The Straitjacket Peace Agreement:  
A Study on Nation-Building and Identity in Bosnia and Herzegovina

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A Study on Nation-Building and Identity in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Master’s Thesis in Peace and Development Studies  
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Abstract

This master’s thesis is a result of research conducted during six weeks in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The purpose of this study is to examine whether the contribution of the Dayton peace agreement to process of nation building in Bosnia has become counter productive as it contains elements of both nation-state and state-nation foundation. The study strives to understand the question of identity and how people in Bosnia view themselves and Others, and how they view the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina in combination with the Dayton peace agreement.

Qualitative methods such as semi-structured and focused interviews as well as participatory and direct observations built the base for the data collection. The hermeneutic method is used as an approach to comprehend and to handle the findings. As my personal background contains pre-understandings of the chosen topic, I have chosen to use them throughout the research instead of ignoring them as the objective of this study is not to come to a final response of this topic, but instead to bring forward an alternative angle of the identified problem.

The result of this study indicates that people in Bosnia and Herzegovina tend to identify in terms of ethno-national identity groups primarily where religion and territory have a decisive role in shaping identity, while a common Bosnian identity has fallen behind. It also reveals that the Dayton peace agreement damages the idea of a common Bosnian identity and questions the idea of Bosnia all together. This research suggests that a nation-state bottom-up process in Bosnia is little perceptible, due to the lack of a common Bosnian identity. The results from this study indicate that Bosnia does not fit the state-nation definition, nor the nation-state definition for several reasons while both state-nation and nation-state building are visible on regional levels. The Dayton peace agreement has initiated a very difficult political situation with extremely complex state structures and limited possibilities for change. The ethno-national division of three, and the constitutive tying of particular groups to specific territories, has hampered both the societal and political situation in Bosnia.

Keywords: Identity, nation-state, state-nation, Dayton peace agreement.
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1. Introduction

Bosnia and Herzegovina has a somewhat interesting history with religious inversions, balancing between East and West, dominance and influence by empires, and long periods of governance by external powers between the last period of self-governance under the medieval king Tvrtko and the proclamation of independence in 1992 (Malcolm, 2002).

Before the war of 1992-95, Bosnia was a one of the six republics of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia together with Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Macedonia, and Montenegro. What distinguished Bosnia from the other five republics was that there was no national hegemonic status in Bosnia, as in the other five republics. Instead, Bosnia consisted of a mixed population that did not have a distinct majority. According to the census of 1991, Bosnia contained some 44% Bosnian Muslims, 31% Bosnian Serbs, 17% Bosnian Croats, 5.5% self-identified Yugoslavs, and 2.5% others (Belloni, 2009:357).

By the end of 1980s, new life was given to the national politics when Milošević1 stated that there was a need to protect Serb national groups, and that he would defend Serb national cause anywhere Serb national groups were living (Stiglmayer, 1994:16). By 1991, both Slovenia and Croatia declared independence, which resulted in armed conflicts; however, the conflict in Slovenia lasted for some ten days as it was considered that Croatia had a greater Serbian population than Slovenia and was therefore of more importance to keep within Yugoslavia (Malcolm, 2002:225-226).

As a result of the new political climate in Yugoslavia, and the establishing of a Bosnian Serb Republic in January 1992, Bosnia held a referendum of independence in February 1992, with 64% voter presence of which 98% voted for independence while the Serb population was urged to boycott the referendum “en masse” (Belloni, 2009:357-358; Naimark, 2002:159). In early April 1992, Bosnia and Herzegovina was recognized as a sovereign and independent state by the EG, and was at the same point in a full-scaled armed conflict (Malcolm, 2002: 234; Belloni, 2009:358). This introduction will not go into the process of the war in detail; however, the war in Bosnia set-up a new type of war, according to Kaldor (2007). The high

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1 At the time President of the Presidency Socialist Republic of Serbia.
attendance of paramilitary units together with the official and the unofficial involvement of other states (especially Croatia and Serbia), the methods of ethnic cleansing, genocide, and introducing mass rape as a war method distinguished Bosnia from other wars at that period and called for massive involvement by the international community at all levels, making Bosnia a subject to study and a career-making or breaking country (Kaldor, 2007:33-71, Naimark, 2002:139-184).

There are different theories to why the war in Bosnia emerged to become as difficult and dirty as it did. Some theories lean on the fact that Bosnia has a mixed population, and that hate and conflicts between the different religious/ethnic groups have been going on since forever. Malcolm (2002) means that the history of Bosnia is not the fundamental underlying reason and origin of the war and that the historical conflicts within the country between the different religious groups were not of ethnic or religious character but rather economic concerning landowners and peasants (xix-xxi). He writes that the process of nationalistic competition of Serbia and Croatia from the nineteenth century made Bosnia more interesting due to their Catholic and Orthodox population than it would have been otherwise. People of those particular religious groups were urged to call themselves Croats and Serbs. The Bosnian Muslims, after the fall of the Ottoman Empire, lost their national status and were established by Serbs and Croats as either essentially Serbs or essentially Croats who took on Islam. This caused Muslim intellectuals to declare themselves as either of the two national identities for tactical and political reasons (ibid., 126-127, 152-153). This combined with external governance lead people to consider themselves as either Serb or Croat living in Bosnia, and, henceforward, consider Bosnia as either a natural part of Croatia or naturally belonging to Serbia.

Naimark (2002) writes that it is evident that people in Bosnia and Herzegovina have had long periods of peaceful co-existence despite religious differences and that it is by the end of the nineteenth century, and more so by the early twentieth century, that national ideologies start to be formed and seriously take on the political sphere (140-145). Moreover, Naimark believes that the World War II gave birth to the largest nationalistic hatreds in former Yugoslavia and that the Yugoslavian nationalistic politicians were able to manipulate with these fresh wounds and emotions to create fear and stronger affinity of the own group by giving reference to myths and legends further back in history (ibid., 147-155).

During the war of 1992-95 all parties in Bosnia were at war at some point. Bosnian Serb forces were supported by the remains of Yugoslavia (dominated by Serbia) while the Bosnian Croat forces were supported by Croatia (Belloni, 2009:358). Several agreements between the
The war in Bosnia, 1992-95, ended with the signing of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Dayton Agreement). The agreement confirmed Bosnia and Herzegovina to be a sovereign state with sovereign borders. Yet it was simultaneously divided in two autonomous Entities and three constituent peoples: Bosniaks, Serbs, and Croats. The Serbs would get the Entity called Republika Srpska\(^2\), consisting of 49% of the territory. The other two constituent peoples, Bosniaks and Croats, would have to intermingle in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina containing 51% of the territory of the country. The three constituent peoples are, in accordance with the agreement and the High Representative\(^3\), supposed to share the power and authority of the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina and regulate it. This seems to have turned out to be very complex and the country does not appear to have progressed far from the same nationalistic politics that resulted in an armed conflict in the first place. The political rhetoric seems to be less about different ideological concerns and more about three different nationalistic ambitions (Belloni, 2009:358-360). Hence, it appears as though the peace agreement is aiming at reconciling politics, but in reality reinforcing the condition upon which the war rhetoric was constructed.

