agents

of socialization: parents, peer groups, schools, and the media (Reidy et al., 2015). In line with previous research in this area, our focus group and case study participants explicitly noted the influence of the above-mentioned agents on the construction of borders between Us and Them.

Focus groups and case studies revealed a belief in the importance of parents as agents of socialization. Participants often claimed that the exclusive identities of youth are a result of upbringing in the home, but—although less often—the family was also where they were encouraged to learn about different customs, cultures, and religions, as well as to respect them. For example:

> *Family is also a big influence. For example, I wouldn't be so familiar with religion if my parents were not so religious or if I was exposed to non-religious people more often*. (Serb, female, Belgrade)
>
> *My parents said that I should visit all places of worship, regardless of religion, that it could be another opportunity for learning*. (Bosniak, female, Belgrade)

Although some participants reported having discussions with their peers about topics pertaining to religion and ethnicity, these were rare examples. The peer group was also recognized as an agent who creates the environment in which individuals learn new behaviors and attitudes. For example:

> *When I was younger I would spend a lot of time in Tutin. And I would go to my sisters' to play, but at some moment they would go to mosque for prayer and I would stay alone. I didn't like to be alone so I started to go to mosque with them and to learn to pray and that is how I became interested in religion*. (Bosniak, female, Belgrade)

Participants also recognized borders as a product of history and of political myths, created and manipulated by cultural elites in their pursuit of advantages and power:

> *We should think about who benefits and who loses from the distinction between Us and Them as it exists now. It is doing us, the oppressed people, the most damage, but it is bringing profit to the rich. The poor are fighting some mythical*

fights, as miserable with miserable. At the same time, the rich are counting the money from the guns, while the oppressed are fighting, not marrying, not giving birth, but creating some stupid borders in their heads. (Serb, male, Belgrade)

The pressure to comply with social norms was most obvious in the case of the more intimate and more lasting relations, such as interethnic and interreligious marriages. As previously reported, a high proportion of Serbs and an even higher proportion of Bosniaks from our sample would not marry or date someone from the other group. Data from the focus group discussions provide us with more detailed insights on the mechanisms lying behind such a decision. Not so much a personal choice, this decision draws upon the anticipated social pressure of the family and the wider social environment. As one participant stated:

I was thinking about this, and I believe that I couldn't be in a relationship with a Muslim, not because of myself, but because of the wider social context in which I live. I believe that my parents couldn't agree with that, it would produce major problems in the family, my social environment would react, and it would be hard for me to deal with it. [Moderator 1: What kind of reactions would there be?] Negative reactions. What others think is important for me and it affects me sometimes, it wouldn't be pleasant for me, I believe that I wouldn't like to live that way. (Serb, female, Belgrade)

On the other hand, participants reported that they feel threatened by outgroup members and that they fear the other side would not respect their own religious or ethnic affiliation:

I admit, no matter how much I advocate for equality, I don't know how I would feel if… for me personally it is not so important that my children practice Orthodox Christianity, but, also, I wouldn't like to have a husband who would teach them about his tradition, the Muslim religion and customs. (Serb, female, Belgrade)

It is important to mention that the findings from the focus groups and case studies suggest that young people with complex social identities—those with more tolerant worldviews and who are more open to others (e.g., children from mixed marriages, social or media activists, those

working in outgroup contexts)—are at risk of social exclusion. They seem to be stigmatized by their immediate social surroundings:

> *Everything that you do, and that is unusual for them [the locals], classifies you as a junkie, a lunatic, or a rocker*. (Serb, male, Novi Pazar)

Can Borders Be More Permeable?

Zeldin and Price (1995) noted that conducting narrative studies involving youth is one way to facilitate the shift to strength-based models of youth development. In line with this, we asked participants to give their recommendations on how the borders could be made more permeable or—in other words—how They could become part of Us. As potential mechanisms for making group boundaries more permeable, participants recognized the construction of superordinate identities, contact with members of outgroups, and changing the dominant narratives on others that are transmitted through means of political socialization, such as school and media. Here we present and discuss their suggestions in more detail.

The common ingroup identity model (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000) posits that re-categorization from separate subgroups into an inclusive superordinate group reduces intergroup bias. In other words, when individuals refrain from categorizing groups as Us versus Them, and instead categorize both groups as We, it can lead to positive intergroup relations (Reysen, Katzarska-Miller, Salter, & Hirko, 2014). We already addressed the potentials of European, Balkan, and national identity for the incorporation or alienation of minorities. In the qualitative part of the study, participants articulated the same mechanism, illustrating it with different superordinate identities:

> *I will say something stupid, and I am not sure if that will happen or not. But, let's say that aliens invade the planet, and that the existence of the human species is under threat. In that case, I believe that all borders would be erased and all humans would unite in order to survive and continue living*. (Serb, female, Belgrade)
>
> *I believe that the defining feature of us all should be the class we belong to, the material goods we possess*. (Serb, male, Belgrade)

As a host of research findings demonstrates (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008), contact with the outgroups is vital for changing the attitudes towards them (Allport, 1954). Our qualitative data indicate that young people are aware of this fact. In our quantitative study, we measured the quantity of contact by asking participants to report on a five-point scale (1 = never; 5 = very often) how often they have contact with their outgroups in different contexts (i.e., at university/work, in the neighborhood where one lives, in one's free time). The obtained data indicate that the frequency of contact was on average relatively low (M = 3.02, SD = 1.11) and, as expected, the minority group (i.e., Bosniaks) reported more frequent contact with the majority group (M = 3.21, SD = 1.04) than vice versa (M = 2.80, SD = 1.16; $t(174) = -2.41$, $p = 0.02$). There was a share of people who did not have any contact, in any context, with members of ethnic outgroups, especially among members of the so-called local majorities (Serbs in Belgrade-38.6 percent, Bosniaks in Novi Pazar-16.2 percent).

We also measured the quality of contact with outgroups by asking participants to rate on a five-point scale (1 = never; 5 = very often) how often they felt certain emotions (i.e., feeling pleasant, nervous, respected, looked down upon) while experiencing contact. The results indicated that the quality of contact, when it occurs, was reported to be relatively high (M = 3.93, SD = 0.69) and we did not find differences in the quality of contact between subsamples of Bosniak and Serbian youth ($t(162) = 1.48$, $p = 0.14$). As one respondent noted: "*We are together in the classroom. We spend time together, so we have a friendly relationship with them. We hang out together, go out for coffee*." (Bosniak, female, Novi Pazar).

In line with the important role of contact, participants emphasized the importance of the diversity of one's environment and experiences for improving attitudes towards members of outgroups. Getting to know different ways of life, customs, and norms, people start realizing that besides the ingroup's norms and customs there are other ways to evaluate the social world (Pettigrew, 1997). For example:

> *When you travel and meet different people, different cultures, listen to different languages… you start realizing that the difference between Bosniaks and Serbs is not the only one existing in the world, but that the world is in its essence diverse*. (Bosniak, female, Belgrade)

> *I would like to quote Alexander von Humboldt: "The most dangerous worldview is the worldview of those who have not viewed the world."* (Serb, female, Belgrade)

The third mechanism for making group boundaries more permeable articulated by our focus group and case study participants was changing the dominant narratives that are transmitted through different agents of socialization. Education was described as a mean for developing a perception of Us and Them through the formal curriculum, and also informally through experiences in the school environment. In line with literature on the topic (Mthethwa-Sommers, 2014), it was recognized by focus group participants that education could have a transformative potential through providing opportunities for students to interact with a world that differs from their own, while working on raising consciousness on diversities and different worldviews. As one participant stated:

> *I believe that education plays a significant role. I wouldn't dare to say that religious people are uneducated, but I believe that there is a correlation… because it supplies us with different facts and information, it enables us to question different attitudes… Through education, I was widening my perspectives, exploring different things.* (Serb, female, Belgrade)

Media exposure was also recognized as having a profound role in shaping one's views of self and others. Although the respondents in our study demonstrated a low trust in the media (M = 1.77, SD = 0.99),[3] our qualitative data revealed they still recognized the ways media shape public opinion:

> *I recognize the great responsibility of the media in creating and maintaining negative attitudes towards Muslims. In the media, Muslims are usually represented as terrorists and someone who mistreats women, and consequently that has become a common perception in the population.* (Bosniak, female, Belgrade)

On the other hand, if young people are skilled enough to critically analyze the media representation of "others," especially minority groups,

they can call into question the stereotypical views that are being promoted and suggest a different route (Scharrer & Ramasubramania, 2015). To this end, participants in our study recommended activating positive counter-stereotypes in the media, expecting that this would lead to more favorable attitudes towards outgroup members as a whole. Music contests, such as The X Factor, were mentioned, since these contests are the most accessible to youth and they usually enable the strategy of decategorization (individualization) to take place. Namely, the viewers of the shows do not see the contestants as members of adversarial groups (ethnic or religious), but rather focus on the other categories they belong to or on their individual characteristics, which have positive connotations (e.g., talents):

> *I would introduce more music contests like The X Factor… don't laugh, it has good effects; in these contests we have contestants from Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina… and, for example, one contestant is Muslim and he has a great voice, everyone would say: "Wow, great, regardless of the fact that you are a Muslim."* (Serb, male, Belgrade)

Obstacles in Redefining Group Boundaries and How to Address Them

Young people do not grow up in a vacuum; their identities are actively shaped by the social environment they interact with—from primary groups such as family and peers, to wider societal factors such as media and the education system. Our results go to show that young people recognize these outside forces and their influences, especially in fostering intergroup stereotypes and strengthening the borders between groups. They seem to be quite disillusioned with the role that institutions—both national and international—play in the everyday life of citizens (Fig. 5.3).

On average, young people trust political parties the least (M = 1.75, SD = 1.10), which might be due to the highly fragmented[4] and inefficient political system in Serbia. Correspondingly, our respondents display relatively high levels of political cynicism (M = 2.80, SD = 0.53).[5] The qualitative part of the research suggests that the youth in Serbia is not

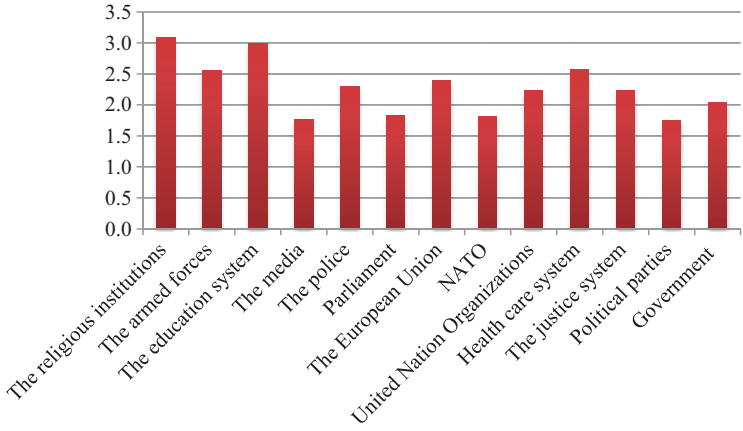

Fig. 5.3 Trust in institutions of youth in Serbia (1—*total lack of trust*; 5—*complete trust*)

simply indifferent to politics, but that they intentionally distance themselves from it:

> *I included politics in the collage* [representing the identity of the participant]*, since I don't like politics in general, I believe that politics is a source of evil. I realize that we are all embedded in politics and that it is unavoidable, but I am not a member of any political party, nor will I ever be, I promised that to myself.* (Serb, female, Belgrade)

Low trust in institutions accompanied by extremely high political cynicism creates a vicious circle of inactivity and resignation.

However, research shows that distrust usually does not completely prevent young people's participation in public life, but it rather leads to unconventional modes of involvement (e.g., protests, volunteering) (Miller, 1974; Pierce & Converse, 1989). Therefore, empowering and connecting young people via non-institutional channels might be a good starting point. Making the youth more aware of their abilities—to shape the environment they live in, to make use of media (especially digital) to reach out to otherwise unreachable peers, to enroll in civic actions that address the common goals (e.g., environment protection, youth unemployment)—seems to be the way to go about it. Redefining rigidly shaped

identities would be a byproduct of these actions, and a very needed one, since identities are the driving forces of intergroup relations and the youth will be shaping intergroup relations in the region in the future to come.

Notes

1. Members of a Croatian extreme nationalist movement that engaged in terrorist activity before the Second World War and ruled Croatia with Nazi support after Yugoslavia was invaded and divided by the Germans in 1941. Serbs use the term as a derogatory name for Croats. Retrieved from www.oxforddictionaries.com/
2. Members of a Slavic nationalist guerrilla force in the Balkans, especially during the Second World War. Croats use the term as a derogatory name for Serbs. Retrieved from www.oxforddictionaries.com/
3. We measured the trust in different institutions, including media, by asking participants to rate on a five-point scale (1—total lack of trust; 5—complete trust) how much confidence they have in different institutions presented on a list.
4. According to the official webpage of the Ministry of State Administration and Local Self-Government of the Republic of Serbia, in 2016 there were 108 registered political parties.
5. The activism-cynicism scale that we applied in our study ranges from 1 to 5 and has been validated in previous research (Žeželj, 2007).

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6

Who Is This New We? Similarities and Differences of Ethnic, Religious, and National Identity among the Albanian Majority and the Serb Minority in Post-Conflict Kosovo

Edona Maloku, Kaltrina Kelmendi, and Marko Vladisavljević

Located between Albania, Montenegro, Macedonia, and Serbia, Kosovo is a former Yugoslav territory that declared independence from Serbia in 2008. Although small by size, it has one of the densest and youngest populations in Europe, where more than 60 percent of its 1.7 million people are under the age of 35 years (Kosovo Agency of Statistics [KAS], 2013). It has an overwhelming majority of ethnic Albanians (93 percent;

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F. Pratto et al. (eds.), *Shaping Social Identities After Violent Conflict*,
DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-62021-3_6

KAS, 2013), and the remaining 7 percent consists of other ethnic groups: Serbs (the largest minority), Bosniaks, Turks, Gorani, Ashkali, Egyptian, and Roma (KAS, 2013).[1] Beyond the numerical majority-minority representation, the relations between the two main ethnic groups—Kosovar Albanians and Kosovar Serbs—are central to Kosovo because the groups share a history of interethnic tensions. This is largely because of the contrasting ethnic identities and the claims that each group holds over Kosovo as a territory (for more background on the context see Bieber & Daskalovski, 2003; Judah, 2008; Malcolm, 1998; O'Neill, 2002). Interethnic tensions peaked in 1998 and 1999 when an armed conflict erupted. The conflict ended with an international military intervention led by the Northern Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and was followed by a decade of United Nations peacekeeping mission. During the conflict and the period following international deployment (1998–2000) more than 13,000 lives were lost[2] (Humanitarian Law Center [HLC], 2009), about 79 percent of whom were Albanian, 17 percent Serbs, and 4 percent from other ethnic groups. About 3,000 people were abducted, half of whom are still missing even today (i.e., 1,600 people are still reported as missing; International Committee of the Red Cross [ICRC], 2017). Although it has been almost 18 years since the conflict ended, Kosovar Albanians and Kosovar Serbs still struggle in overcoming their troubled past. Kosovo's act of independence in 2008 seems to have strengthened ethnic polarizations even more so. Serbs have re-settled in segregated enclaves within Kosovo and are strongly influenced by authorities in Serbia (especially the north of Kosovo; Judah, 2008). Albanians, on the other hand, claim that Serbs are unwilling to integrate and that they seek the partition of Kosovo. As a result, interethnic relations remain tense and reconciliation does not seem viable yet.

With this chapter, we aim to explain the challenges and opportunities of the peace-building process by analyzing intergroup relations from a social identity perspective (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; 1986). In doing so, we first start by describing how the two groups define their social identities and how they both present Kosovo as part of their ethno-national aspirations. We then elaborate the nature of three focal identities for this chapter—national, ethnic, and religious identity—by presenting findings from a quantitative study carried out in two cities: the capital

Prishtina and the northern part of Mitrovica, which is populated mainly by Serbs (Regional Research Promotion Program [RRPP], 2015). Finally, we conclude by identifying the similarities and differences between the groups in terms of the content of these focal identities, based on a subsequent qualitative study conducted with youth groups in the two cities (RRPP, 2015).

Kosovo: An Ethnic Identity Portrait

Kosovo has a long history of ethnic polarizations between Albanians and Serbs that is reflected by a continuous struggle for dominance of one group over the other and incompatible desired political solutions (Bieber & Daskalovski, 2003; Nikolić, 2003). The two groups show high social distance; that is, they do not want to be friends, do not want to live in the same neighborhood or perceive that it is even impossible to live in one country without conflicts (Nikolić, 2003). On the one hand, Kosovar Albanians consider Kosovo's independence vital and a righteous reflection of their large majority status, while for Kosovar Serbs, Kosovo's independence is erroneous because they view the territory as belonging to Serbia. Beyond the territorial claim, Kosovo is also a national idea for each group (Bieber, 2002). For Kosovar Albanians, it is the place where the national (independence) movement was launched (in Prizren, a city in the East of Kosovo, in 1878) and where, according to their views, a historical injustice occurred when, at the London Peace Conference in 1912, the territory was excluded from what is today Albania (Judah, 2008). In contrast, according to the views of Kosovar Serbs, Kosovo is a holy place where most of their churches are located and where a number of important historical events took place (e.g., the Battle of Kosovo in 1389; see Bieber, 2002; Judah, 2008; Malcolm, 1998 for more historical background on Kosovo). Within these historical narratives, both groups have developed mirroring realities that collectively represent their own group as the victim being antagonized by the other group (Nikolić, 2003).

Apart from diverging nationalist aspirations, ethnic differences between the groups also coincide with language and religious differences (Malcolm,

1998). Albanians speak Albanian, while Serbs speak Serbian. Albanians belong to a number of different religions, although the majority are Muslim, while Serbs are generally Orthodox Christians. Traditionally, for Albanians, language and culture constitute the essence of ethnic identity (Judah, 2008) and ethnic identity supersedes religious identity (Babuna, 2000). In contrast, some studies suggest that—unlike for Albanians—religion seems to have represented an important backbone for the Serb ethnic identity (Bieber & Daskalovski, 2003; Judah, 2008; Markešić, 2010; Vasić, 2013). However, religious identity might not have the same function nowadays. Findings from a recent study show that as many as 99 percent of Albanians and Serbs in Kosovo categorize themselves as belonging to a religion (Pasha et al., 2012), although only 26 percent of Albanians and 4 percent of Serbs report they practice it on a daily basis. When compared with several other countries of South East Europe, Kosovo stands out with the highest reported rates of trust ascribed to religious leaders in a listing of social institutions (listed immediately following family and relatives, M = 7.70 on a 10-point scale; see Taleski, Reimbold, & Hurrelmann, 2015). Although these findings are very limited (as is research about religion in Kosovo in general) they could indicate a shift in the meaning and function of religious identity—especially in relation to the traditionally shaped ethnic identities for Albanians and Serbs in Kosovo.

Giving Meaning to the New Kosovar National Identity

The creation of a new national identity, the Kosovar identity, offers an opportunity for an overarching identity that could incorporate all ethnic groups. Past research in social psychology has shown that if conflicting groups are recategorized under a shared group identity (e.g., Common Ingroup Identity Model; Gaertner, Dovidio, Anastasio, Bachman, & Rust, 1993), in this case under a new national identity, prejudice and bias towards formerly outgroup members are reduced because they are now perceived as ingroup members (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2011). However, a

recent study in Kosovo (Maloku, Derks, Van Laar, & Ellemers, 2016) has shown that the effectiveness of the overarching national identity is currently hindered in two ways. First, the process of building the Kosovar identity is largely being determined by the Albanian majority, so ethnic characteristics are projected onto the Kosovar national identity by this group (as is often the case for majority groups; see Ingroup Projection Model; Wenzel, Mummendey, & Waldzus, 2008). Attesting this, Maloku et al. (2016) found similarly high levels of ethnic and national identification, and a strong correlation between these identities among Albanians in their sample. To this ethnic group, Kosovar identity was just another form of Albanian identity (Maloku et al., 2016).

The second issue, according to these authors, is that the Kosovar identity is perceived by Serbs as an identity that is not representative, nor inclusive of them (Maloku et al., 2016). Indeed, they found that national identification among Serbs was generally low (or rather neutral), while ethnic identification was as high as among Albanians. Furthermore, there was no relationship between ethnic and national identification for Serbs (Maloku et al., 2016; also see Sidanius, Feshbach, Levin, & Pratto, 1997; Sinclair, Sidanius, & Levin, 1998; Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007 for similar results among ethnic minorities in the United States and the Netherlands). This weak relation towards the national identity (especially among minority groups; see Huntington, 2004) can have negative effects for intergroup relations because it reinforces ethnic divisions even further. Moreover, Serbs might also perceive the new national identity as a threat to their ethnic identity and will therefore be motivated to increase their ethnic identification even more (Maloku et al., 2016).

Ethnic, National, and Religious Identity among Albanians and Serbs in Kosovo

In order to understand intergroup relations between Kosovar Albanians and Kosovar Serbs in more depth, the content and relation of ethnic, national, and religious identities have to be examined. A recent theory on

multiple categorization, social identity complexity theory (SIC; Roccas & Brewer, 2002), argues that the way in which people perceive others is largely dependent on how they define their ingroups. When a person has overlapping identities (e.g., ethnic Albanian identity overlapping to a large degree with Kosovar national identity), then this constitutes low social identity complexity; on the other hand, the less overlap there is, the more complex identities are said to be (Roccas & Brewer, 2002). Because social identity complexity fosters a broader view of one's ingroups, it is related to a number of positive intergroup outcomes, including endorsement of egalitarian values and support for multiculturalism (Brewer & Pierce, 2005), and more positive outgroup evaluations (Maloku et al., 2016; Miller, Brewer, & Arbuckle, 2009; Schmid, Hewstone, Tausch, Cairns, & Hughes, 2009).

Recent findings on social identity complexity in Kosovo (Maloku et al., 2016) show that ethnic Albanians have *very low* social identity complexity (i.e., show highly overlapping national and ethnic identities). These results replicate previous findings on social identity complexity (see Putnik, Lauri, & Grech, 2011; Xhelili, 2010), which showed that majority groups tend to perceive ethnic and national identities as overlapping because they are aware of the objective numerical representation of their ethnic group in the country. Serbs, on the other hand, unlike other studies on complexity in minority groups (e.g., Brewer, Gonsalkorale, & Van Dommelen, 2013), reported a *higher* social identity complexity (or much less overlap of national and ethnic identities; Maloku et al., 2016). However, these authors argue that this result shows an artificially inflated social identity complexity, where the Serbs' low identification with national identity also reflected in the low overlap between ethnic and national identity (therefore, presenting higher complexity).

To extend these findings, we examined the degree to which Kosovar Albanian majority ($N = 105$) and Kosovar Serb minority ($N = 109$) identify with nationality, ethnicity, and religion. We also examined identifications with a number of other relevant social groups, like family and group of friends, the person's city/town of origin, the Balkans and Europe, and gender[3] (RRPP, 2015). We then qualitatively investigated the underlying meaning of our identities of interest (nationality, ethnicity, and religion)

and how they nuance intergroup relations between Albanians and Serbs in Kosovo (RRPP, 2015).

Results from the quantitative study (RRPP, 2015) revealed that Albanians, on average, showed stronger identification with all the listed social identities, compared to Serbs (see Fig. 6.1): the red line, which represents the average strength of identification for Serbs, is inside the blue line, which represents the average identification of Albanians, although some of the differences are not statistically significant.

For comparison purposes, we considered not only the absolute average values but also the rank of importance of each of these identities for each of the ethnic groups (see Table 6.1). Additionally, we performed the paired-samples t-test to compare the strength of different identifications for each ethnicity. We comment on these differences in this chapter for descriptive purposes.

Results showed that out of the three focal identities, identification with the country (operationalized as measuring national identification in this study) is the strongest for both Albanians and Serbs. The average

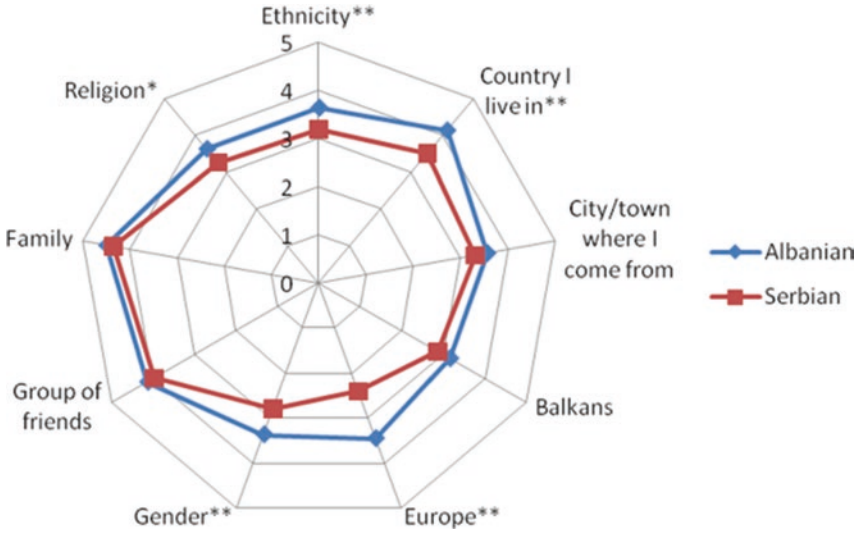

Fig. 6.1 Strength of identification among Albanian majority and Serb minority in Kosovo. Note. Asterisk denotes statistically significant differences between the groups (*$p < 0.10$; **$p < 0.05$)

Table 6.1 The strength of social identification of Albanian majority and Serb minority in Kosovo by rank.

Kosovar Albanians	Mean	(SD)	Kosovar Serbs	Mean	(SD)
1. Family	4.50	(1.05)	1. Family	4.35	(1.27)
2. Country I live in	**4.14**	**(1.18)**	2. Group of friends	3.96	(1.35)
3. Group of friends	4.12	(1.10)	**3. Country I live in**	**3.51**	**(1.46)**
4. Ethnicity	**3.65**	**(1.32)**	4. City/town of origin	3.30	(1.42)
5. Religion	**3.64**	**(1.48)**	**5. Religion**	**3.26**	**(1.47)**
6. City/town of origin	3.55	(1.30)	**6. Ethnicity**	**3.19**	**(1.41)**
7. Europe	3.45	(1.20)	7. Balkans	2.85	(1.26)
8. Gender	3.36	(1.46)	8. Gender	2.79	(1.54)
9. Balkans	3.14	(1.29)	9. Europe	2.39	(1.29)
Total average score	*3.73*		*Total average score*	*3.29*	

strength of identification with the country one lives in was higher for both Kosovar Albanians and Kosovar Serbs ($M_{ALBANIANS}$ = 4.14, SD = 1.18; M_{SERBS} = 3.51, SD = 1.46) than their identification with religious or ethnic groups, which was almost equivalent for both ethnicities (Albanians: $M_{ETHNICITY}$ = 3.65, SD = 1.32, $M_{RELIGION}$ = 3.64, SD = 1.48; Serbs: $M_{ETHNICITY}$ = 3.19, SD = 1.41, $M_{RELIGION}$ = 3.26, SD = 1.47). Moreover, Albanians showed a statistically higher strength of identification with all three identities, compared to Serbs. The results for the national identification of Serbs were higher than their ethnic identification and stand in contrast to earlier findings (e.g., Maloku et al., 2016) that showed a low identification with nationality for this ethnic group (especially compared to ethnic identity). However, a higher national identification seen in our results could be due to the way nationality was operationalized. In our study, nationality was measured in terms of citizenship (i.e., "The country I live in is important to me"),[4] which might have allowed Serbs to identify stronger with this identity by identifying with Kosovo as part of Serbia, not Kosovo as separate from it.

Going beyond national borders and putting the group identities within a wider geographical perspective, our findings show that Kosovar Albanians and Kosovar Serbs also differ in their identification with the region and with Europe at large (see Table 6.1). For Serbs, Balkan identity was much stronger than European identity, while for Albanians identification with Europe was much stronger than the regional identification

with the Balkans. The findings are in line with a number of studies on social distance done over the past decades, which consistently showed that Albanians were considered the most alienated ethnic group in former Yugoslavia, by others and by themselves (see Nikolić, 2003 for a review of these studies). In contrast, given that the case of Serbs was one of a more centralized position in the region (Nikolić, 2003), their higher identification with the Balkan identity could have been expected.

Detangling the Content of Identities

When examining the content of the Kosovar identity qualitatively (RRPP, 2015), and how it combines with the content of ethnic and religious identity (i.e., how complex social identities are), findings suggest a segmented picture for national identity among the two groups. For Kosovar Albanians, national identity is acknowledged and seems to represent the independent state that they sought to have. One participant said, "*I am from this place, and I love this place, so I feel like part of it. I feel Kosovar. All these years, I have wanted this so, it is finally here. It is my identity*" (Albanian, male, Prishtina). However, Kosovar identity is not necessarily inclusive of Serbs because it is reflected through the lenses of ethnic identity, that is, to Albanian participants being an Albanian and being a Kosovar means the same thing. When asked to describe how Kosovar and Albanian identities were related, an Albanian male participant from Prishtina explained: "*If I would put only Kosovar identity, it wouldn't make sense (…) only Albanian identity, and from Kosovo*." Although Albanians embrace the new national identity, participants in our sample have for the most part considered it a vague and an imposed political identity: "*The problem is that it is an identity that was brought in 2008…it is on paper only, I don't feel anything for it*" (Albanian, male, Prishtina). Another Albanian participant explained his attachment to Kosovar identity in this way: "*I don't feel Kosovar at all. It is as something that was given to you from an unknown source, something purely regional*."

Findings for Kosovar Serbs, on the other hand, suggest that they have an ambiguous perception of the new Kosovar identity. Serb participants

mainly rejected it because the Kosovar identity was perceived as threatening to their ethnic identity:

> *I am not Kosovar, I am a Serb. I can accept the official document* (…) *but personally I will never accept the Kosovar identity* (…) *I am Serb, and I cannot do that* (…) *in spite of the tendency and pressure on us to assimilate…I would never accept it*. (Serb, male, Mitrovica)

Moreover, this threat to identity is described as an identity crisis, in which Serbs in Kosovo have to give up their identification with Serbia (i.e., as a national identity), and adjust to the current situation of identifying with the Kosovar national identity:

> *I consider myself Serbian, but on the other hand I have the feeling that we are prone to experience identity crises* (…) *there is pressure and a tendency to see ourselves as Kosovar since we belong to Kosovo, but at the same time Serbs in Serbia do not accept us either*. (Serb, female, Mitrovica)

It seems that, for Serb participants, this ambiguity about who they are at the national level is rendering higher ethnic identification as a result. "*As much as there is pressure to give it up [to give up ethnic identity and identify with Kosovo], I put my ethnic identity above all*" (Serb, male, Mitrovica). Similarly, another Serb participant added: "*At the moment, we are just trying to endure, here and in Republika Srpska* [in Bosnia and Herzegovina]."