1.1 Aim and Purpose

The purpose of this study is to look into whether the Dayton Agreement is counter productive since it appears to base its solution of the armed conflict on a peculiar mixture of state-nation

\(^2\) Republika Srpska is the Serb Republic in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Note that it is not the same as the sovereign state Republic of Serbia.

\(^3\) The High Representative is, according to the Dayton peace agreement, the supreme interpreter of the agreement and is entitled to remove politicians who act contrary to the agreement or in some matter attempt to undermine or break the agreement.
and nation-state foundation\(^4\). Consequently, it becomes relevant to consider whether Bosnia-Herzegovina is put in a nation-state *straitjacket* while it simultaneously endeavours to maintain a state-nation mode. Hence, the fieldwork aims to look deeper into whether there exists a hegemonic *Bosnian identity* among the citizens, how the mechanism of nationalness is constructed around identity, and whether the existing identities in turn are obstacles for the contemporary political situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The following two research questions are based on the problem identification of the thesis – i.e. how identity shapes and strengthens the on-going process of nation-building in the country since the territory is divided by ethnicity, according to the Dayton peace agreement, and hence Bosnia and Herzegovina may have developed a state-nation mode through the agreement while the agreement simultaneously attempts to keep the country in a nation-state manner.

*The first research question* looks into how identity is perceived in Bosnia and Herzegovina and to what extent, and in what pace, does a national identity emerge. Here it is important to understand how identities are formed, perceived, and reinforced throughout the country, but the question also looks into how much the Dayton peace agreement contributes to the emerging of one hegemonic common Bosnian identity or several sub-identities based on ethnic belonging. *The second research question* is concerned with how it would be possible to define the idea of Bosnia and Herzegovina today in order to understand the intended nation-state building process.

### 1.2 The Point of Departure

Benedict Anderson (1991) argues that identity groups, whose members believe that they share certain kinship and solidarity primarily due to their identity, have no absolute borders as they are shaped and changed over time. Hence, due to their characteristics, Anderson refers to them as imagined communities. He means that imagined communities are constructed in the manner where specific features, attributes, and values are added to a specific identity group to

\(^4\) A nation-state process emerges when a nation (an identity group) recognized the need for self-governance and an idea of a state emerges. While a state-nation process emerges when the state manages to include several identity groups under one national identity, without necessarily having to reject the *old* identities, and reinforces this identity through state institutional (Buzan, 1991).
distinguish them from other identity groups. The members of the group believe that they feel more solidarity within the own group then outside it. These identity groups can be called nations. As a contemporary political consciousness is not possible to separate from nationalness, elements such as nationalism, nations, and nationess are of major importance when identity is shaped (1991:131). This may be particularly important to take into the equation when dealing with the subjects such as nation, state, politics, and identity in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In Bosnia, it seems as though the identity of the different national groups is underlined and emphasized by nationalness, yet it appears that a Bosnian national identity is not included in this process. Instead, it looks as though more focus is put on the construction and maintenance of the Bosniak, Serb, and Croat identities, while the Bosnian identity has been obscured due to their development. I suggest that within Bosnia and Herzegovina the imagined communities are highly evident and segregating due to emphasize on nationalness, which excludes other identity groups. This in turn leads to a weakened emergence of a homogeneous Bosnian identity and consequently questions the idea of the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina becoming a unitary nation-state.
2. Method

This chapter will explain how this study was conducted and what methods that were used together with ethical considerations and delimitations. It will also provide with information about the informants in this study and the geographical setting.

2.1 Hermeneutic Method

I have chosen to apply the hermeneutic method in my approach to understand and, later on to handle, my findings. Alvesson and Sköldberg (2009) mean that we are never free from preconceptions or pre-understandings of a particular subject. The reasoning is that people tend to use their past experience, the present situation, and the possible future as the base for their decision-making and orientation in the world (240-242). Hence, the individual is put in a context that is based upon the individual comprehension of a practical situation, and therefore the individual should not be considered as an agent who views an object with pure subjective passivity, rationality, or theoretical base. Instead the individual carries with him silent knowledge that is based on his/hers preconceptions, pre-understandings and emotions, which in turn create understanding of the self, the world, others, and other individuals’ world. Interpretation is considered historically conditioned and, consequently, results in different aspects of reality throughout different historical and cultural eras (ibid: 244-246).

Hence, I will have to consider the informants in their societal and historical context, as the informant cannot be viewed as isolated according to Alvesson & Sköldberg (2009:195). This implies a constant shift between interpreting the whole and parts, as well as a constant shift between understanding and pre-understanding. In other words, the whole is interpreted by interpreting parts of it, which in turn gives an understanding of the whole. Likewise, in order to understand the presented problem identification one must refer to the own pre-understandings. At the same time, pre-understanding required understanding of the findings and thereby contributes to the own pre-understanding (ibid: 211).

To avoid the own pre-understandings from becoming a problem of understanding itself, one must always move from penetrating the unknown world and our own reference. This leads us to understand the unknown reference, review, and enrich our own reference.
(Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009:245). In some methodological approaches, this dependency is considered to be possible to avoid. Others, for example Myrdal (1970), argues that it should be acknowledged and dealt with, rather than hidden and ignored (19-22).

Similarly, due to my background, as I am from Bosnia and Herzegovina and have several personal links to the country, I have certain pre-understandings of the chosen topic. Instead of ignoring my preconceptions and my pre-understandings – because I believe that is impossible – I will use them throughout my research since the idea is not to come to a final result of this topic, but instead to bring forward an alternative angle of the identified problem. Alvesson & Sköldberg argue that we do not only attempt to understand the world of others by putting ourselves in their context, but rather by using our own preconceptions and pre-understandings as the starting point never begins with *tabula rasa* when we attempt to understand. Therefore, I use Anderson’s (1991) concept of imagined communities as my point of departure because I suspect that a common national identity of the different ethnic/national identity groups within the country is disturbed, which in turn is enforced by the Dayton Agreement, and, hence, the idea of the state becomes uncertain which may make the Dayton Agreement counterproductive. In this regard, I consider the problem identification whether the Dayton Agreement becomes counterproductive as the whole, while obvious parts to start with, before entering the field, consist of how the population view their own and other identity and what their idea of the state is. Accordingly, one must look at the whole to understand the parts, just as the parts are necessary to understand and shed a new light on the understanding of the whole. For this my informants are vital as I believe them to be experts of the world they live in, i.e. their lifeworld, and communicate a specific knowledge of the world they live in which is incorporated with both the presented parts and whole of this study.