While Albanians and Serbs differed in their relation to Kosovar national identity, they showed similar patterns in terms of ethnic identity. In line with our quantitative findings and other studies (see Table 6.1 for quantitative findings; also see Maloku et al., 2016; Xhelili, 2010 for similar findings), the qualitative results revealed that both groups are highly identified with their ethnic identity and consider it a central one. Content-wise, findings suggest that the groups perceive ethnic identity as an identity one is born with and that is, as such, unchangeable (for unchangeable or primordial ethnic identities in the region, see Majstorović & Turjačanin, 2013; Milošević-Đorđević, 2007). Albanian participants described it as the essence of who they are: "*Albanian identity is the backbone of our thinking; everything we do or think comes from that perspective, it includes all of what you believe in and all of your values*" (Albanian, male,

Prishtina). Another participant explained ethnic identity's unchangeability in this way: "*It is important. Can you genetically change yourself? No, you can't because…you can't genetically change yourself as you are Albanian*" (Albanian, male, Prishtina). Ethnic identity was also similarly accentuated for Serb participants: "*I put up a Serbian flag as a symbol of traditional values, faith, and family values I believe in*" (Serb, male, Mitrovica). As with Albanians, it was similarly emphasized as an identity that cannot change: "*The fact that I am Serb, I cannot change it even if I want to. I was born a Serb and that's it*" (Serb, male, Mitrovica).

Given that the quantitative findings pointed out that ethnic identity was highly correlated with religious identity for both groups, with the relationship being stronger among Serbs than among Albanians,[5] we examined the content of this relationship qualitatively. In doing so, we were able to confirm differentiating patterns between the groups. For Serbs, ethnicity was closely intertwined with religious identification. "*Serbs are only Orthodox. Even atheists are Orthodox if they claim they're Serbs*." (Serb, male, Mitrovica). This was less prevalent among Albanian participants, who perceived religious identity as an identity given by birth (i.e., in primordial terms), but not necessarily an important one:

> *I accept the Muslim religion but I am not religious. I think I am in between an atheist and a Muslim, somehow. I don't keep my faith, but I accept it as a given religion and I don't mind other religions at all.* (Albanian, male, Prishtina)

However, given that our quantitative findings for Albanians did show a rather high religious identification (i.e., as high as ethnic identification, and a moderate correlation between the two), the qualitative data might be more a reflection of the sample itself rather than the ethnic group as a whole.

Findings also indicate a difference in how changeable Albanians and Serbs in Kosovo perceive religion to be. Just like ethnicity, religion was also perceived as an unchangeable identity for Serbs. "*Ethnic and religious identity for me are unchangeable*" (Serb, male, Mitrovica). For Albanians, however, religion was considered to be a changeable identity:

> *Converting? I find it really natural. A Muslim can feel more as a Catholic and become so. But, I don't think someone can "make" you (or turn you) into a*

Muslim or a Catholic. It is illogical (…) *it is a belief and it is everyone's right to believe whatever they want*. (Albanian, male, Prishtina)

For Albanians in our sample, the changeability of identity also extended to the Kosovar national identity. "*That's very easy. In fact, I think people do it a lot these days [go to live abroad] for a better future*" (Albanian, male, Prishtina). As for Serbs, on the other hand, we cannot speak of (un)changeability as their national identification mainly seems to reside with Serbia, and Kosovar identity is not accepted as such: "*Ethnic and religious identity for me are unchangeable, but citizenship could be changed only if my country [referring to Serbia] decides to cancel my citizenship*" (Serb, male, Mitrovica).

Taken together, these findings show that Kosovar Albanians and Kosovar Serbs in our sample have an equally strong attachment to their ethnic identity and it is a central source of identity for them. Both groups perceive their ethnic identity as one that is given by birth and which, therefore, cannot be changed. However, groups differ in how they relate to the Kosovar national identity: Albanians perceive the Kosovar identity as a positive identity, despite considering it to be an imposed and political one. Serbs' perceptions of the Kosovar identity are ambiguous. On the one hand, they mostly reject it as they perceive it as a threat to their ethnic identity and speak about maintaining their national identification with Serbia. On the other hand, they feel pressured to identify with the Kosovar identity as they do not seem to feel accepted by Serbia. Lastly, when analyzing groups in terms of the third focal identity—religious identity—groups show similarities in their declared religion (i.e., self-report) but differ in the content they ascribe to it. For Kosovar Serbs, religion is closely related to ethnicity, while for Kosovar Albanians, this is less the case. Religion for Albanians is changeable (as is national identity), while for Serbs religion is unchangeable (as is ethnicity).

Group Boundaries and Intergroup Relations

The pivotal importance of social identification lies in the impact it has on intergroup relations (see Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 2002; Gaertner et al., 1993; Riek, Mania, & Gaertner, 2006; Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

Therefore, in addition to depicting how Kosovar Albanians and Kosovar Serbs conceive of their identities, we were interested to understand how these identities affect the perceptions of ingroup-outgroup boundaries and intergroup relations. In terms of attitudes of Albanians and Serbs in Kosovo, our findings confirmed that there is high ingroup bias and very strong negative attitudes about members of the outgroup. This is in line with findings from previous studies done in the region about the same groups (e.g., Nikolić, 2003; Pasha et al., 2012; Putnik et al., 2011). For example, when characterizing their ingroup, Kosovar Albanians described themselves as "peaceful, friendly, honest and responsible." In similarly positive terms, Serbs described their ingroup as being "humane, not violent, generous and friendly." However, when describing the outgroup, both ethnicities tended to dehumanize outgroup members (i.e., give the outgroup a subhumane or demonized label; Bar-Tal, 1989). To Albanians, Serbs were "inhumane, unstable, deceptive, and distrustful," while to Serbs, Albanians were "violent, aggressive, fake, and not autochthon." This extreme polarization extended to (un)willingness to include members of the outgroup in one's ingroup and reluctance to establish interethnic contact. Kosovar Albanians and Kosovar Serbs both implied that the only commonality between the groups is that they live in the same place: "[A Serb] *is part of my group with or without my liking, as a citizen* (…) *a citizen sharing the same geographical space*." (Albanian, female, Prishtina). "*I don't think that they* [Albanians] *could be part of our group, since we have nothing in common*" (Serb, female, Mitrovica). Both groups found it equally unacceptable to consider including outgroup members as part of their ingroup. To an Albanian male participant, this translated to: "*To be honest, there is no circumstance in which I would consider a Serb to be part of my group. I cannot think of any*." A Serb female participant from Mitrovica similarly concluded: "*They* [Albanians] *cannot be considered as part of our group since we have many differences including language, religion, ethnicity; despite all, there is still anger and hate between us*."

The strong prejudice between the groups, combined with the physical segregation between them, seriously limits chances of intergroup contact. For example, none of the Albanian participants in our focus group reported having any contact whatsoever with Kosovo Serbs. Paradoxically enough, they did experience contacts with Serbs from Serbia, and this was

mainly through formal settings like exchange or peace programs. "*I have had contacts with Serbs, but from Serbia, not Serbs from Kosovo*." (Albanian, male, Prishtina). Even when some form of contact was present, it was said to typically occur in formal settings and was described as anxious: "*Personally, I have had bad experience with Albanians in my street. I have good experience with them at work, but my experience from the street prevents me from developing closer relations*" (Serb, male, Mitrovica). Another Serb participant similarly added: "*I have regular contact with Albanians at work. The relations are fine since we don't talk about politics. However, these relations are not close, but rather, formal*." (Serb, male, Mitrovica).

Together, these findings show a highly negative picture of intergroup relations between Albanians and Serbs in Kosovo and tendencies to dehumanize outgroup members, the latter found to justify conflict and preserve ideas that one's ingroup is superior to the outgroup (for effects of dehumanization in intergroup relations, see Bar-Tal, 1989; Haslam & Loughnan, 2014; Schwartz & Struch, 1989). Given that the groups in our sample also have little or no contact, this paves the way for reinforcing the negative attitudes and strengthening group polarization (Pettigrew, 1998). This situation seriously limits Kosovar Albanians and Kosovar Serbs to benefit from the numerous positive effects that contact has on intergroup attitudes (e.g., the Contact Hypothesis; Allport, 1954; see Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006 for a review).

How to Move Forward?

Our qualitative study also included two case studies that showed high social identity complexity (or low overlap of our focal identities: nationality, ethnicity and religion), which allows for a broader self-conception and relates to improved attitudes towards outgroup members (Brewer & Pierce, 2005; Miller, Brewer, & Arbuckle, 2009; Roccas & Brewer, 2002). We therefore wanted to analyze which factors contributed to fostering the high social identity complexity found in our case studies. The first case study was with a person who comes from an interethnic marriage (parents are Albanian and Serb; hereafter CS 1), and the second one was with a person who converted his religion (Muslim to Catholic; hereafter CS 2).

Our findings suggest that the primary components that cultivate more complex identities are: neighborhood diversity (CS 1 was raised in Prizren, traditionally a multicultural city), family as a promoter of inclusive values, and one's level of education. "*I was lucky to be raised in a context where many ethnicities and religions were present…I was exposed to differences in people since I was very little*." (CS 1). Furthermore, an open upbringing where individual differences are respected has been said to contribute:

> *Both of my parents always tried to be very cautious about giving ethnic connotations to us, so that they could respect each-other in the first place…my father could not tell me that I am Albanian, because his wife is a Serb, so he had to respect that…and same for my mother*. (CS 1)

Finally, education was considered to be an important factor for one's complexity because it broadens the person's views:

> *Education, books and being open helped me become who I am today. It is important for human beings to evolve, to try to find answers to their questions. Not be rigid and strict* (…) *I think that this understanding makes people more open to diversity. But it can only be achieved through education*. (CS 2)

In a segregated and conservative society such as that of Kosovo (Pasha et al., 2012), it is challenging to survive as a person who does not believe in boundaries:

> *I don't identify with any ethnicity, but this does not mean that they were not given to me at times. For example, in the latest population census my parents were saying that they had to enlist me as something* (…) *so at times, I am somehow forced to categorize myself and identify with a group* (….) *this is hard when I have to justify to others that I don't belong to any ethnic or religious group*. (CS 1)

This obstacle can become even harsher, including being stigmatized by others:

> *I have been judged by everyone who knew me* (…) *about my decision to convert. To be honest, my father was mainly disappointed because I did it publicly,*

since he knew that my whole family will be judged and stigmatized by the rest of the community. (CS 2)

Despite the challenges, differences between the ethnic and religious groups can be overcome and relations can improve. Earlier work (e.g., Maloku et al., 2016) suggested that increasing complexity among Albanians so that national identity is more inclusive of Serbs on the one hand, and increasing national (Kosovar) identification among Serbs on the other hand, could help bridge the gap between groups and improve intergroup relations. Note that in their study ethnic and national identification were unrelated for Serbs, so a higher identification with the Kosovar identity does not come at the expense of ethnic identification for this group. Our qualitative findings also suggest that Kosovar identity seems to give hope to creating such a path:

Kosovar identity seems like a small version of the Balkans to me, it includes many ethnicities and many religions (…) *I feel Kosovo as my state and the Kosovar identity gives me this feeling of focusing on what we have now…not on the past, like we were, Albanian, or Serb, or whatever…I don't care about the background, as this is who I am*. (CS 1)

Conclusions

In this chapter we have shown that Kosovar Albanians (majority group) and Kosovar Serbs (minority group) show similarities but also differences in their identification with three focal identities examined here: the new national identity, ethnic identity, and religious identity. Both groups hold ethnic identity as central to themselves and perceive it as an inborn and unchangeable identity. Even though ethnic identity is correlated with religious identity in both cases, the relation is stronger for Serbs, suggesting a larger overlap of these identities for them. For Kosovar Albanians, religious identity seems to be less intertwined with ethnicity and is also changeable, which is not the case for Kosovar Serbs. There is also a similar strength of identification with nationality (i.e., the country), although for Serbs, there is ambiguity as to what the target of national identification is. As we have argued, groups differ in how they relate to national identity:

for Albanians, the new Kosovar identity is welcomed, but it is conflated with ethnic identity, and therefore exclusive of Serbs. For Serbs, Kosovar identity is mostly rejected as it is perceived to be a threat to their ethnic identity; unless specified, national identity to them refers to Serbia including Kosovo, not Kosovo as separate from it.

Over and above the strengths and contents of these social identities, we have shown impediments in the current intergroup relations: ethnic segregation, high ingroup favoritism, negative and dehumanizing attitudes towards the outgroup, very little contact (i.e., only in formal settings), and lack of intergroup trust.

However, despite the severe limitations, we have also shown that the new Kosovar identity can hold the potential of bridging the gap between the groups if it is conceived as an inclusive and more complex identity for all ethnic groups. This research suggests that possible avenues of presenting the Kosovar identity as more inclusive would be: promotion of inclusive values, neutralization of historical ethnic narratives in the education system, and enhancement of intergroup contact. Future research should examine this further, and also test if there are other viable ways to enhance complexity and inclusiveness as a means of improving intergroup relations between Albanians and Serbs in Kosovo.

Notes

1. Figures by KAS (2013) are from the Population Census 2011, which has been boycotted by Serbs in the northern part of Kosovo and partially boycotted by Serbs and Roma in the southern part of the country. Therefore, the minority representation has to be taken with caution (see European Centre for Minority Issues, ECMI Kosovo, 2013 for details).
2. This figure also includes the post-conflict period, when Serbs were killed on retaliating.
3. Participants were asked to rate the extent to which the fact that they belong to each of nine social groups is important to them personally. Respondents rated each item on a scale from 1 (of no importance) to 5 (highly important).
4. In their study, Maloku et al. (2016) devised the national identity measure specifically in terms of the Kosovar identity, e.g., “Being a Kosovar is an

important part of who I am." When it was specified in these terms, ethnic Serbs showed low identification with the national identity (i.e., $M = 3.99$, $SD = 1.81$, on a 7-point scale).

5. For the Serbs, Spearman's correlation between ethnic and religious identity was 0.72 ($p < 0.01$), while for Albanians the correlation was 0.47 ($p < 0.01$).

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7

Towards Inclusive Social Identities in the Republic of Macedonia

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Macedonia is a small Balkan country with a mixed ethnic composition: Macedonians make up two-thirds of the population of 2 million, Albanians—as one quarter of the total population—are the second most numerous ethnic group, whilst Serbs, Turks, Bosniaks, Vlachs, and Roma together account for about 11 percent. The dominant religion is Christianity: the most prevalent is Orthodox Christianity (64.78 percent), followed by Islam (33 percent) (Census of population, 2002). Analyzing ethnicity and religion, the same source shows a high level of overlap in regard to the affiliation to these groups—the majority of the ethnic Macedonians are Orthodox Christians, whereas the majority of the ethnic Albanians are Muslims.