### 2.2 Abduction

According to Danermark et al. (2009), abduction should be considered as redescription and recontextualization of a subject, i.e. “to study, describe, interpret and explain something within the frames of a new context is a central moment in the scientific work” (184). This is important in the field of social science, according to Danermark et al., as social scientists study subjects that are already known, and give a new meaning to an already known phenomenon. This type of analysis provides with a more in-depth knowledge by using
different theoretical points of departure and interpretative frames. Danermark et al. write that it is not only important to examine what a theory says about different events, but also to look at what the different events say about the theory. Case studies are of value in order to test and develop already existing theories relations, structures, and mechanisms. Hence, the same phenomenon can be recontextualized in different manners without either one of the recontextualizations being more true than the other. For abduction, the interaction between the theoretical redescriptions of a case and the case study based development of theory is central (ibid: 185-189).

Abduction is therefore applied as an analytical tool to understand and explain the findings. The productivity of the Dayton Agreement, and the national situation in Bosnia, will be viewed within a framework of identity and the state in order to arrive at a conclusion. However, this does not imply that the attempt is to prove an already existing theory or to construct new theories. It implies that the analytical framework will be used to understand the findings.

2.3 Geographical Setting

The setting of the fieldwork is Bosnia and Herzegovina, as it lays in my interest to see how the people living in different areas of the country look at their identity. Since Bosnia has been divided in two Entities, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska, I have chosen three larger cities - Sarajevo, Mostar, and Banja Luka –and smaller communities or municipalities around these large cities to focus upon as the field.

Sarajevo is the capital of the Republic Bosnia and Herzegovina and is situated in the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina while bordering with Republika Srpska. Sarajevo has been divided according to the Dayton Agreement, so Eastern Sarajevo – Lukavica - belongs to Republika Srpska and the rest belongs to the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Mostar is another city situated in the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, but differently from Sarajevo, it does not border with Republika Srpska since it is situated South-West. Mostar has been divided by invisible borders between Bosniaks and Croats, together with vital institutions situated in the city such as educational, health, and political to mention a few. Banja Luka is now the capital of Republika Srpska and is situated in the northern parts. A population of Serb majority probably inhabits Banja Luka today due to the demographical
change by refugees stream from Banja Luka during the war.

2.4 Interviewing in the field

In the field, I used two different interview forms for my respondents: semi-structured interview and focused interview\(^5\). When interviewing officials I chose to use the semi-structured interview form as it enabled me to ask particular questions and also use follow-up questions based on the respondents answer. Like the semi-structured interview form requires, I had five questions that were fixed and asked in the same way to all the respondents. In some cases the respondents demanded the questions in advance to be looked over. However, as the interview was not structured it allowed me to go deeper into certain issues and come into a dialogue with the respondent. My aim for the interviews was to have certain themes to follow, but at the same time to be able to go beneath the surface and allow the respondent to answer within the terms their own conditions (May, 2001:123).

I used the focused interview form when I interviewed ordinary citizens as this form has an open-ended nature, which, from my point of view, suits the hermeneutic method. My intention was to open up a conversation with the informants and let them communicate their lifeworld by expressing themselves in their own way, and at the same time to keep the conversation focused on certain themes. The themes that were discussed was identity, religion, nationalism, and the Dayton peace agreement and what it means for Bosnian state.

Hence, the focused interview form was used because it allows the informants to do precisely that, i.e. to speak about the themes on their own terms, using the terms, ideas, and thoughts with which they are familiar with, and for them to feel more comfortable with discussing themes and instead of answering the interview questions (May, 2001:124-125). The flexibility in using this specific interview form allowed me to have an aim with the interview while the informants were free to speak about their understanding of the topics and provide me with knowledge that may not have been accessible unless the informants wander off the topic. The focused interview form also allows me to return to a point made by the interviewee, and it allows the interviewee to elaborate such a point and/or correct it if necessary (May, 2001:133).

\(^5\) It can also be referred to as unstructured interview but I have chosen to call them focused interview as certain themes were focused upon during the interviews (May, 2001:124).
As will be presented below, I chose a varied target group precisely due to its variety due to my wish to understand how informants with different backgrounds, historical experiences, and within different geographical settings view identity, their state, their society, and the Dayton Agreement within the terms of their reference and from the perspective of their lifeworld. On the one hand, it is needed to find out how officials working for different institutions perceive the chosen topic of this study purely professionally and how they look upon the functionality of the state. On the other hand, ordinary citizens’ understanding of everyday life, and the ways they are affected by the chosen topic for the study, in combination with their perception whether the functionality of the state is accomplished and serves the citizens or not, would possibly provide an alternative understanding of the chosen topic for this study. I believe that such an understanding may reveal a difference in perceiving the chosen topic and present a different ‘truth’ of the relationship between the identity, the state, and the Dayton Agreement.

2.5 Informants in the field

I have used 25 informants for this study. I have both spoken to government officials, employees of municipalities, institutions, organizations and associations, and of course ordinary citizens. The reason for why I have chosen such a variety of informants is the very reason that they are probably diverse in their perceptions of the same topic as one group represents the governmental and state institutions, in one way or another, and the other group is (as the first group as well) affected by the institutions.

As I suspected before I went to the field, some of my informants were nervous and unwilling to participate in any interviews, group discussions, or anything similar until I was able to convince them that their identity will be protected and concealed throughout this study. For that reason, I will refer to some of the informants using pseudonyms and not mention their place of work. Another concern regarding my informants is that some of them are officials and thus they are in all probability restricted in how much they can speak to me about the different themes I wish to discuss, if they accept to discuss them at all.

Furthermore, it is important to remember that I try to discuss specific themes with all of the three constituent peoples and that they more often than not are subjective in their answers and in regards to what can be spoken about at all, that is, how much they accept to diverge
from their own imagined community. It is also of significance that people living in different
surroundings, regardless of their ethnic belonging, will have very different points of view on
the same issues. In addition, my background also depends on how much the informants trust
me to be open and speak their mind. It also affects whether they wish to share information
with me, i.e. if they either open up for discussions or attempt to steer them elsewhere.

I started off by interviewing my contact person, the Ambassador of Bosnia and
Herzegovina in Sweden, Darko Zelenika, who introduced me to the Dayton peace accords and
helped me to come in contact with other officials in the field. In the field I managed to
interview three other government officials: Amer Kapetanović, the head of the EU department
in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and two officials who wished to remain anonymous. I also
interviewed Janja Milinković, professor of Political Science at the Mostar University, and
Tanja Topić, a political analyst. Since I find the religious institutions as important actors in
the chosen topic, I spoke with two persons who are employed by different religious institutes:
a Catholic priest in Prijedor, Marijan Stojanović, and a theologian, Muharem Merdić, who is
an imam in Sarajevo. I also turned to different organizations and association in different cities
where I spoke with personnel, some wanted to be completely anonymous, and some wanted
their names visible in the text. Moreover, I spoke with seventeen women and eleven men from
the target cities of Bosnia and Herzegovina who do not obtain any institutional functions
mentioned above.