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F. Pratto et al. (eds.), *Shaping Social Identities After Violent Conflict*,
DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-62021-3_7

Macedonia in the Near Past and Today: Inter-Ethnic Relations Among Macedonians and Albanians

After the breakup of Yugoslavia in 1991, Macedonia peacefully declared its independence through a referendum in which 98 percent of those who turned out to vote opted for separation. Macedonia adopted its constitution in which ethnic Macedonians were the constitutive people, and Macedonian was the official language. At the same time, the rights of all citizens regardless of their ethnic or religious affiliation were guaranteed. Albanian representatives in the parliament did not vote for the new constitution. What followed was a period of political turbulences, during which the relations between Macedonians and Albanians became polarized and tense. In regard to responsibility for the conflict, the two ethnic groups voiced different views. Macedonians attributed the responsibility for these growing animosities to radical Albanian politicians, and dismissed Albanians' statements they were "second class" citizens as absurd (for more details, see Petroska-Beshka & Kenig, 2009). On the other hand, Albanians claimed they were deprived of their rights as an ethnic minority, while Albanian politicians asked for pluralistic and multiethnic policies to be implemented.

The armed conflict of 2001, when the so-called Albanian Liberation Army (NLA/UÇK) from Kosovo attacked the Macedonian army and police, was justified by the Albanian political parties as an attempt of Albanians in Macedonia to acquire extended cultural rights and the status of constitutive people. It was put to an end after the Ohrid Framework Agreement (OFA, the peace agreement from August 13th, 2001), signed by Macedonian and Albanian political parties and the president of the Republic of Macedonia with mediation of the international community. Analyses showed that ethnic Macedonians saw the signing of the OFA as being dishonored by the international community, betrayed by the government, and humiliated by Albanians (Petroska-Beshka & Kenig, 2009). The entire process of its implementation was seen as a weakening of the Macedonian identity (Lesnikovski, 2011). On the other hand, for Albanians it did not maintain the national integrity of the citizens who

do not belong to the majority—those who are not ethnic Macedonians (Reka, 2011).

After these events, findings on inter-ethnic relations between Macedonian and Albanian youth revealed that the separation between them became greater than before (in surveys in 1996, 1998, and 2000)—Macedonians perceived Albanians as more hostile and dangerous, while Albanians saw Macedonians in a more negative light, but viewed them as harmless (Petroska-Beshka & Kenig, 2002). Similar results on how Macedonian and Albanian youth perceive mutual differences were reported in a recent study by Pajaziti, Sela, and Trajkovska (2015). If tendencies for explicit manifestation of differences are a strong sign of tension between ethnic groups (Petroska-Beshka & Kenig, 2002), then evidence implies that fostering inclusiveness in Macedonian society is needed. As noted in Verkuyten and Martinovic (2016), many authors argue that it is important to find a balance between the need for distinctiveness and for similarity. In that sense, identification with a superordinate group—such as national—together with the identification with one's own ethnic group could be a beneficial basis for the recognition of similarity and distinctiveness at the same time. This could be a way to simultaneously foster inclusiveness and stress that identification with a superordinate group is not always a threat to the subordinate group affiliation.

Given the history of inter-ethnic tensions and the current political climate in Macedonia, we aimed to investigate the salience of ethnic, religious, and national identities among young ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians. Additionally, we examined the contact between the two groups in various contexts.

In this study, quantitative data were obtained on a sample of 264 young adults from Skopje (100 of Macedonian and 61 of Albanian ethnicity) and Tetovo (76 of Albanian and 26 of Macedonian ethnicity), aged from 18 to 35 years ($M = 24.85$, $SD = 3.2$). Ethnic Macedonians are the local majority in Skopje, while Albanians are the major local ethnicity in Tetovo. Taking into consideration both their status on the state and on the local level, Macedonians who live in Skopje are a "double majority," while Albanians in this city represent a "double minority."

Us and Them: Identification With Ethnic, Religious, and National Group Among Macedonian and Albanian Young Adults

Social identity denotes social categorization based on characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, religion, occupation, and so on. Social identity thus indicates the similarities among members of one group and the differences with members of other groups. Among the most important social identities that develop at an early age are gender, ethnicity, and religious affiliation (Verkuyten, 2005). When affiliation is accompanied by emotional attachment to the group, then there is identification with that group.

Individuals simultaneously belong to a great number of social categories, which implies that they have multiple identities. These could be mutually exclusive, depending on the circumstances and the way they are defined and articulated. Studies conducted before the events in Kosovo in 1998 and in Macedonia in 2001 (Petroska-Beshka & Kenig, 2002) showed that Macedonian and Albanian students perceived their own ethnic group in a positive way, as very valuable, especially the latter group. These results replicated several years later: both Macedonian and Albanian students demonstrated relatively high degrees of ethnocentrism and exclusive acceptance of values of their ethnic ingroup (Jashari, 2005).

However, events starting in 2014 demonstrated that common goals are a good basis for connection between the groups. Namely, students of all ethnic groups together with university teachers started protests against the new controversial law on higher education in December 2014. In January and February of the following year, students "occupied" state universities in Skopje and Bitola, advocating that the autonomy of the university cannot be bounded by the law. Both Macedonian and Albanian students acted together toward the same goal. Many protests have been organized since, and through a series of events the state fell into a serious political crisis that lasts even today. Macedonian and Albanian citizens, as well as all others groups, are faced with the same problems—economic and social insecurity and instability.

The separation between Us and Them (Macedonians and Albanians) can be viewed through the existing psychological distance and mutual stereotyping. The salience of ethnic, religious, and national identities among young ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians and the contacts between the two groups in various contexts were the focus of this study. In the following text, the results of the quantitative analyses on three types of social identities and contacts among members of both ethnic groups are presented.

The findings demonstrated that young Macedonians and Albanians ascribe different levels of importance to the investigated social groups.[1] Namely, the level of ethnic (M = 2.21) and religious (M = 2.46) identification of the surveyed young Macedonians from Skopje was low; the identification with ethnic (M = 2.85) and religious (M = 2.92) group of Macedonians from Tetovo was slightly below the mid-point of the scale (hereinafter, the mean of a scale will be noted as the average); the national identification of both groups—Macedonians from Skopje (M = 3.05) and Macedonians from Tetovo (M = 2.96)—was assessed as average (Table 7.1).

In contrast, Albanian young adults from Skopje and especially from Tetovo expressed relatively strong identification with their ethnic (M = 3.30 and M = 4.07, respectively, which were reliably different) and religious identity (M = 3.90 and M = 3.95, respectively) group. Regarding national identity, it could be noted that identification was above the average among surveyed Albanians from Tetovo (M = 3.45), while Albanians from Skopje reported a relatively strong sense of national identity (M = 3.80). As shown in Table 7.1, the test of differences between

Table 7.1 Mean scores on ethnic, religious, and national group identification by ethnicity and town

		Town		Total	*t*-test
Ethnicity	Variables	Skopje	Tetovo		
Macedonian	Ethnic group identification	2.21	2.85	2.34	−1.12
	Religious group identification	2.46	2.92	2.56	−1.48
	National group identification	3.05	2.96	3.03	0.27
Albanian	Ethnic group identification	3.30	4.07	3.72	−3.26**
	Religious group identification	3.90	3.95	3.93	−0.18
	National group identification	3.80	3.45	3.61	1.51

Macedonians from Skopje and Tetovo and between Albanians from Skopje and Tetovo in regard to the level of identification with the investigated social groups revealed that the first two groups did not differ in their expressed identification with their ethnic, religious, and national affiliation, probably due to their majority status on the state level ($t(124) = -1.12$, *ns*, $t(124) = -1.48$, *ns*, and $t\ (124) = 0.47$, *ns*, respectively).

On the other hand, despite their majority status on the local level, Albanian youth from Tetovo had a significantly stronger attachment (M = 3.30) to their ethnic group compared to Albanian youth from Skopje (M = 4.07) ($t\ (135) = -3.26$, $p < 0.01$). It is likely that their minority status on the state level plays a more important role than their position as a local majority. In addition, societal pressure to conform might be stronger in smaller communities, such as Tetovo, than in the capital Skopje. For example, Kenig's study (2003) showed that higher orientation to collectivism (importance of group affiliation and cohesiveness) was related to stronger ethnic and religious identification. In other words, this means that the higher the collectivism, that is, the more one gives priority to their ingroup and to the attitudes and behavior of its members, the higher the conformism of the individual. Differences in regard to religious and national identification among Albanians from Skopje (M = 3.90 and M = 3.80, respectively) and from Tetovo (M = 3.85 and M = 3.45) were not found ($t\ (135) = -0.18$, *ns*, and $t\ (135) = 1.51$, *ns*, respectively).

In general, the Macedonians' attachment to their ethnic and religious group was evidently lower in comparison to their Albanian peers. Their relatively weak ethnic identification could probably be explained through what Verkuyten (2005) stated about the ethnic identification of majority groups. One explanation of such results could be that majority group members view themselves as the rule rather than as the exception, so they can more easily deny the psychological importance of ethnicity, which could be true for religious group attachment as well. However, it could also be plausible that Macedonians, who are representatives of the majority, reported weaker identification with ethnicity and religion due to their high disapproval of the current state of the society in the Republic of Macedonia—the governmental policies, the economy of the country, and

so on. Such disapproval is evident on a daily basis, demonstrated through the unrest of thousands of people who frequently take to the streets of the major cities in the country, expressing their rage against the political parties who have been running the country for the last eight years.

The psychological effect of ethnic minority membership—sensing a threat to one's social identity (Tajfel, 1982)—could be seen as a reason why Albanian youth ascribed high psychological value to their ethnicity. In addition, there was a tendency for even higher religious identification among the Albanian participants in this study. This could be explained by the fact that emphasizing distinctiveness in relation to outgroups is the foundation for the development of homogeneity in the ingroup (Petroska-Beshka & Kenig, 2002) and for the strengthening of one's sense of "personal security and certainty" (Brewer, 2009, p. 17). On the one hand, religious identification is probably an additional form of distinctiveness in addition to ethnic identification, while on the other hand, religious beliefs can possibly be seen as a factor for increasing feelings of security. It is also true that, in recent years, there has been an evident increase in the religiosity of Muslims in the Balkan region in general, so these findings in Macedonia are in some way expected.

Surprisingly, Albanian respondents reported a slightly stronger sense of national identity than Macedonian study participants. This finding contradicts the notion that identification with a superordinate group can be seen as a threat by the minority ethnic subgroup (Verkuyten & Martinovic, 2016). However, the expressed national identification of ethnic Albanians could be explained in light of the indispensability of a subgroup for the national category. It is possible that Albanians perceive their ingroup as more indispensable to the national group (Republic of Macedonia) than other outgroups that are minority as well, but are evidently less represented in the state. Some similar findings are reported in the study of Brewer, Gonsalkorale, and van Dommelen (2013), in which the Chinese-Australian minority demonstrated higher Australian national identification than the Anglo-Australian majority. Our research in Macedonia was conducted in specific circumstances: Macedonian and Albanian students were joined together in a collective action, cooperating towards the same goal (opposition to the proposed education law). It is also possible that the Albanian respondents gave biased answers in order to represent themselves

in a more positive manner or that they demonstrated a tendency to rate all three types of social identities higher in comparison to the Macedonian participants. Alternatively, these might be genuine responses because of the fact that many of these participants have Macedonian friends, so they might be more positive and open to cooperation and accepting differences (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). However, compared to the empirical results reported three years before ours by Hristova and Cekik (2013), the Albanian sample in our study is slightly more nationally identified, but the Macedonian sample is significantly less nationally identified. This decrease could be due to the prolonged economic hardships, grim possibilities for the future employment, and anomia among young Macedonians (Fritzhand & Blazhevska Stoilkovska, 2016) that lead to detachment from the country they live in. Even though young Albanians share the same social reality, their disillusionment might be less pronounced due to lower initial attachment. This unexpected pattern of identification is yet to be replicated and its mechanisms further explored.

The qualitative analysis on ethnic, religious, and national identity and contacts between ethnic Macedonian and ethnic Albanian youth supports the quantitative findings in regard to ethnic and religious identification. Albanian participants from Tetovo showed a tendency to hold tightly to their identity, both ethnic and religious. When asked about their identity, they readily proclaimed themselves to be Albanian and Muslim, perceived as the core of their being and inherited from their ancestors. They felt proud to emphasize their identification with the ethnic and religious groups, as demonstrated by the following statements:

> *I'm a patriotic Albanian… as for religion, I am a deist* (God created the universe). (Albanian, male, Tetovo)
>
> *Albanian, a patriotic one… I'm a nationalist; I recognize myself and feel as an Albanian, even though I live in Macedonia, even though my citizenship defines me as a citizen of the Republic of Macedonia. Circumstances forced me to live with this… but, in the meantime, if somebody offends Macedonia, as a matter of fact, I do not feel attached, I do not care*. (Albanian, male, Tetovo)

Supported by many others, the second statement demonstrated a low level of attachment to nationality as a social identity. Additionally,

participants pointed out their distance from the official name of Macedonia—through the well-known phrase "Don't FYROM[2] me!"—and the image that the country has worldwide. They stressed the tendency to introduce themselves by their ethnic identity rather than the country they come from (the citizenship). Instead of saying "I'm from Macedonia," they tend to emphasize that they are Albanian, and they feel more related to Albania as their homeland. They insist on this strong feeling even when they go to Albania (trips, vacations, etc.). When they are identified by Albanians (from Albania) as Macedonian, Albanians from Macedonia strongly refuse the term and try to convince them that they are all compatriots.

Statements of the Albanian focus group participants demonstrated their tendency to emphasize the salience of their ethnic affiliation, their strong commitment to Albanian ethnicity, and their distinctiveness from Macedonians as a majority in the country. That is particularly in line with the quantitative findings on identification with ethnic group among Albanian study participants who live in Tetovo. Considering national identification, the qualitative data are opposite to what was revealed in the quantitative analysis. Taking into account the explanations of quantitative study results on this type of social identity, and especially the similarity of the obtained data with previous research findings (e.g., Hristova & Cekik, 2013), the focus group data can probably be seen as a result of the tendency to be similar with ethnic ingroup members, to meet group expectations, and to avoid group pressure. Further research on social identification, particularly national, should be conducted on other samples.

Unlike the Albanian participants, Macedonian participants reported that ethnic and religious identity are not important for them. The way they described their weak identification with the ethnic group can be seen in the following statements:

> *I perceive myself as a citizen* [of Macedonia] *more than I identify as an ethnic Macedonian because… I think that defines me more, that I was born here and I've got that citizenship… I do not know… somehow it was more like—I've been put here, and now I'm trying to manage that, than trying to harbor some feelings and traditions.* (Macedonian, male, Skopje)

> *I think, for me, to be an ethnic Macedonian should mean that I am different from someone who is Albanian or Turkish, or whatever she/he is… for example, in my family we never made a big difference and I've never had to separate from someone, like I am Macedonian and you're not.* (Macedonian, female, Skopje)

Macedonians gave different explanations for their level of attachment to nationality than Albanians. For many of them, being Macedonian and living in Macedonia is not imperative, as the country and its institutions are not meeting their needs as citizens (employment opportunities, safety, health care, quality of life). This can be illustrated through the following statement: "If we were from Sweden, we would be happy to say we are Swedes, but we are in Macedonia, so… it is not about what to say, just, you do not consider, recognize it as your personal identity" (Macedonian, male, Skopje). Similar statements were given by other focus group participants, which lead to the conclusion that they were expressing their resentment toward the state, that is, state institutions. However, at the same time, the statement "In sports, in situations when someone represents my country, then yes [I feel Macedonian]" (Macedonian, female, Skopje) leads to the conclusion that the importance of the national background is expressed in specific contexts, for instance when the country is represented abroad. This is true for Albanians, as well. They said that they would be proud to hear of any success of Macedonia, in sports, in the international arena, and so on.