As mentioned before, with the help of my contact person I managed to come in contact
with government officials in the field. To reach the other informants I used the snowball
method – one informant gives contact information of a person, or two, who the informant
presumes would wish to participate or possesses valuable knowledge for the research (May,
2001:132) – in some cases, and in other cases I looked up contact information to reach some
informants on the Internet and asked directly whether they would consider participating, this
was used to come in contact with civil society personnel. Before any interviews or group
discussion started, I explained what the study is about and its purpose in order to be as
transparent about my intentions as possible.

2.6 Observations
Direct and participatory observation is another method that was used in the field. An observation basically means that visual impressions in the field are transformed into text (Aspers, 2007:103). Whilst direct observation includes observations of the physical arrangements, behaviors, symbols, and so forth, participatory observations generally require that one is directly involved in the activities of the focus group without being taken in into the field; i.e. to be integrated in the field and keep a distance (Mikkelsen, 2005:88: Aspers, 2007:105-106).

The participatory observation consists of informal discussions with informants who participated in the interviews but as well with persons who only spoke to me informally and invited me to spend time with them and in so doing understand their perspectives of the circumstances which are related to my topic. I was also asked to take part in some events, which also provided opportunities to actively be included in the field and gain understandings by sharing the activities that were performed by members of the field. Moreover, the direct observation was applied throughout the time spent in the field by observing the surroundings, the people, the symbols, and similar.

2.7 Literary Review

In chapter 4, a literary review is presented of previous studies and comment on the Dayton Agreement and nation-building in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The review is thought to be both instructional and demonstrate others studies and views on the subject. Furthermore, it is thought to be additional to the point of departure and the analytical framework for this study as the chosen literary review view at the Dayton in terms of the structures it creates and how it contributes to the nation-building process.

2.8 Ethical Considerations
There are quite a lot of ethical considerations concerning the fieldwork. Apart from filling the basic required ethical consideration that Mikkelsen discusses, such as informing the respondent of the aim and purpose of the research, confidentiality, and the risk assessment of my respondents by speaking to me, there was other as well (Mikkelsen, 2005:342-343).

One would be the cultural consideration. Although I am originally from Bosnia and Herzegovina, I am also regarded as Diaspora and not really belonging to the society. Some consider the fact that I live in Sweden as a positive feature and some regard it to be a negative feature when conducting such a study. My social background makes it easier for me to understand certain values and norms of the different communities better than others. For example, some norms and values are different in Northern Bosnia from those in Southern regardless of their identity groups.

I prepared myself for the possibility of my interviewees being interested in me as well and asking questions about me. Mikkelsen suggests that it is important to be researched as well, especially when one is entering a dialogue with the respondents, which was my aim (2005:330). In order to establish trust and transparency, especially as I am regarded to belong to one of the identity groups, I chose to introduce myself briefly when I was talking about my aim and purpose with the interviews, and I decided to be open and answer questions about myself.

As Mikkelsen writes, interviews do tend to go about on a personal level and in so doing the researcher can interfere in the private sphere of his/her informants (2005:340-341). At the same time, the themes of the interviews touch upon sensitive issues for some informants and more often than not the war finds its way into the dialogue. This can be difficult for the informants and a lot of mixed feeling can appear. For that reason, the informant was never forced to answer questions he/she did not wish to discuss and if he/she felt uncomfortable to talk about certain issues the interview would be directed towards other relevant themes.

2.9 Delimitations

I have refrained from using a quantitative approach even though a quantitative approach might offer some good statistical insights. However, when this study is conducted there is no
census since 1991, which makes it considerably difficult to estimate how many of the citizens consider themselves to be Bosnian or Bosniak, Serb, and Croat. It also gives little support in defining the attitudes considering the Dayton Agreement.

It has also been difficult for me to enter institutions of Republika Srpska even though I have sent requests to both religious and other institutes of the Entity. Therefore, I cannot give account for how the Orthodox religious institute and the institutes of Republika Srpska view identity, the national process of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Dayton Agreement.
3. Analytical Framework

Some describe nationalism as popular national movements that grew within Europe from 1820. The concept of nationalism was so effective that after the First World War the nation-state became the legitimate international norm of countries (Anderson 1991:89, 103). Nation, nationality, and nationalness are the major factors concerning our identity; we usually identify us by stating what nation we belong to. Nations are created when certain attributes, features, and, more often than not, certain territories are added to a specific identity group. These attributes and features are habitually regarded as if they were inherited by nature and not constructed by social surroundings. In our present time, nationalness has become impossible to separate from political awareness of the global society (ibid:73, 89).

This chapter will attempt to explain how nationalism is constructed and by which mechanisms it is maintained. The first part focuses on the concepts of nation, nationality, nationalness, and ethnicity. It will discuss how these concepts are regarded generally, but also what they in reality involve. Moreover, the second part will go into what a state is, while the third part discusses the nation-state and state-nation model.

3.1. Nation, Nationality and Nationalness

According to Gellner (1997), nationalism is a political norm, which means that above all culture is the primary factor that connects human beings to each other (21-22). In other words, culture can be seen as an element, inherited by birth, that is the ultimate bond that links human beings of the same culture to one another and creates unique solidarity. Nationalists present nationalism as universal and of course hereditary by nature, perhaps even God given, and therefore people from the same cultural identity group are thought to feel a greater and a more unique solidarity within the group than outside it (Anderson, 1991:37, 138; Hechter, 2000:11, 25). Therefore, it is a quite common thinking that individuals of a nation are more eager to live with people from the same nation, than with people of a different nation and that foreign governance is an unfavourable condition, as they possess ties of kinship through their culture, which, in turn, can be seen in cultural products (Gellner, 1997:25; Anderson,
1991:140). Anderson, through his critical standpoint, calls the identity groups, which are formed on this basis, imagined communities. It is his conceptualization that imagined communities legitimate themselves through nationalness, i.e. they are using cultural features and attributes to separate themselves from others by giving a particularity to the group. The description of the cultural distinctiveness can be found in music, literature, poetry, art, dance, language, behaviour, norms, values, traditions, and so forth. Some of these features and attributes are then used as symbols (folkdance, flags, folk music, etc) of a particular nation in order to distinguish them from Others. One important feature is language, according to Anderson. In theory, anybody can learn any language and therefore it cannot properly be used as an excluding feature, but it is probably impossible for anyone to learn all languages and therefore it could function as an excluding factor. Yet, language is mostly considered to be an including factor as it has the ability to construct imagined communities with solidarity (1991:129-138). As such, language can be viewed as the key to enter a culture as one may perhaps not belong to a particular culture by learning the language, but it is possible to take part in it as one has access to the music, literature, and poetry of a particular culture.