The given statements could be considered through the perspective that various identities become more or less salient in different contexts (e.g., Wentholt, 1991, as cited in Verkuyten, 2005). Statements demonstrating the influence of the context on the salience of national identification, especially those of Albanian focus group participants, could present support for the obtained quantitative data on attachment to national group. A previous study (Back, 1996, as cited in Verkuyten, 2005) demonstrated that ethnic identity was denied in favor of local and sub-cultural identities, but at the same time exclusive notions of ethnicity were registered.

Similarly, when put in situations in which they are forced to consider the malleability of their ethnic and religious identity in the next five years

(for instance, marriage with a member of a different ethnic group), most of the Macedonian participants stated that they would not change their ethnicity and/or religious affiliation. Similar and even stronger statements were noted among Albanian participants. For instance:

> *I have found myself in Islam, and I'd never trade that for anything in the world. And I'm a man. There's no issue that would change my mind, like money, profit, or bad reputation, like mixing Islam with terrorism, Islamic state, etc*. (Albanian, male, Tetovo)

When it comes to nationality, Macedonian participants demonstrated a readiness to change their citizenship. The following statement shows their reasons:

> *So, as for the future, I sincerely think that maybe I will leave the country because of employment. So, if, as an external factor, if I find work there, most likely I'll become a citizen of that other state… but ethnicity, as a Macedonian, I think you carry that wherever you go… I will still keep some traditions… and my religion, I do not believe that it would be changed either*. (Macedonian, female, Skopje)

Another participant added: "Due to work and depending on how things will go in Macedonia, right now I feel that it is unstable" (Macedonian, male, Skopje).

Similar reasons to change their nationality were pointed out by some of the Albanian participants, for example, "Yes, definitely, for a better life" (Albanian, male, Tetovo) and "I'd prefer every possible country, better than Macedonia, preferably Switzerland, Germany, USA" (Albanian, female, Tetovo). One participant noted how their social environment sees this issue in the following statement: "I think there is some bias here [in Macedonia], if you change your nationality or religion that it will be perceived as betrayal" (Macedonian, female, Skopje).

Confirming previous research findings (Beshka & Kenig, 2002; Pajaziti et al., 2015; Petroska-Beshka, Popovski, & Kenig, 1999), and in line with the expressed strong ethnic and religious identity, Albanian participants reported a clear distinction between Us (Albanians and Muslims) and

Them (Macedonians). Perceiving their own group in a positive way, they defined themselves as follows: "We are… Albanians, patriotic, people of their word (*Besa*[3]), people of faith (religion), people of strong belief, humanists, hardworking persons etc.," and for the other group they said: "They are… Macedonians." Thus, it could be proposed that negative stereotyping of the outgroup is still as present as before (e.g., Petroska-Beshka & Kenig, 2002; Petroska-Beshka et al., 1999).

In the Macedonian group, we registered more heterogeneous answers in regard to the Us and Them relation. One participant said: "They are human and we are human" (Macedonian, male, Skopje), indicating that both Macedonians and Albanians belong to the human race. However, the same respondent still recognizes, as many others, that distance/separation does exist as something deeply rooted in our society, and that should definitely be changed. Another participant added:

> *When I observe them* [ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians] *as two groups, I think there are disagreements because they have different values, I think, I feel that Albanians are more collectivistic as a community and group affiliation is very important to them. We are trying somehow to become more individualistic*. (Macedonian, male, Skopje)

Still, no negative attributes were expressed in reference to the Us and Them distinction. The following statement also reflects the perception of the Us and Them relationship: "All of us live in Macedonia and we are all Macedonians [citizens], we have the same rights and obligations in Macedonia, privileges, except for those who feel that they are not [citizens of Macedonia]" (Macedonian, female, Skopje). This is in line with the common ingroup identity model, which proposes that outgroup members will be treated as ingroup counterparts based on the more inclusive group (e.g., national identity) (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000).

Contact between groups can have an important role in the process of creating a common identity and overcoming mutual stereotypes (e.g., Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). The following section presents results from quantitative and qualitative data analyses of intergroup relations between ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians.

Contacts Between Macedonian and Albanian Youth in Skopje and in Tetovo

Cross-group interaction can make salient membership in a superordinate group of those affiliated to different subgroups simultaneously leads to positive relations between those subgroups (Brewer, 2009). Gaertner, Dovidio, Anastasio, and Bachman (1993) proposed that the process of re-categorization leads to a transition from Us and Them to We. Study findings reported by van Dommelen, Schmid, Hewstone, Gonsalkorale, and Brewer (2015), that contacts with members of religious and ethnic outgroups are associated with a more inclusive social self, indicate the importance of communication across groups for social identity inclusiveness.

As previous research suggests, although Macedonian and Albanian young adults have opportunities for contact in many public places, such as universities, work settings, cinemas, cafes, and so on, close relations among them are mostly rare. This fact probably reflects the psychological distance reported in the aforementioned research studies. Macedonian and Albanian students in primary and secondary schools are, in some cases, separated in double shifts or even in different schools. Occasionally, there are inter-ethnic tensions (e.g., during sports competitions among, in most cases, football fan groups; see Anastasovski, Aleksovska Velichkovska, Zivkovic, & Ajdini, 2013; Anastasovski & Stojanoska, 2010).

In general, contacts can be seen as a way of facilitating a context that fosters mutual acceptance of members of different groups (Jonas, 2009). As Wright (2009) pointed out, contacts with cross-group friends have a bigger effect on positive attitudes towards outgroups than those with co-workers and neighbors. Therefore, the frequency of contacts among ethnic Macedonian and ethnic Albanian youth in different contexts was examined. Results showed that both groups in this study meet each other at the places where they study or where they work (Table 7.2).

As expected, Albanians from Skopje and Macedonians from Tetovo, due to their minority status in the mentioned towns, had greater opportunity to meet majority group members and thus reported more frequent

Table 7.2 Frequency of contacts in different contexts by ethnicity and town

Ethnicity	Variables	Town		
		Skopje	Tetovo	Total
Macedonian	Contact at university/work	3.20	4.08	3.39
	Contact in neighborhood	2.34	3.69	2.63
	Contact in free time	2.30	2.92	2.43
Albanian	Contact at university/work	3.87	3.12	3.24
	Contact in neighborhood	2.40	2.01	2.08
	Contact in free time	2.67	2.12	2.21

Note. Answers were given on a 5-point scale ranging from 1—never to 5—very often; a higher score means more frequent contacts

contacts with the outgroup in formal settings such as university or the workplace. In the community, that is, the place where they live, and during their leisure time, communication among Macedonian and Albanian youth from both cities, as they stated, is rare, indicating an evident separation of these groups in everyday life. Wright (2009) stressed the importance of cross-group friendship, explaining that—through friends who are members of the outgroup—the outgroup itself can be included in the self and can become salient. The author, further, argues that real membership in certain outgroups is impossible, but what is important for fostering social identity inclusiveness is the psychological connection. In addition, it should be pointed out that many studies revealed that the quality of contacts, such as close friendship, is more important than the number of friends or frequency of contacts (e.g., Wright, Brody, & Aron, 2004). This implies that attention should be focused on fostering contacts, especially in one's free time when there is more possibility for establishing closer relationships.

The investigation of the quantity of contacts (direct communication with outgroup friends) and the quality of contacts among Macedonian and Albanian respondents revealed that Macedonians from Skopje and Albanians from Tetovo have little direct contact with outgroup members, but both groups assessed the quality of contacts as above average (Table 7.3). Albanians from Skopje reported the widest network of direct communication with Macedonians, the quality of which was assessed as above average, whereas Macedonians from Tetovo were second in regard to the quantity of direct communication with outgroup members

Table 7.3 Quantity of direct contacts and quality of contacts by ethnicity and town

Ethnicity	Variables	Town		Total	Test of difference
		Skopje	Tetovo		
Macedonian	Quantity of direct contacts (Mdn)	2.0	4.50	3.0	−2.06*
	Quality of contacts (M)	3.47	3.62	3.51	−0.68
Albanian	Quantity of direct contacts (Mdn)	8.5	3	5.0	−3.41**
	Quality of contacts (M)	3.68	3.02	3.31	4.67***

Note. An open-ended question was used to measure the quantity of direct contacts; participants were asked to answer how many of their friends are members of the other group.
*$p < 0.05$. **$p < 0.01$. ***$p < 0.001$.

(Albanians), also with an above-average rating of the quality of contacts. In general, study participants typically reported the number/quantity of direct contacts with members of the outgroup as relatively small, while they stated that the quality of their contacts was above the scale mid-point. Differences in regard to the quantity of direct contacts among Macedonians from Skopje and Tetovo and among Albanians from these towns were analyzed performing the Mann-Whitney U test. Analyses revealed that Macedonians from Tetovo have more direct contact with Albanians (Mdn = 4.5) than Macedonians from Skopje (Mdn = 2.0) (U = 912; z = −2.06; $p < 0.05$). The results are opposite in the Albanian subsample, that is Albanians from Skopje reported more direct contact with Macedonians (Mdn = 8.5) than their counterparts from Tetovo (Mdn = 3.0) (U = 1390; z = −3.41; $p < 0.01$). These findings are in line with previous results on the frequency of contacts in different contexts, thus strengthening the aforementioned conclusions. When it comes to the differences in quality of contacts, examined using the t-test, it was found that Macedonians from Skopje and Tetovo did not differ in the assessed quality of contacts with Albanians, whereas Albanians from Skopje rated the quality of contacts with Macedonians significantly higher (M = 3.68) than Albanians from Tetovo (M = 3.02) (t (135) = 4.67; $p < 0.001$).

Results in Tables 7.4 and 7.5 showed that ethnic, religious, and national identification among Macedonians were negatively and significantly related to quality of contacts with members of ethnic outgroup; among

Table 7.4 Correlations between study variables in the Macedonian subsample

	1	2	3	4	5
ID Ethnicity					
ID Religion	0.735**				
ID Country I live in	0.428**	0.496**			
Quantity of contacts with members of the other ethnicity	−0.12	−0.00	−0.027		
Quality of contacts with members of the other ethnicity	−0.242**	−0.214*	−0.212*	0.10	

Note. *$p < 05$. **$p < 0.01$

Table 7.5 Correlations between study variables in the Albanian subsample

	1	2	3	4	5
ID Ethnicity					
ID Religion	0.488**				
ID Country I live in	0.315**	0.364**			
Quantity of contacts with members of the other ethnicity	−0.15	−0.04	0.079		
Quality of contacts with members of the other ethnicity	−0.215*	−0.036	0.048	0.18	

Note. *$p < 05$. **$p < 0.01$

Albanians quality of contact with ethnic out-group correlated significantly only with their ethnic identification. As can be noted, quality of intergroup contacts can decrease distinctiveness among both ethnicities.

Taking into consideration intergroup relations, many Albanian participants in the focus group reported that they have Macedonian neighbors, that they are friendly, exchange visits, and have contacts at universities and at work. But, on the other hand, they pointed out a tendency to be very careful in their relations. As one participant stated:

> *I'd never try their red eggs they color for Easter. On the other hand, they accept baklava for our Bayrams [holidays]. We exchange best wishes for our holidays… but, there are some nationalistic policies, maybe not only from their side but ours too, making us hold back*. (Albanian, male, Tetovo)

The lack of readiness to accept Easter presents from an outgroup member could reflect a lack of trust. On the other hand, most of the Macedonian focus group participants reported that they have infrequent contacts with

Albanians, while some participants noted having Albanian friends, but those Albanians who are atheists. Literature suggests the contrary, that contacts with outgroup members who are typical representatives of their group are most important for altering stereotypes (Wright, 2009).

The Albanian participants recognized politics and politicians as responsible for the distance between the two groups. They also noted other factors that contribute to the infrequency of contacts, such as stereotypes and prejudices, different value systems and culture, and the way media reports events. As one participant stated:

> *I think there are still those prejudices. We should try to overcome them. It is not an easy process… I think, if we have more communication, if we have a common goal, somehow more contact between people and not separation… from start they tell us…some stories or some gossip… you should be more cautious… later, when you think about it, basically there is no reason for that.* (Macedonian, female, Skopje)

This statement also recognized the tendency of being cautious in contacts with outgroup members, seeing it as imposed by others and without objective reasons. Another participant noted: "I think that until recently we were moving toward segregation [Macedonian-Albanian relations], but now I think we have much bigger problems… you see those more… the question whether you will survive [referring to the economic situation]" (Macedonian, male, Skopje).

In line with the quantitative data, the focus group analysis showed that direct and close intergroup communication is relatively rare, and at the same time, it indicated the possible factors contributing to that situation. Namely, the existing negative stereotyping and prejudice toward the outgroup and the evident lack of mutual trust were recognized as the barriers of cross-group contacts. As Wright, Aron, McLaughlin-Volpe, and Ropp (1997) argued, contacts can have an extended effect. Fostering close intergroup contacts through civic actions and friendship development is of great importance for positive attitudes toward outgroups.

Almost all the Macedonian participants in the focus group recognized that a larger number of contacts, more frequent communication, and defining common goals and interests are needed to overcome the distance between the groups. They stated that both Macedonians and Albanians

would like to live in a peaceful and prosperous environment, but according to them, one's opinion on how to achieve that depends on several factors, such as the level of education, training, place of residence, and so on. Albanian participants stated that they would like to live with Macedonians, in the same neighborhood. Referring to identity inclusiveness, one participant said: "If we want to overcome these tension issues we have, we must not think this way" (Albanian, male, Tetovo). At the end of the discussion, one participant stated:

> *I'd argue for coexistence in a multiethnic country. It should not be so important [ethnic, religious, and national identity] if everyone is really interested… to put behind those things and go toward a more collectivist life. That will bring only good and not… not make even greater discord. It is true on a global, institutional level.* (Macedonian, female, Skopje)

According to the aforementioned statements, there are tendencies to affiliate with humankind as a superordinate identity that will include national, ethnic, and religious categories.

Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to discuss ethnic, religious, and national identity of ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians in the specific cultural, social, and political context of the Republic of Macedonia. The study focus was the salience of these social groups for young adults. The presented quantitative and qualitative data analyses indicate several important differences between Macedonians and Albanians in terms of complex social identities.

With regard to the ethnic and religious identification of young Macedonians from Skopje (where Macedonians are the majority), findings suggest a low sense of both types of identity. At the same time, Albanians from Skopje and especially those from Tetovo expressed relatively strong identification with their ethnic and religious groups. Identification with ethnic and religious groups for Macedonians from Tetovo (where they are the minority) was slightly below average. The

national identification of both groups of Macedonian ethnicity was assessed as average. Contrary to that, national identification of Albanians from Tetovo was above average, while Albanians from Skopje surprisingly reported a relatively high sense of national identity. In general, members of the national majority tend to embrace national identity, while the minority group identifies more with their ethnic and religious identity. This should be taken into account while creating intervention programs that focus on complex social identities (national, ethnic, and religious), since the representatives of majority and minority groups analyzed in this study are considering its importance very differently.