Furthermore, the nation is often portrayed to have a particular identification that is anchored throughout history, they can even be ancient, and for that reason the nation has great significance and vulnerability. This makes nations both absolute and restricted (Anderson, 1991: 20, 89, 113). Hechter writes that nationalism is more appealing to individuals who consider their nation to have been disadvantaged due to their cultural uniqueness than those lack the same (2000:31).

Hettne (1992) writes that ethnic groups also share a collective awareness where kinship is usually based on race, language, religion and/or territory (82). He means that both ethnicity and nation are psychological and cultural phenomena, and that the distinction between the both can be rather complex. One can regard nationalism as a political ideology to determine the world by nations, while ethnicity is viewed as a more extended kinship. Hettne explains that a nation can serve as a collective identity for several ethnic groups such as the Spanish and Belgian nation (ibid: 59-62). Yet, when an ethnic group shares a somewhat realistic ambition to create a nation-state is should be regarded as a nation. However, Hettne argues that ethno-nationalism is a special concept that can be used when describing an ethnic group’s organisation or ambition to create a nation-state. In that case, it is common to make a distinction between two ethno-nationalistic movements: the pan movement with the ambition to unite smaller units into a larger unit, and the separatist movement that aims to separate a smaller unit from a larger unit (ibid: 62).
Nations in themselves do not create nationalism. It is rather that nations feel that their inevitable distinctiveness is threatened through foreign governance. According to Hetcher, it is the wish for self-rule that causes nationalism. Sovereignty is then the preferred condition, for nationalists, as it would provide with unlimited self-determination. Having said this, for nationalistic collective action to occur there is a need for the central state’s tolerance of nationally political and cultural organizations (2000:18, 116, 127). The constructed cultural products raise devotion, love, and self-sacrifice. Thus, it is also possible for one nation to perceive the other nation’s cultural products as a threat and create fear, enmity, and disgust (Anderson, 1991:137). So, it is easy for nationalistic movements to present themselves as defenders of their particular vulnerable, yet unique and sometimes superior, culture that is threatened (Hetcher, 2000:123). Having said this, nations can demand victims for their cause as they are considered to be impartial, and individuals (who are not genetically related to each other) may feel that they have to protect their members with whom they feel affinity (Anderson 1991:138-139).

3.2 The State

To understand what nation-states and state-nations are and how they are constructed we must first look at the state. Hettne (1992) writes that there are several definitions of the state but that one has to distinguish the state as an executive and administrative power and the state as a political territory. Yet, the state can also be a combination of the two as they are interlinked. He explains that the state must be able to control its territory by efficient state apparatus and state control, which it utters throughout state institutions (including the military and the monopoly on violence), but it also requires recognition by both the own population and other states in order to be legitimate (58-59).

In the international system, the state is considered to be the most dominant type of political units of all due to its socio-political centrality and military power. According to Buzan (1991) there are two different ways of viewing the state: internally and internationally. Internationally the state would be viewed, according to the traditional International Relations theory, as a billiard ball among others, i.e. in an international anarchy where each state acts as it desires due to its sovereignty. While internally, the state is equal to the central government.
In other words, a state is an organization within a particular territory with the authority to introduce rules for its inhabitants and by its institutions makes certain that they are followed. However, Buzan presents an alternative view by merging the two views together. He speaks of three components that together conceptualize the state: territorial – political – societal. The three components are interlinked and together form a system of the state as demonstrated below (58-61, 65).

**Figure 1. The component part of the state**

![Diagram showing the component part of the state]

(Buzan 1991:65)

Buzan suggests that these three components are the defining characteristics of the state. The physical base consists of the population, the territory, and all of the natural, and other, resources on that particular territory (1991:90-91). The institutions of the state include the government and its “executive, legislative, administrative and judicial bodies, and the laws and norms by which they operate” (ibid: 82-83). It is important to note that the state continuity does not necessarily have to be interrupted if the governing institutions change. The institutions of the state are closely linked to the idea of the state, as the idea of the state serves as a guide to the state institutions to put the idea into action and vice versa. Yet, the idea of the state has to be shared by a group of individuals linked to each other. Again we come into the concept of nation. A nation may be a population concentrated on a specific territory, normally due to the course of time, which may create an idea of a state that is bound to a specific territory and aim for self-dominance. Herein, the relationship between the state and the society is quite obvious as the state serves a purpose for its national group, and the society serves a purpose for the state (ibid: 86-71). The population, of a particular territory, who share a collective idea of the state, are also providing legitimacy to that state (ibid:65-66). Hence, it is relevant to consider Anderson’s (1991) concept of imagined communities in relation to Buzan’s model of what constitutes a state and how the relationship between the
state and the society - imagined communities – can be understood.

Hettne points out that it is necessary to separate the absolute concept of the state and the relative concept of the state. He clarifies that the relativistic concept of the state portrays that polities can differ in their stateness, i.e. to what extent their stateness is developed. He also points out that the state, as a legal arrangement, may fall apart but that both nation and ethnicity are, as mentioned above, psychological and cultural phenomenon and lives on within the identity groups. Hettne, writes that in order for this phenomenon to cease it would take physical and cultural erasure (1991:59).

3.3 Nation-State Building and State-Nation Building

Nations that considered their possibilities and salient uniqueness to have been threatened by a government which does not consist of the ‘own’ will, regard as mentioned above, upon sovereignty as the most positive condition. Gellner (1997) means that states and nationalisms are not universal while culture and social order is. On the other hand, since culture has become woven into nationalness, it is by some seen as universal, natural, fated, and eternal (ibid: 23,25). Hence, nationalism not only promotes the idea that genetically unrelated people of one nation share a special kind of affinity solely due to the fact that they are a part of that particular identity group, but nationalism also ties the nation to a particular territory and promote the idea that the nation would be better off with self-determination. Since nations are usually concentrated in particular territories, which they considered as their native soil, they can pose factual threats of becoming self-determining polities who may attempt to be sovereign. On the other hand, groups always consist of individuals who have their separate private interests and they need to be persuaded that they will benefit more if there was self-determination. Thus, nationalism must convince the individuals of the nation that self-determination will benefit their private interests, and that the policies of the new government will benefit them materially (Hechter, 2000:14-15, 30). For that reason it is not enough to define borders of a particular territory. Instead it is needed to reconstruct the social order; apart from soil, it calls for an institutionalized authority centre, which would be filled with members of the ‘own’ nation (or cultural) group so that self-determination is truly possible (Gellner, 1997:24).
In the case of *nation-state*, the nation paves the way for the state and, as Buzan puts it, “[the nation] plays a major role in giving rise to [the state]” (Buzan, 1991:72-73). In other words, the nation on a particular territory has a quite explicit identity, that is more or less homogenous\(^6\), who together share an idea of the state that is there to protect that particular nation. The relationship between the state and the society is quite profound and intense. Nation-state model include a, somewhat, bottom-up process as the society is the core constructor of the state.