Findings on the strong positive relation between ethnic and religious identity should be especially noted. Young Albanians and Macedonians—as shown in the results section—perceive a clear distinction between Us (Albanians/Muslim or Macedonian/Orthodox) and Them along both ethnic and religious lines. As focus group participants of Macedonian ethnicity pointed out, this phenomenon is deeply rooted. Thus, they perceive it as almost impossible to make a conscious choice to be one but not the other, or not to be perceived by the social environment as Muslim and Albanian or Macedonian and Orthodox at the same time. This intertwining between ethnicity and religion can be traced back to the political organization of religious groups during the Ottoman Empire. It is during this time that religious communities became the bases for ethnic identity construction. These ethnicity-religion parallels are obstacles in intergroup mixing because they make the groups more exclusive.

Regarding mutual contacts between young adults of the two ethnicities, results clearly show that those who have local minority status (Albanians from Skopje and Macedonians from Tetovo) have a greater opportunity to meet local majority group members. Therefore, they reported more frequent contacts with the out-group in formal settings, such as university or the workplace. There is also evidence that Albanians, as a minority on the national level, usually speak or at least understand the Macedonian language while the opposite is not as frequent (Tankersley, 2001). However, in the community, that is, the place where they live, and during their leisure time, communication among Macedonian and Albanian youth, as they stated, is rare—indicating the evident separation of these groups in everyday life in both cities. Such results are not

optimistic and they need to inform the future policies (e.g., introducing educational programs for ethnic cooperation and understanding, building the culture of peace, etc.). Additionally, among Macedonians, ethnic, religious, and national identification were negatively related to the quality of contacts with members of the ethnic outgroup. Among Albanians, the quality of contact correlated only with their ethnic identification, which could be explained with the importance of being Albanian in the first place—a phenomenon called "Albanism" among Albanians in the Republic of Macedonia, but also among Albanians in Kosovo.

In view of the given analysis, one of the ways to increase the frequency and improve the quality of intergroup contact is organizing various social events (e.g., sports events, concerts, trainings and seminars, art events, etc.), which would be of interest for both groups. Education could be another cornerstone for overcoming segregation and other negative side effects of the lack of knowledge and the lack of mutual trust. In the case of the Republic of Macedonia, which is a multicultural and multiethnic society, the given findings call for further investment in the education system, with the goal of promoting inclusiveness and decreasing separation among youth. Altogether, this could foster cooperation and learning more about Them—who are different from Us, but also similar to Us in many ways.

There are many examples (e.g., Students' Plenum, Professors' Plenum, Colorful Revolution, etc.) that show how Albanians and Macedonians can stand side by side, working together—even fighting together—for common goals. The fact that both Skopje and Tetovo are multicultural and multiethnic cities can be used as an advantage in creating opportunities to bring young people together on various occasions. In Skopje, there is already one famous part of the city called "The Old Bazaar" where Macedonians, Albanians, Turks, and others are circulating on daily bases, for centuries. This area is recognized by its cultural monuments, cafeterias, and shops and shows how young people from different national, ethnic, or religious backgrounds can spend effective time together. Therefore, if there is a better future for All of Us—Us defined in the most inclusive way, only then can there be talk about complex and inclusive social identities, which can result in real cooperation and mutuality, regardless of ethnicity or religion.

Notes

1. For Macedonians, these identities are Macedonian (ethnicity), Orthodox (religion), and Macedonian (nationality), while for the Albanians, they are Albanian (ethnicity), Muslim (religion), and Macedonian (nationality).
2. Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is a provisional reference to Macedonia, a result of an interim accord between Greece and Macedonia in a dispute over the country's name. Ethnic Macedonians often use it unofficially as a derogative term (Markowska & Wisiniewski, 2009).
3. "Besa" is a norm in ethnic Albanian communities, usually translated as "faith" or "word of honor," meaning that the a person is obliged to keep their promises.

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8

What Identities in the Present May Mean for the Future of the Western Balkans

Iris Žeželj and Felicia Pratto

Western Balkans: A Microcosm of Dynamic Relations Among Groups

The fact that a nation-state that offered an inclusive superordinate identity (union of predominantly Slavs), a state in which most people spoke the same language, a state which fostered minority ethnic rights both informally and institutionally could so easily mutate into a hydra with the tentacles of forced migration, systematic rape, and massacre of children does not comport with assertions that humanity is growing more peaceful, sophisticated, and egalitarian (cf., Inglehart & Welzel, 2005; Pinker, 2012). In the Western Balkans, the thriving multicultural state of Yugoslavia dissolved into the most violent conflict on European soil since WWII. Outside intervention was needed to stop the atrocities and wars, and new, more homogenous nations sporting new sectarian divisions

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F. Pratto et al. (eds.), *Shaping Social Identities After Violent Conflict*,
DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-62021-3_8

devolved more than once from the former Yugoslavia. At present, the Western Balkans is a "post-conflict region," with diplomatic relations established between most of the states, but with some unresolved territorial disputes (e.g., the status of Kosovo), and it has intergroup tensions that can be easily fueled by daily politics. Though the violence has stopped, it is not at all clear that the new countries are functioning socially as nations in the many conceptions of the word (e.g., Smith, 2002; Tishkov 2000): as a community of people who have collective symbols and history (e.g., Connor, 1990; Smith, 2002), nor as democratic nation-states—functioning governments that provide equally for their people's physical security and economic needs (Ythier, 2013).

This book has four major gifts to offer. The first and second are to provide contemporary knowledge about how people who live in post-conflict societies understand social identities, and the social challenges and opportunities that identities pose for heterogeneous countries. The third is to provide data that address numerous theories about intergroup relations in social psychology, and in a context that is understudied compared to where most theories originated and the most research has been conducted (i.e., the United States, United Kingdom, and Germany). The fourth is to provide potential insights from scientific research to suggest constructive social practices and policies that may minimize the possibility of further violent conflict or group oppression within forming nations and post-conflict regions.

The Stakes

Quite clearly, history is not over in the Western Balkans. The present is critical because new nations are forming, and how well they form matters for several reasons. There are essentially three ways governments can maintain stability: (a) buying off the population (as Saudi Arabia does, but which few nations can afford), (b) through oppression, which only lasts so long (Pratto, Stewart, & Bou Zeineddine, 2013), and (c) by functioning. Most people around the world would like to rely on the institutions, stability, security, and opportunity that governments are expected to provide, and they expect democracies to provide these things (see Pratto & Bou

Zeineddine 2016, regarding Arab countries). If they cannot rely on government competence and justice, then people will feel insecure and demeaned, some will engage in corruption to get what they need, unofficial economies will result in foregone revenue collection and sometimes human rights abuses (e.g., through slavery; Bales, 2004), and people's trust in their neighbors, government, leaders, and country will dissolve (e.g., Bou Zeineddine & Pratto, 2015). Many of the consequences of poorly functioning governments cause further problems for states. Corruption hampers economic growth (e.g., Zack & Knack, 1998), especially when institutional functioning is poor (Aidt, Dutta, & Senna, 2008), and reduces trust (e.g., Robbins, 2012). Mistrust and cynicism dampen participation in political life and in civic organizations, undermining democracy and social cohesion (e.g., Pattyn, van Hiel, Dhont, & Onraet, 2011). Insecurity and the sense of injustice feed intergroup hostility. The stability of nations, then, depends largely on their governments functioning.

The economic health of nations also depends on their functioning. As we saw in Chap. 4, civil war had enormous costs in terms of lives, stability, and wealth, and the region can ill afford devolving again into war. Nations with young populations especially need to provide economic opportunities in order to expect the next generation to stay and invest commitment and talents to the country. Losing the next generation of education, talented, and emotionally invested adults could severely hamper a society struggling for health and continuity. Strength of identity could be an important factor in deciding whether to migrate.

A nation with functioning institutions not only enables people to get what they need, to develop new ideas and preserve its collective health, the sense of nationhood provides social, psychological, and political benefits as well. A nation can provide people with a sense of belonging and patriotic pride (Kosterman & Feshbach, 1989). Given that the different ethnic/religious groups within countries may not share a common heritage or language, and given that children may not have the same citizenship as their own parents, nationhood presents the possibility of a unifying (national) identity. The stakes for the people of the Western Balkans are high. This book is intended to provide useful information that we hope will be used to help shape these new nations and their neighbors towards positive futures, both separately and together.

Why Study Identity?

Aspects of Social Identities

Our study centers on the concept of social identity because that concept connects everyone's psychology to the practical and political issues in these nations-in-progress. Social identity has several dimensions. From the inside, one's identity is who one thinks he or she is in relation to others, and it is a part of one's self-concept. The important social psychologist, Henri Tajfel's most often cited definition of social identity emphasizes the consequences of belonging to a certain social group—"that *part* of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (Tajfel, 1981, p. 63). Many laypeople also view having a social identity as so normal it is required. In fact, one participant in our study stated:

> *You said you feel Human, but we still need to identify with some more particular groups. French are French, German and German, etc. I am Albanian.* (male, 24, Albanian from Kosovo)

Many psychologists view feeling that one has a positive self-concept is important to psychological health. This may be one reason people are motivated to view their social identity, and therefore the groups to which they belong, as positive (e.g., Tajfel, 1981). One's identity is highly motivating, often leading to personal sacrifice on behalf of one's group (e.g., Huntington, 1993).

From the outside, one's social identity is who others recognize one to be (Mead, 1934, chapter III). People are often the most comfortable if their own self-image corresponds with how others view them (Swann & Read, 1981). At the group level, people view ethnic groups and nations as allies if they see them as having similar cultural values, power, and compatible goals (Alexander, Brewer, & Livingston, 2005; Eicher, Pratto & Wilhelm, 2013; Herrmann, 1985). Sharing social reality—that is, understanding the world in the same terms—is a feature of good relationships (Higgins, 1996). One of the questions, then, regarding group's own identity and the beliefs other groups have about them is how much

the two groups concur on what groups are like. In other words, do the groups share their social reality regarding beliefs about groups?

Further, for some people, having a particular social identity also implies having a particular worldview, a system of meanings that make sense of life, prescribes how one should be, and provides expectations. Some of our participants gave voice to this assertion:

> *Muslim identity is not just to declare to be a Muslim, it is a whole system of social, educational and, of course, religious values, that manifest through behavior, speech and many other aspects, not just through declaring as a Muslim*. (female, 24, Bosniak from Novi Pazar)
>
> *Because it* [ethnic identity] *is the backbone of our thinking; everything we do or think comes from that perspective, it includes all of what you believe in and all of your values*. (male, 20, Albanian from Prishtina; see Chap. 6 for more details).

When people's identities are couched in terms of social categories and not simply person-to-person or person-to-meaning affiliations, then defining an ingroup, a "we," implies that there are outsiders to the group. Quite often, an ingroup does not just imply what individuals are in or out, but rather, that there is an *outgroup* that is viewed as an entity, with its own mutually exclusive membership, characteristics like values and culture, and so forth. Own identities can become salient in situations of meta-contrast, or where two or more groups are salient and compared (Chrobot-Mason, Ruderman, Weber & Ernst, 2009).

It was easy for our participants to identify "them," just as easy as it was to identify "us":

> *They are…. Macedonians, unfaithful, Orthodox*. (male, 26, Albanian from Tetovo)

Identity and Intergroup Relations

There are several reasons that social identity can influence the quality of relationships between groups, as well as be influenced by that quality. One important reason social identity matters is that people care about, protect, and feel emotions on behalf of those they identify with more than they do

others (James, 1890). For example, people who say they endorse international humanitarian law (i.e., the "law of war") actually would prefer to sacrifice civilians over combatants if they identify with the combatants in question, in contradiction with their stated values (Pratto & Glasford, 2008). Europeans who identified with Americans after Al Qaeda's attacks on the United States in September 2001 felt more angry than those who did not (Dumont, Yzerbyt, Wigboldus, & Gordijn, 2003). The overall implication is that if people in different groups do not identify with people in another group, they are less likely to care about injustice, suffering, discrimination, or other hardships for that group. The more "others" are not viewed as part of "us," the less their outcomes matter to "us."

Conversely, if people can begin to view even members of different groups as having something in common with their own group, or perhaps both groups being part of a superordinate group, they are less likely to discriminate against them (Gaertner, Dovidio, Anastasio, Bachman, & Rust, 1993). For example, Esses, Dovidio, Jackson, and Armstrong (2001) showed that if Canadians were induced to think of immigrants as similar to Canadians in different ways, such as sharing a family history of migration, or having shared values, they had more positive attitudes towards immigrants and opposed discrimination against them more. Sometimes meta-contrast can lead people to find those they might think of as "other" to be more like them when they both differ from others.

> *I feel a citizen of B&H mostly when leaving the country. It is then that I use term "we" to denote people from the region, or citizens of B&H.* (male, 22, Bosniak from Sarajevo)

Finally, research in a number of societies shows that when people live segregated from other groups, they often can only "know" the other groups as stereotypes (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). On the other hand, contact between people in different groups, especially when cooperation is useful and other groups bring different contributions to common goals, has been shown to improve intergroup relations. This robust effect has been found in experiments, in numerous nations for direct contact (Brown & Hewstone, 2005; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006) and even through secondary contact (i.e., having a friend who has a friend in the outgroup; e.g., Turner, Hewstone, Voci, & Vonofakou, 2008).

It should be noted, though, that contact is often a different experience for people in more powerful and majority groups than for people in less powerful and minority groups. The prejudice of majority group members is usually worse to begin with, and changes more following contact, than does the prejudice of minority group members (Tropp & Pettigrew, 2005). Being a token in a contact situation is not always comfortable for minority group members, who have the interpersonal experience of being a minority far more often than majority group members do. Majority group members often assume that the contact will be on their terms, and it is no favor for minority group members to be expected to be the ones who change to make the situation comfortable for majority group members. Minority group members may want to be with other minority group members so that they feel accepted and can affirm their group identity with similar others (Dixon, Durrheim, & Tredoux, 2005).

The Context and Nature of Our Study

Although it is possible that our study will be useful for people outside the Balkans and for considering the generality of theories, following Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje (1999) and Verkuyten (2004), we argue that the region of Western Balkans merits study in its own right. Social psychology can be understood in particular historical context (e.g., Liu, Huang, & Sibley, 2014). The predominant feature of identities in the present context of the Western Balkans concerns majorities and minorities based on ethnic and religious category membership. Even though the same individuals whom we label as minority members can belong to a host of other groups, some of which are actual majorities (e.g., males, highly educated, middle class), ethnic/religious belonging is the most salient and most often evoked membership. Ethnic minorities are recognized as minorities constitutionally, and in public discourse the concept of minorities actually refers to ethnic minorities—all other minorities have to be specified (e.g., "sexual minority," "gender minority").