**Figure 2. The Nation-State Process**

![Diagram](image)

*The figure demonstrates the bottom-up process where there already exists an unambiguous identity group that together form the nation that in term is giving rise to the state. This is of course a simplified ideal version whereas the reality may look different throughout history.*

While the state has a purpose to provide legitimacy for the nation both internationally and internally, the nation serves a purpose in upholding the state (Buzan, 1991:73). The state-nation, on the other hand, strives to construct nation. It is a clear top-down perspective, where

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\(^6\) However, there are usually always ambiguous identities but they may not belong to a great minority or they can be marginalized either politically or by territory.
the state plays an active role in the creation of a nation out of a culturally heterogeneous society. The aim is to create a homogeneous identity, through cultural, and institutional elements such as language, custom, norm, and law that will in time identify with the state despite their diversity. Although the population may keep their ‘old’ identities, these are not organized by territory nor represented in state/political/administrative institutions and are, therefore, not unable to coexist with the constructed prevailing collective identity (ibid:73-74).

**Figure 3. The State-Nation Process**

*In this figure it is possible to detect how the top-down perspective of the state-nation process works. The state forms the nation by creating a collective homogenous identity group out of separate identity groups. This figure, is like figure 2, a mere ideal model.*
When constructing either a nation-state, or a state-nation, it is necessary that institutions be state-controlled in order to reinforce the national identity. Education, media, militarism, and “official rewriting of history” are used for the political purposes of nationalism (Anderson, 1991:103). What is more, the new order presents new traditions such as flags, anthems, monuments, and so on (Hechter, 2000:64). Having said this, a socialization of the national identity occurs where a new national history is offered, and so individuals are taught to be proper members of their nation state.
4. Background

The Dayton peace agreement settled the conflict within Bosnia and Herzegovina 1992-95. On one hand, the agreement divides Bosnia and Herzegovina into two Entities with autonomy and an arbitrary ruled District: namely the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Republika Srpska (Serb Republic in Bosnia and Herzegovina), and the District of Brčko. On the other hand, the Dayton Agreement also recognizes the sovereignty of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a state with internationally recognized borders (The General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina Annex 4, 1995).

4.1 Short summary of Annex 4 of the Dayton Peace accords

The General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina entered into force 14 December 1995. The agreement consists of eleven articles and eleven annexes. A summary of Annex 4, the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, will be presented below since it is the most relevant annex for this study.

Annex 4 begins with stating that the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina will be based on human dignity, liberty and equality. Furthermore, Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, which are listed in the annex, should apply to Bosnia and Herzegovina. Herein, the agreement recognized the republic as a sovereign state – the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina “shall continue its legal existence under international law as a state, with its internal structure modified as provided herein and with its present internationally recognized borders”. Sarajevo is declared to be the capital of the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Entities are to enjoy the right, given by the Constitution, to establish special parallel relationships with neighbouring states if they are consistent with the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina, but they may enter into other agreements with states and international organization with the approval of the Parliamentary Assembly. The Entities are to assist the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina so that it may honour its

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7 See Appendix 3 for a short summary of the Dayton Peace Agreement.
international obligations, and the Entities (together with subdivision of the Entities) must conform fully to the Constitution and the decision of the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, the Entities are given the possibility to enjoy all governmental functions and powers, within the Entities, that are not expressly assigned to the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina by the Constitution. The Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina may decide to assist inter-Entity coordination on matters not within the responsibilities of Bosnia and Herzegovina provided by the Constitution, though only if the Entity does not object in any particular case.

The Constitution declares three Constituent Peoples - Bosniaks, Serbs, and Croats – and Others who obtain Bosnian citizenship. It also declares citizenship of the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina and citizenship of Entities (providing that all Entity citizenship are thereby recognized as Bosnian citizenship), and gives the citizens possibility of dual citizenship if there is such a bilateral agreement between Bosnia and Herzegovina and other states.

Moreover, the annex explains the design of the Parliamentary Assembly, which shall be divided into two chambers: the House of Peoples and the House of Representatives. In short, the House of Peoples is to consist of 15 Delegates – one-third selected by the National Assembly of Republika Srpska, and two-thirds selected by the House of Peoples of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina – of which nine members comprise a quorum providing that those nine are divided according to ethnic quotas, i.e. three Serb Delegates, three Bosniak Delegates, and three Croat Delegates. The House of Representatives is to consist of 42 Members, again divided by ethnic quotas, i.e. one-third consisting of Bosniaks, one-third of Serbs, and one-third of Croats, who are directly elected from their respective Entity. The majority elected to the House of Representatives will comprise a quorum. Each chamber is convened in Sarajevo and the majority of each chamber must approve all presented legislations.

The Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina is divided among 3 members: one Bosniak from the Federation, one Croat from the Federation, and one Serb from Republika Srpska. Each decision can be taken only by consensus, which basically means that each Member of the Presidency obtains veto power. The Presidency appoints the Chair of the Ministers, with the consent of the House of Representatives, who in turn appoints other Ministers who will take office after the approval of the House of Representatives. The Constitution also allows for an amendment of the Constitution – however, not regarding the Human Rights and the Fundamental Freedoms – by the decision of the Parliamentary Assembly if two-thirds of those present and voting in House of Representatives vote for an amendment.
The Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as presented in the agreed Constitution, serves to uphold the Constitution, where all members together constitute a quorum, and their decision is final and binding. The Court is to consist of nine members: four members selected by the House of Peoples of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, two members from National Assembly of Republika Srpska, and the remaining three are to be appointed by the President of the European Court of Human Rights with the consultation of the Presidency. The judges selected by the President of the European Court of Human Rights are not to be citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina or any neighbouring states.

Furthermore, the Constitution decides that all authority for issuing currency and for monetary policy is given to the Central Bank of Bosnia and Herzegovina. A Governing Board is introduced, and for the first period after the Dayton agreement enters into force, it shall consists of a Governor that is appointed by the International Monetary Fund and three Members on a six year term—again divided by ethnic quotas, a Serb, a Bosniak, and a Croat where the two appointed by the Federation will share vote. After the first period of six years, there shall be five Members appointed by the Presidency, also with six years term, with one of the Members is to be appointed the Governor.

4.2 Previous studies and comments on the agreement: a Literary Review

There are no doubts that the Dayton Agreement have delivered a rather complex situation to the process of state building in post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina. What is arguable is to what extent the Dayton has failed the country. Belloni (2009) writes that the situation is even worse than 2006 and that the international community is weak in its response (355-356). Mahon & Western (2009) state that the situation is the worst since the end of the war and that there are whispers of a potential war (69).

On the other hand, Lampe (2005) argues that the Dayton Agreement has managed to create a single market economy which links the different nations with each other by providing free movement of labour and capital, which is an important step in state building and towards EU integration (43, 45). The goal of the Dayton Agreement was to put forward “a single democratic, tolerant and multi-ethnic state”; however, the Dayton turned out to have very few successes such as settlements on a common passport for all citizens, common license plates
for vehicles, common currency (the currency is referred to as the Convertible Mark in
Bosnian, while the its correct international name is Bosnian Mark), common borders, custom
service, and joined army (Chollet, 2005:23). At the same time, each of the two Entities has its
own government that controls educational policy, foreign policy, and taxation (Mahon &
Western, 2009:69).

Most agree that the signing of the Dayton peace agreement was necessary to end the war.
Hayden (2005) writes that other attempts to bring forward a peace agreement have been
unsuccessful due to the structure they provided, while the Dayton agreement was signed
precisely since “it did not provide a workable structure for a single Bosnian state” (51). The
Dayton Agreement decentralises the state to the degree that it undermines the authority of the
state itself and allows room of manoeuvre for irresponsible politicians and corruption. The
agreement has provided the three-member presidency with veto legislation, which cripples the
ability to come to a joint agreement on a basic political structure for the state (Mahon &

As seen in the summary of the peace agreement above, Bosnia and Herzegovina is divided
into two Entities (the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Republika Srpska) and a District
(the Brčko District), which has brought upon a situation where a country of approximately
four million citizens have some 160 ministers (Mahon & Western, 2009:73). The Federation
of Bosnia and Herzegovina is in turn divided into ten cantons where each canton has its own
prime minister, ministers, and an own constitution assembly that is directly elected by voters
from the Federation (Belloni, 2009:359). Republika Srpska is not divided into cantons but it
enjoys a constitutional assembly as well together with a prime minister and ministers
(Hayden, 2005:51-52).\(^8\)

A state structure, like the Bosnian, is very expensive to obtain, and more than 50 per cent
of the state budget finances these administrative units. Bosnia has five levels of governance,
which are led by 14 prime ministers of different levels, a three-member presidency, and
several ministers. It is the country with the highest number of ministers, prime ministers, and
presidents per capita in the world and therefore the state budget needs to allocate huge sums
to keep this apparatus going (Belloni, 2009: 359, 366).

Thus, and due to the nature of the agreement as it binds territory with ethnicity, a stable
political structure or/and situation is difficult to reach. At the moment, Serbs are those who
encourage the status quo the most as it gives Republika Srpska a chance to keep the semi-

\(^8\) See Appendix 4 for a simplified version of the Bosnian state structure.
independent unit existing and, of course, a status quo provides the possibility to strengthen the republic as well, and if needed to call for ultimate self-governance - sovereignty. The Prime Minister of Republika Srpska, Milorad Dodik, keeps threatening with holding a referendum on independence whenever a discussion of modifying the state structure is on the table. At the same time, the Croats argue for more autonomy within the Federation and push for a third entity (Belloni, 2009:367, Mahon & Western, 2009:70). According to Chollet, the Dayton peace agreement has institutionalized ethnic division and ethnic politics as the agreement continues to maintain the possibility to tear apart Bosnia into two or three states while it simultaneously attempts to push the nations – that it already divides into different territories - together into one state (2005:24). Even so, Belloni writes that the different Bosnian leaders do recognize the need to alter the state structure to international officials, as they too consider the Dayton constitution to be inefficient and less functional. However, this recognition occurs only in private dealings with international officials (2009:367).

Likewise, most citizens do not all feel that they are Bosnian, or that their homeland is Bosnia and Herzegovina. There is little and limited support for politicians who encourage a multi-ethnic state and those citizens who identify themselves in civic terms are being discriminated against by the constitution itself – as the three constituent peoples are Bosniaks, Serbs, and Croats – while the ethnic identities prevail (Hayden, 2005:52; Belloni, 2009:368). This limits the alternatives for social and political room of manoeuvre for those who wish to identify themselves as Bosnians. Moreover, the limited functionality of the state has in turn marginalised the citizens and the constant status quo has, in turn, brought upon passivity among the citizens (Belloni, 2009:368). The international society in Bosnia has with its presence attempted to strengthen the civil society, but one must remember that the international society is represented by several nations with different interests and different approaches and courses of actions regarding development and empowerment. Even if different international organisations achieved success on a certain level, they would fail in their cooperation with other international organisation. Mahon and Western mean that attempts to strengthen the civil society with a bottom-up approach would fail due to the international actors’ limited knowledge of Bosnia and Herzegovina, its population, its history, culture, and its complexity (Mahon & Western, 2009:75-76).

In summary, although the Dayton Agreement has managed to achieve slight success, the authors, mentioned above, agree that the Dayton is not very successful when it comes to state-building in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and that the agreement has brought with it very complex
structures and obstacles that are difficult to go about. They also point out different actors responsible for the situation, such as nationalistic politicians and the international community. Most of the authors, if not all, have a rather pessimistic disposition towards the Dayton Agreement, responsible actors, and its impact on the contemporary situation in Bosnia. However, this study will refrain from pointing out the responsibility of different actors, but instead focus on the Dayton Agreement as such and the structures, and frames, that it sets for the citizens and the state itself.
5. Finding in the Field

This chapter will present the collected data in the field through interviews and observations. The presentation of the finding will be divided into four main sub-chapters. The first part discusses the question of identity and how the respondents regard themselves in the contemporary context of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The second part moves on to identity and nationalness while the third part touches upon nationalness, identity and the Dayton peace agreement.

5.1 What about identity?

From my respondents I have learnt that a common Bosnian identity is not a mainstream phenomenon that is accepted throughout the country. Instead there exist sub-identities of which the Serbian, Croatian, and Bosniak identity are the most dominant identities. Diana and Jasna⁹, who work for an institute that raises questions concerning human rights, told me that there might be an existing Bosnian identity, but that it is probably more visible to people from abroad than to Bosnians themselves. “The contemporary identifications prevail now but they are temporary and imposed on Bosnians”, Diana said (Interview 3). She explained that these identities – Serb, Croatian, and Bosniak - are imposed on Bosnians by external and internal factors, which find the contemporary situation suitable for creating a chaotic situation within the entities so that important political questions, such as economy, labour market, unemployment, education and so on, can be taken off the agenda by emphasizing the issue of nationality (ibid.).

In the office of foreign affairs, Amer Kapetanović¹⁰ explained that the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina firstly identify in accordance with their ethnicity or religion, secondly with their local or regional territory, and then lastly with Bosnia and Herzegovina. I asked him whether there exists a common Bosnian identity and he told me that mostly Bosniaks identify with Bosnia, as they do not have a ‘spear’ nation. “The level of national identity with Bosnia

⁹ Both pseudonyms.
¹⁰ See page 19.
is very low and least noticeable among Serbs. People need group identity that is a part of human nature”, he said and continued, “but Bosnia and Herzegovina cannot be that group identity for its people as it is a weak state” (Interview 2). Kapetanović explained that nationalistic leaders are emphasizing differences between the nations in Bosnia while attempts are made to hide the similarities. Even so, he believed that moving towards the European Union might be a solution, as the different identity groups would gain a common goal and start to move forward on the same path (ibid.). My pre-understanding could relate to what Kapetanović said in terms citizens identifying least with Bosnia and primarily with ethnic or religious factors, and it also matches Anderson’s (1991) concept of imagined communities, which in terms strengthen my pre-understanding of the subject. However, I did not consider that integration towards the European Union could function as a main catalyst for emphasizing a common Bosnian identity or strengthening of the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Yet, Diana, Jasna, and Kapetanović (Interview 2 and Interview 3), although differently, marked the impact of the international community in Bosnia, which undoubtedly must be taken into consideration when discussing the contemporary situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but it is also important to view how the citizens conceive that they are affected by the international community in their everyday life, and more importantly, to what extend do they visualise the international community to have an impact on their identity.