As such, we choose to compare four states from this region: Serbia, Kosovo,[1] Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), and Republic of Macedonia (RM). Each has histories of interethnic conflicts—with two constituted as multiethnic states at present (BiH, RM), and two being relatively ethni-

cally homogeneous but with segregated minorities and remaining intergroup tensions (Serbia, Kosovo). We also aimed to include both minority and majority perspective of intergroup relations, so we choose participants belonging to both major groups within a society: Serbs and Bosniaks from Serbia and from BiH (the former being a majority in Serbia, minority in BiH and the latter vice versa), Macedonians (the majority) and Albanians (the minority) from RM; Albanians (the majority) and Serbs (the minority) from Kosovo. This design, then, also can help control for possible "cultural" differences among ethnic Serbs, Albanians, and Bosniaks.

Why Compare People in Different Groups?

One reason, then, that we included participants belonging to different groups in our study is that contact experiences can be different for majorities and minorities. Further, worldviews and the meanings of experiences may differ between groups to the extent they have different cultures. Also, there can be structural differences between groups that influence their experiences and the meanings of their identities. In general, people who belong to groups that are socially defined to have different identities have different life experiences.

Another important aspect of lived group differences is that in most modern societies, at least one group is poorer and is negatively stereotyped more frequently than a different group that is over-represented in power structures and leadership positions (e.g., Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). In addition to power differences, the identity of the dominant group often provides the basis of societal norms, such that the behaviors it exhibits, its values, and standards become standards against which other identities are measured (Pratto, Hegarty, & Korchmaros, 2008; Verkuyten, 2005). These norms can make it unclear how minorities are supposed to act in situations in which diversity has not been considered (this is addressed in Chap. 5). For example, another participant said,

> *When we were younger, we would go to the school excursions and usually we would visit only Orthodox churches and monasteries. As a child I was confused, should I go in or not—there were no instructions for a case like mine*. (female, 22, Bosniak from Belgrade)

As noted previously, groups are often segregated in terms of where they live, attend school, and participate in community groups, and this lack of contact may make people may feel uncomfortable interacting with members of different groups (Stephan & Renfro, 2002). Even if members of different groups do interact, if their groups in general differ in power, then the individuals involved may be in circumscribed roles. For example, it may be that the typical professional belongs to one group and that unemployed people are more likely to belong to another. Exposure to these kinds of patterns sets expectations of what roles people in the groups play and even what personal characteristics they have (e.g., Ridgeway & Bourg, 2004). Given that people seldom like to be stereotyped, relying on these stereotypic expectations does not facilitate intergroup interactions.

There are, then, four reasons to consider majority and minority status in our study: (a) the social meaning of group membership for minorities is different than for majorities, particularly in the reputation that minorities have, (b) minorities likely have more experiencing interacting with majority group members than the reverse, (c) features of majorities are usually considered the social norm to majority group members to which minorities contrast, and minority group members are well aware of this, and (d) majority groups are often more politically powerful, particularly when the society is understood to be "their" society.

Ethnic/Sectarian Social Categories in the Western Balkans

In the Western Balkans, ethnic and religious identities are almost completely overlapping. In our survey, correlations between ethnic and religious identification were very high and did not differ for national majorities/minorities subgroups (r_{maj} = 0.69, p < 0.001; r_{min} = 0.70, p < 0.001). Differences in the size of the ethnic and religious identification between the countries were small as well, r_{ser} = 0.70, p < 0.001; r_{kos} = 0.64, p < 0.001; r_{mk} = 0.75, p < 0.001; r_{bih} = 0.68, p < 0.001. This finding suggests that the meaning of ethnic identity is religious identity and vice versa in this context, whether people do not identify with or

highly identify with both groups. The complete overlap in ethnic and religious designations was expressed by our participants:

> *Serbs are only Orthodox. Even atheists are Orthodox if they claim they're Serbs*. (male, 30, Serb from North Mitrovica; see Chap. 6 for more details)
>
> *For me, honestly, Bosniak and Muslim are the same. I am part of a certain group of people who live in this area, and we call ourselves, I mean we declare ourselves as Bosniaks, as our ancestors did*. (male, 27, Bosniak from Novi Pazar)

The Difficulties Posed by Presumptively Mutually Exclusive Ethnic/Religious Categories

When mutually exclusive social categories are presumed to encompass everyone, those who are not neatly categorized are left out of consideration, and there may be no clear norms or worldview or identity meaning for such people. In all societies, there are such people. In the United States, for example, additional options such as "mixed race" have been added to the historical race categories of "White" and "Coloured" so that people do not have to describe themselves as "Other." In our study, not belonging clearly to just one religion or just one ethnic group posed problems for participants:

> *I think this sort of struggle made me very defensive…trying to fight for things that should not be fought for… ultimately, knowing that you should fight because you should prove that you are equal as they are…. It is very inhumane to have to justify yourself for something that should not be justified!* (female, 27, from a mixed marriage of Albanian and Serb, Prizren)

Lay Conceptions of Identities

Mandatory Category Membership

Social categories such as race, religion, and ethnicity are not natural kinds. Rather, there is substantial evidence that they are cultural artifacts (Haslam, Rothschild, & Ernst, 2000). However, the social categories of religion and ethnicity and the requirement to use them appear to be part

of the "social reality" of the societies we studied, as illustrated in these participants' statements:

> *… I don't identify with any ethnicity, but this does not mean that they were not given to me at times …. for example, in the latest population census my parents were saying that they had to enlist myself as "something" … so at times, I am somehow forced to categorize myself and identify with a group… These are hard to do when I have to justify to others that I don't belong to any ethnic or religious groups*. (female, 28, Albanian from Prishtina; see Chap. 6 for more details)
>
> *So, the society I think has a tendency to always try to put you in a box, because it is easier for them to deal with others that are different and fall outside of certain societal frames*. (female, 25, Albanian from Prishtina)

In fact, we found, across the four countries, that the proportion of ethnic minorities who believe one acquires ethnicity at birth is essentially the same as the proportion of ethnic majorities who endorse this belief. The same pattern held for religious minorities and majorities endorsing the idea that religion is acquired at birth (see proportions of the samples endorsing this idea in Table 8.1).

Identity as Unchangeable

People sometimes perceive those in different categories to be essentially different, as if there is some internal essence that makes them who they are. This "subjective essentialism" (Yzerbyt, Rocher, & Schadron, 1997) is a core belief that social categories are aking to natural categories: belonging to a certain social category means sharing several obligatory features—having those features makes one belong to a certain group, and not belong to others.

One way to understand whether people view identity as essential is to test whether they view identity as a changeable property of a person. We asked our participants whether they "do not agree at all," "mainly disagree," "neither agree nor disagree," "mainly agree," or "completely agree" that "One can change his/her citizenship, but essentially one remains attached to the country one was born in." Good-sized majorities in all four countries either agreed or completely agreed with this statement: 80

Table 8.1 Proportion of sample agreeing or disagreeing that religious and ethnic identity are conferred at birth, by majority and minority status

	Does not agree at all (%)	Mainly does not agree (%)	Neither-nor (%)	Mainly agrees (%)	Completely agrees (%)
A child becomes a member of an ethnic community (e.g., Serb, Bosniak) by birth					
Majority	8.1	7.9	13.4	36.1	34.6
Minority	8.1	7.9	12.9	29.4	41.7
A child becomes a member of a religious community (e.g. [Muslim, Orthodox]) by birth					
Majority	8.1	11.5	16.2	30.1	34.0
Minority	8.4	10.0	10.5	27.6	43.6

Note. The two terms in square brackets for each question were tailored to correspond with the main groups within each country

percent in Serbia, 70 percent in Macedonia, 62 percent in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and 72 percent in Kosovo. Some participants described the immutability of their mandatory imposed identity. For example:

> *Can I be French? I cannot say that I am a French if I am not—I might want to be French, but I just cannot.* (female, 23, Serb from Kosovo)

Identity as Primordial

Across many societies, it is common for people to view their group identity as deriving from ancestors, or being "primordial" (e.g., van den Berghe, 1981). This kind of essentialism goes hand in hand with believing identities are unchangeable:

> *Can you genetically change yourself? No, you can't because you can't genetically change that you are an Albanian.* (male, 24, Albanian from Prishtina)
>
> *The fact that I am a Serbian, I cannot change, even if I want to. I am born as Serbian and that's it.* (female, 23, Serb from Mitrovica; see Chap. 6 for more details)

In the colonial era, anthropologists and other experts argued scientifically that race and gender are essential, biological features. This kind of

discourse is still present, in that scientific language is used to promote the ideology of biological determinism—essentialism in its strongest form (Zagefka, 2009). Non-scientists employ this scientific cloak for essentialism in public discourse. Serbian president Tomislav Nikolić seized the opportunity of opening a stem-cells research facility in Kragujevac to declare, "*We have to preserve Serbian genes, with Serbian past and Serbian future*" (Tomislav Nikolić, Blic, 25. 01. 2016).

Problem with such beliefs is that they could serve to support status quo, and represent existing social divisions as unchangeable, and even justify discriminatory practices, especially when held by dominant groups in the society.

Is National Identity Unifying?

Conceptually, a nation-state, rather than a primordial "nation" or "tribe," legally establishes citizenship rights and obligations. Democratic states are supposed to offer these rights and obligations equally to all citizens (Barzilai, 2003). Nonetheless, it remains a question whether these rights and obligations are *in fact* equally spread across groups, and whether the social sense of the nation feels inclusive to all groups.

If, as was suggested by the sense that the nation-state is normed on majority groups, identifying with the nation should correspond more with identification with majority subgroups than it should with identification with minority subgroups. Much empirical evidence suggests that the pattern of attachment with ethnic group and country is different for majority and minority members: while dominant ethnic majority tends to identify with both country and ethnicity, and implicitly associates the two, ethnic minorities show weak or negative correlation between the two kinds of identities (Sidanius, Feshbach, Levin, & Pratto, 1997; Sidanius & Petrocik, 2001) or the three: ethnic and religious on one side, and national on the other (Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007). Some studies discovered more complex relations between the three: among Muslim immigrants in the Netherlands, only high religious identification accompanied by high ethnic identification and perceived high overlap between the two predicted low national attachment, while religious or ethnic identification

alone did not have negative relationship with national identity of ethnic and religious minorities (Verkuyten & Martinović, 2012).

These kinds of asymmetries are predicted by social dominance theory (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Social dominance theory has a general principle that beliefs and attitudes towards things that serve dominant groups more than subordinate groups will correspond with group identity and general prejudicial tendencies (social dominance orientation) more strongly among dominant than among subordinate groups. For example, in the United States, among whites, men, and straight people, identifying more with those groups respectively than with complementary groups correlates positively with social dominance orientation, but among blacks and Hispanics, women, and lesbian and gay people, identifying more with those groups respectively correlates negatively with social dominance orientation (Pratto & Stewart, 2012). In the present context, social dominance theory predicts that identification with participants' nations should correspond more strongly to their ethnic identification for majority than for minority groups. This could be due to perception that state institutions mirror the values of the dominant groups and to supply power to them more than they do subordinate groups (Sidanius & Petrocik, 2001), and due to the sense that the nation "is" the majority, for the most part.

We tested whether the ethnic majority identified more with "the country I live in" (M = 3.55) than did the ethnic minority (M = 3.04), and found this was the case in Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Kosovo, *p*s < 0.001. In Macedonia, the ethnic minority identified with the nation, M = 3.53, more than did the ethnic majority, M = 3.11, $p = 0.038$, which differed from the impressions made in our focus groups (see Chap. 7). Within each country, the more participants identified with their ethnic group, the more they identified with their country of residence, *p*s < 0.01. In both Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, this effect was reliably stronger among the majority group than among the minority group, *p*s < 0.001. Perhaps the segregation of Bosniaks and Serbs into two separate countries via war may make each nation seem to represent only its dominant ethnic group.

Social identity theory would predict that ethnic or religious versus national identities do not necessarily conflict with each other, but that

national group can be perceived as a superordinate ingroup by the minorities (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000), and that national and ethnic identity are essentially independent (Phinney, 1992; Phinney, Berry, Vedder, & Liebkind, 2006). As such, according to social identity theory, ethnic and national identification can correlate positively, negatively, or not correlate at all depending on the context, and most of all on perceived discrimination (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006). In a post-conflict region, however, in which ethnic groups that constitute national minorities were on the opposing side of the violent conflict with the minority groups, both social dominance theory and social identity theory would predict zero or negative correlation between national and ethnic/religious identification among minorities.

National identification of minorities depends heavily on the model of citizenship that is being promoted (Bilali, 2014). Newly formed Balkan countries do not explicitly promote assimilationist policies. On the contrary, the minorities are being granted rights to schooling in their own language, representatives in national assemblies, and so on. However, it is very clear that dominant groups bear rights to national symbols: an anthem and a flag. In the same line, three out of four countries (with Kosovo being the exception, explained in detail in Chap. 6) have preambles to the constitutions stating, "*The* [country] *belongs to* [ethnicity] *and Others*."

In our research, we addressed this problem in two ways: first, we compared ethnic, religious, and national identifications of national majorities and minorities (Fig. 8.1), and established that majorities have weaker ethnic and religious identifications than minorities whilst their national identification is stronger. Next, we correlated all three types of identifications in minority and majority subgroups and within each country (see Table 8.2). This allowed us to compare whether there are similarities and differences across the national contexts. In all four ethnic/religious majority groups we found strong correlations between all three identities, although ethnic and religious were more strongly related (see correlations above the diagonal in Table 8.2). In minority groups, however, the relations were not so uniform. For the minority Bosniaks in Serbia and Serbs in BiH we registered strong correlations between ethnic and religious identification, but no correlation of these kinds of identification with

national identity. A similar but weaker pattern emerged for minorities in Kosovo (for Serbs) and RM (for Albanians): ethnic and religious identity were strongly correlated with each other and more weakly correlated with national identification.

Having Multiple Identifications

It is clear that for states that are defined explicitly or by unstated consensus as being "for" a particular ethnic group, this poses problems for identification for ethnic minorities. When asked about these potentially conflicting attachments, ethnic minorities explicitly mentioned their "divided loyalties" towards both the ethnicity they belong to/country of their ethnic origin, and the country they live in:

> *I was attending a training in Belgrade, and I was the only Bosniak there, others were Serbs. We started discussion on the topic "Do you love your country Serbia?" All of them answered. "Yes, of course I love Serbia, that is my country…" And then I had to say if I loved my Serbia. I've said that I first love myself, then my family, my friends, members of Bosniak ethnic community and then Serbia*. (male, 20, Bosniak from Serbia)

However, when referring to "their country," ethnic minorities refer to their country of ethnic origin—they support the national team from

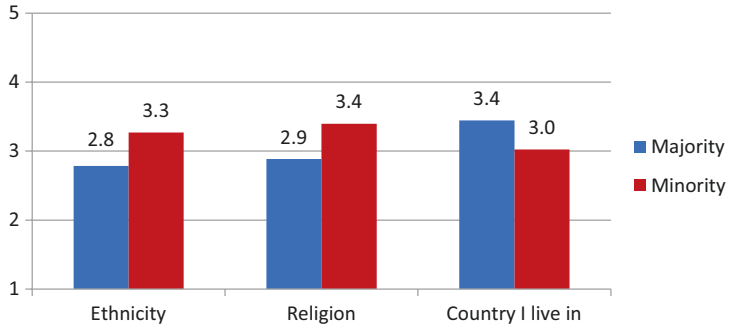

Fig. 8.1 Mean importance of identification with ethnicity, religion and nationality, by majority/minority status (1 = *of no importance*; 5 = *highly important*)

Table 8.2 Correlations between ethnic, religious, and national identifications in majority and minority groups, by country

	Ethnicity	Religion	Country
Kosovo			
Ethnicity		0.490**	0.419**
Religion	0.734**		0.289**
Country	0.405**	0.422**	
Serbia			
Ethnicity		0.782**	0.328**
Religion	0.648**		0.341**
Country	0.162	0.028	
RM			
Ethnicity		0.725**	0.440**
Religion	0.611**		0.551**
Country	0.303**	0.378**	
BiH			
Ethnicity		0.646**	0.352**
Religion	0.718**		0.433**
Country	0.143	0.004	

Note: For every country, above diagonal correlations are for majority group, below diagonal correlations are for minority group; ** signifies p <0.01

country of origin in sport events, they root for singers from the country of origin at Eurovision song contest, and so on. They rarely take pride from the fact they are citizens of a country they represent a minority:

> *I have never said "What a great feeling being a citizen of Macedonia," but I have hundred times said "What a great feeling being an Albanian." I would love to have an Albanian passport. I route for Albania in all sports* matches. (male, 21, Albanian from Macedonia)

Although there were such examples, usually the events where they represented the whole country as competitors in international events:

> *Since I had trained judo for a long time I should have gone to a national championship where I would have probably reached the third place. Three first places were supposed to go to a European championship. In that stage, in my head, I did not represent Republic of Srpska. As a very result of the fact I would have come through the judo competition at the national level, I was thinking how I would be from Bosnia and Herzegovina and how I would represent both entities*. (female, 22, Serb from BiH)

Several participants from minority groups noted a particular situation when they are often forced to re-categorize themselves, namely, when people with their ethnicity who are members of the majority in their countries (e.g., Albanians from Albania or Serbs from Serbia) perceive them along national instead of ethnic lines:

> *Oftentimes when I go to Belgrade—I have relatives there, and not only relatives—well, those who know me say: "What's up, Bosnians?"*[2] *To them it is so, it is a common name for all of us….* (male, 22, Serb from BiH)
>
> *It hurts the most when your fellow Albanians call you "Macedonian"—it happened to me several times in Albania. How can you be so ill informed, I say?* (male, 25, student, Albanian from RM)

Being a member of an ethnic minority means one can be marginalized both in one's country of citizenship and in the country of one's ethnic origin.

Apart from the non-inclusiveness of national identity, and its lack of potential to offer overarching identification, there are institutional obstacles in certain countries that make this impossible.

The parents of nine-month-old Faruk Salaka have become the first to register their son's nationality as "Bosnian," defeating a system that insists on strict ethnic definitions. When Faruk was born in April 2014, his parents, Kemal and Elvira Salaka, wanted him to be registered as a Bosnian. But in a country whose constitution recognizes only three constitutive ethnic groups, newborn children can only be registered as Bosniaks, Croats, Serbs, or "Other." Kemal Salaka recalled that when he wrote down "Bosnian," he was told that it was not acceptable and that the rules demanded that he must put Bosniak, Croat, Serb, or "Other"—the category usually used by ethnic minorities or those who reject being labeled by ethnicity. But the Salakas persisted, and sought help from an attorney who specialized in constitutional law. Eventually, at the end of January 2015, Sarajevo's center municipality decided that there were no legal restrictions preventing anyone from being registered as a Bosnian (February 2015, BIRN).

If we take progress to be moving to wider and wider identifications, we could pose the question if superordinate identities would ever be able to

incorporate such basic ones (in terms of psychological and social investments) as ethnic and religious. To this end, we included two such identities—Balkan (regional) and European, and compared majority and minority groups in country subsamples. If national identity is not inclusive for ethnic minorities, one could expect them to identify with superordinate identities that would provide psychological benefits. However, no differences between the groups were observed (see Fig. 8.2).

We also included one subordinate identity—local, and compared national and local identifications between majority groups, and different types of minorities (only local, only national, and double minorities; see Fig. 8.3). Our data go to show that local identifications are significantly higher for minority groups who are majority on state level, and, somewhat unexpectedly, for double minority groups. State majority groups tend to identify with the country significantly more than with the city they live in.

Dealing with Multiple Identities: How to Move Forward

At the end, it is important not to approach group identifications as stable and contextually independent, especially in young people. In this vein, Phinney argues, "Adolescents report that their feelings of being ethnic vary according to the situation they are in and the people they are with." (Phinney, 1990, p. 510). Adolescents of minority origins (e.g., Greeks in Australia) report feeling strong attachment to their ethnicity in certain settings (e.g., at home with family), and strong attachment to the Australian nation in other settings (e.g., school; Rosenthal & Hrynevich, 1985). These shifts are especially easy if the two identities are not in conflict, that is, if superordinate identities are inclusive. However, in newly formed states with remaining inter-ethnic tensions, national identification serves the needs of dominant groups:

> *Whenever I need to identify with being Kosovar, or the context brings that out in me, I have the war as my primary point of reference. Reflecting about it, sharing my experiences with others on this period, etc.* (female, 21, Albanian from Kosovo)

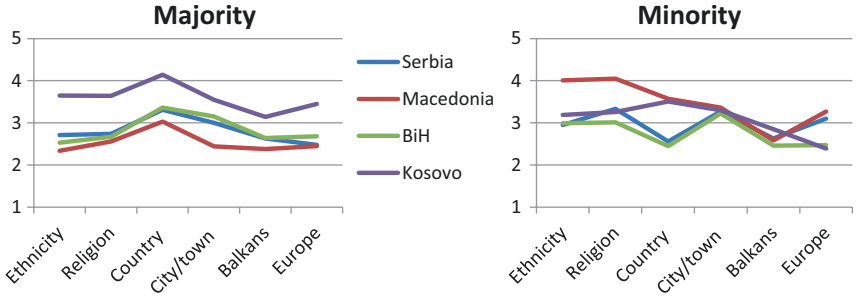

Fig. 8.2 Strength of different identifications by country and majority/minority status

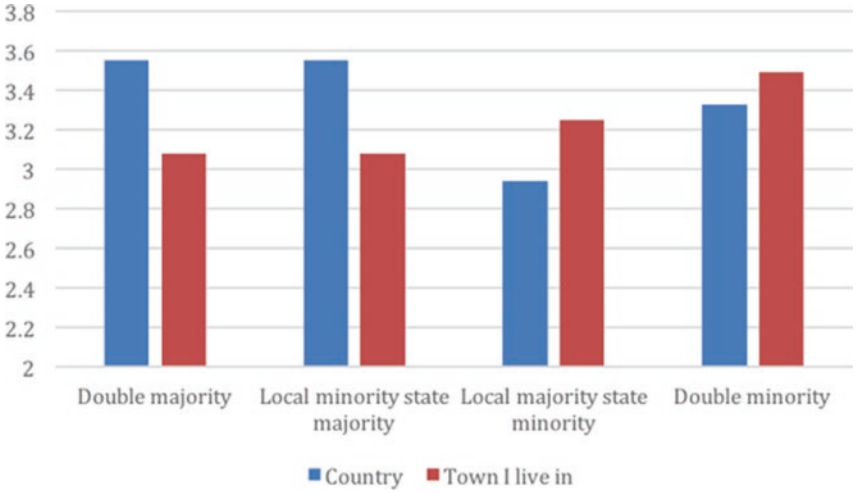

Fig. 8.3 State and local identification of different types of minorities and majority

Ethnic and religious identities are often evoked in a defensive manner, as a reaction to some form of ingroup threat or discriminatory behavior:

> *When I see that someone attacks my ethnic community, when I see that citizens of my ethnic community are treated unjustly, when… you know, someone stigmatizes them, when someone in personal contact or through the institutions will treat me differently in comparison to other citizens, only because of my ethnicity, then I feel that…that "specialness."* (male, 32, Albanian from Macedonia)

As a consequence of realizing divisive potential of ethnic and religious identifications, universal identities, as human being or global citizen emerged. Those universal identifications were associated with a set of pro-social values, such as valuing diversity, and social justice.

> *I said the most important thing to me is to be Human because I think that is the basic category by which you identify yourself. It becomes the umbrella of your identification. I have been in the past a Muslim, a Kosovar, an Albanian, and many other things, maybe even a patriot, but they have often led me to make flawed decisions. We now know that these categorizations are also means of separating people*. (male, 21, Albanian from Kosovo)

Suggestions for Making Societies and Regions More Coherent

At this point, people's understanding of identities in their nation and region are much what theory predicts: Some aspects of identity have meanings that are unclear, especially for those whose ethnic heritage is centered in a different country than their nationality. Most people see the strong social reality of given identities. Still others see this but reject being forced into social categories. The majority of people do not want inter-group conflict to arise again, but trust their own groups most, and are not sure how to make sure further conflict is prevented. Young people are reluctant to dive into politics, but can still be active in various real-life and online civic activities (Milošević-Đorđević & Žeželj, 2016).

Drawing on the experience of other nations in both conflict-ridden and stable regions, we can make suggestions for policymakers in the Western Balkans to consider.

First, they might consider the benefits of defining citizenship as based solely on one criterion, namely where someone was born, rather than designating that some are "Others" but that the nation is primarily for a designated group. Second-class citizenship inevitably feeds social inequality, and that is divisive for societies. This suggestion is meaningless unless the people of a nation actually do join as nations, with common symbols, shared knowledge, and meaningful inclusive rituals (Smith, 2002). Even

broader, making peace effectively can also entail recognizing common symbols and rituals (Nagle, 2014).

Bilingual education would enable people in a nation to speak common languages, such as in Albania, without which there is no possibility of face-to-face, mass mediated, or written contact. Although schools are one way the people could learn another's language, bilingual television shows or online videos featuring characters interacting could be an appropriate way to demonstrate language in context. This method helps people learn languages best, and if done through entertainment, is more appealing to youth as a demographic group. Another route for facilitating communication would be bringing ethnic groups together by learning a non-Balkan, common language, or stimulating the majorities to learn minority languages by portraying this as an asset, both culturally and practically (e.g., an additional skill for the labor market).

The way history is taught to children can help to prevent, rather than to provoke, interethnic conflict if a longer time perspective is used (Psaltis et al., 2017). The Western Balkans has a rich history of people's migration, settling, and re-settling and has been ruled by different empires (for the longest period by, the Ottoman Empire). This is why there are so many languages in a relatively small physical space, and also several religions that various communities have adopted. There can be pride in having cultures that have benefited from all the historical cultures without approving of conquest or warfare. The United States touts its variety as "multi-culturalism," and this ideology assumes that people of all backgrounds have important things to contribute, and that variety makes a nation stronger. Changing the perspective and seeing diversity as a strength, not a threat, learning that other countries have helped to reduce the issues of division and inequality through such methods could introduce a more optimistic and non-blaming solution that the Western Balkans can adapt.

Another important aspect of teaching history in a wider timeframe is to prevent the assumption that one's group has only been a victim and not a perpetrator. This will likely be a new initiative; studies find that leaders' acknowledgement of past national guilt for genocide or mass violence is quite rare (Leach, Bou Zeineddine, & Čehajić-Clancy, 2013). Though clearly there has been asymmetric warfare and asymmetric atrocities, there are no young adults who were the perpetrators of these actions. *Youth may*

well adopt an identity of the post-conflict generation who is not going to carry the conflict forward. In war, no one has clean hands. Introducing the fear and suffering that both sides experienced can bring empathy to both sides. In the second author's (American) children's middle school, students read one book about a Korean girl fleeing danger from Chinese, and a different book about a Chinese boy as the Japanese invaded. These stories about particular children make readers able to identify them, and the books teach some history, but implicitly teach the message that there can be people who are oppressed in any countr, and that no country is always the "bad guy/perpetrator." The books also teach empathy by having readers take the perspectives of various characters, as well as communicating that children are not helpless. Books about cross-ethnic friendships or mixed families provide a kind of indirect contact and model that such relationships can work. Movies, novels, and children's books such as these are in fact already available in the Western Balkans, but they are not widely adopted and even viewed as politically suspect. A commitment by educators to introduce these materials in the curricula across *all* involved nations could be an inclusive, mutual de-escalation procedure. It is expected for education materials to change in time. It should be considered whether engaging parents in an understanding that the curriculum is sympathetic to all sides, and may help to prevent their children and grandchildren from suffering from war and marginalization is in fact a good thing for them.

Another educational initiative is to plan school trips to other regions in the country, possible as weekend-exchange programs in which children can meet and play with children from a region with a different majority/minority mix than their own. Sports, music, art, dancing, and so forth are all activities that people can enjoy with anyone. Our research showed that one of the few ways that both majorities and minorities identified and were proud to be members of their nation was regarding athletic competitions (Chaps. 4 and 7). In addition, celebrities in sport have sometimes been shown to help heal nations after conflict (Wilson, van Lujik, & Boit, 2013). Research in Bosnia-Herzegovina shows, though, that is better that these be indigenous initiatives rather than foreign sponsored, and that there is a real political will to implement them (Micinski, 2016).There is also new evidence that supports the idea that the online contact via social networks can be effective as well (Žeželj et al., 2017).

We offer this suggestion with some cautions: There are situations in which prejudice and hostility between groups makes contact unwanted, and can even backfire in terms of increasing intergroup understanding and equality between groups (e.g., Coleman & Lowe, 2007). Also, dialogue between unequal group members can be difficult because dominant groups do not want to address the conflict, and subordinate groups can be misled about how such conversations will lead to reconciliation (Saguy, Dovidio, & Pratto, 2008). Our research shows that this situation may especially be the case in Kosovo at present (see Chap. 6). Policymakers may need to do initial research to assess how ready youth in their areas are for these suggestions.

We saw in Chaps. 6 and 7 that some youth would be happy to go abroad for better opportunities. A very important way for nations to keep intergroup conflict to a minimum is to have a healthy economy. Clearly, this is easier said than done, but substantial research demonstrates the importance of economic opportunity and security in maintaining peace and increasing cohesion. Most nations having civil wars right now had unstable economies prior (Rice, Graff, & Lewis, 2006). People always need hope, and when there is scarcity, it is easy for people to imagine that "others" are getting an unfair share.

Conclusion

The present research has illustrated the complexity of identities in newly formed nation-states that were formed in part to quell ethnic conflict. The facts of complex histories even before nations were formed, migration, and in fact ethnic and religious mixing is not being taken into account in defining nations as "for" a particular peoples. Thus, relations between majorities and minorities, especially because they are widely and consensually understood to be social reality, are therefore problematic. In some nations, there is opposition to contact (Kosovo), and segregation within nations makes contact unusual in many people's experiences. However, televised events provide one means of exposing people to those in other groups but who share the same nationality or same regional identity. We suggested that there are many more opportunities for

policymakers to enact useful and often inexpensive ways to improve intergroup relations and regional relations in the Western Balkans. Perhaps the most important implication is that the sense of threat from "others" that many politicians foment (Campbell, 1965) is not conducive to building economies using all human capital available, to trust in government or nation, or to preventing the substantial human and economic costs of violent conflict.

Notes

1. The terms of positions about status of Kosovo are detailed in Chap. 2
2. While Bosniaks refer to an ethnic group, predominantly Muslim, Bosnians refer to all citizens of BiH.

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F. Pratto et al. (eds.), *Shaping Social Identities After Violent Conflict*,
DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-62021-3