5.1.1 Views on Identity in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina

One evening during a dinner conversation, in Sarajevo, Sanja11 told me that she was very upset not being able to formally identify herself as Bosnian, since such an identity was not possible (Interview 4). She said that one could only choose between being Serb, Croat, and Bosniak. She found this discriminating against her identity as Bosnian, as she was born into a mixed marriage (an Orthodox father and a Catholic mother were both parents were atheists) and originated from Sarajevo. She considered people living in Bosnia to be Bosnian with different religious identities and thought that all of the other three were based on ethnical and nationalistic factors as Serb were synonymous to Orthodox, Croat to Catholic, and Bosniak to

11 A pseudonym.
Muslim.

My parents considered themselves to be Bosnian and so do I. I have a Bosnian passport and I am born and raised in Bosnia, but I cannot be Bosnian as Bosnian is not an existing identity group that is legitimate among the given alternatives. Instead I am categorised as others because I do not want to identify myself as either Serbian or Croatian, she explained (Interview 4).

She added that people abroad refer to people from Bosnia as Bosnians, but that in Bosnia one cannot be Bosnian. However, her friend, Adnan\textsuperscript{12}, did not agree with her as he found it very important to be able to identify as Bosniak. “I want to identify as Bosniak in spite of all because of what happened in the war”, he said (Interview 5). He meant that the Muslim population in Bosnia has survived genocide and that being Bosniak now is important in order to express the right to exist in Bosnia as a Bosnian Muslim, and then being Bosnian is not enough as it could be any of the other religions and does not put emphasize on the rights of Bosnian Muslims as a group.

In Mostar I met with Nedžad Kusumović, who was the first to film the shelling that caused the destruction of the old bridge in Mostar (Interview 6). I asked him about a common Bosnian identity and he told me that such an identity is barely noticeable, and if it exists it is mostly noticeable among Bosniaks or when a Bosnian is abroad it is common to identify as Bosnian. Nevertheless, Nedžad Kusumović said that his primary identity is Bosniak because that is what he is. He explained that Mostar used to be multicultural before the war but that it now is divided in two parts – one Croatian and one Bosniak side. “People usually interact due to business, and there is not a great fear anymore to cross sides, but it is still not even close to the way it used to be, and most of us keep on our respective sides”, he said (ibid.). It is interesting how he expresses himself in regards of his identity as though it was given by nature and not debatable. Yet, his understanding of which group tended to mostly identify with Bosnia was in accordance with Amer Kapetanović’s understanding (Interview 2).

In Mostar I also met with Iva and Jelena\textsuperscript{13}, who work for a local women organization, over a coffee at the Bristol Hotel (Interview 7). Both Iva and Jelena identified themselves as Croats.

\textsuperscript{12} A pseudonym.
\textsuperscript{13} Both pseudonyms.
and neither of them was from Mostar originally, but both were from Bosnia. Iva told me that she came from central Bosnia and that in her home village the armed conflict was mainly between the Bosniak and Croat side and that she fled to Mostar during the war and stayed there ever since. Still, she explained that she found it very difficult to hate members of “the Other nations” as her landlord is Bosniak and has helped her and her family a lot. Jelena explained that the city is divided in two parts and that everyone knows their place. Jelena has never visited the old part of the town with the famous old bridge from the Ottoman Empire while Iva has been in the old town at some point (ibid.).

My respondents in Mostar put a great stress on identity and territory which increased my understanding of how identity and territory is not only limited to Entities, but is highly visible on local levels as well. The respondents are also highly aware of the invisible borders and on what terms they are crossed and challenged. According to their description, one can cross the borders but should still keep on the right side. Moreover, it becomes even more noticeable that it is as important to categorise others into one of the three dominating identities in the country, and that precisely Serb, Croat, or Bosniak are frequently used identities when describing others even though others might consider themselves not to belong to either of the three identity groups.

5.1.2 Views on Identity in the Serb Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina

In Prijedor, I interviewed a married couple - Dragan is Orthodox and Emira is Muslim - who told me that in Prijedor there is no “apartheid” as there is in other cities (Interview 13). Still, the level of nationalism is high and they explained both that identity is very important especially in this country. “You have to state your identity to get a job or improve your opportunities for employment”, Dragan told me (ibid.). “It was a political factor that became reinforced in the everyday life”, Emira added (ibid.). They disagreed on the need to officially express which group one belongs to, but concluded that it has to do with circumstances and

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14 Prijedor is situated in North Western Bosnia and is currently in the region of Republika Srpska.
15 Pseudonym.
16 Pseudonym.
17 Quote from Dragan.
both were annoyed that it had to be so. “I work with Serbs and there have never been any problems, but we do not speak of certain topics at all. One can be discriminated against and perhaps even violated in some way when certain themes are raised” Emira said and referred to the war (ibid.). Although, both expressed frustration over the fact that one, at times, was forced to make a choice between and express one of the three dominating identities, they never rejected their legitimacy.

I visited Bosanska Gradiška, a town bordering with Croatia, to meet with three respondents. One of them Milan18 who told me that he did not thrive in the post-war atmosphere (Interview 11). He would like to be Bosnian but that it is difficult to be Bosnian in Republika Srpska for an Orthodox Bosnian. One would be discriminated against in different ways. Therefore, he said, he liked to keep his identity for himself. “My grandchild has to learn Serbian in school and I told him once that we speak Bosnian. When he said this in school he got picked on by the other children and the teacher corrected him”, Milan explained and continued that he does not like to discuss politics that much (ibid.). The other two people I met were Bosnian Muslims, Samira and Admir19 who stated that they both are Bosniak and that they needed to have an identity due to the war and what happened to the Muslim population (Interview 10). Admir gave me a brief history and explained that Bosnian Muslims used to intermingle with the Others to a large extent, and that they believed more than the other national groups that they were Yugoslavs. “For that reason we must know who we are”, Samira filled in (ibid.). In their belief, a national identity for the Muslims got lost in former Yugoslavia while Christians kept their national identities as either Serb or Croat. A Bosniak identity limits the confusion of who the Muslims are, according to them, and therefore is the right identity to use as the Bosnian identity could include anybody. Admir also explained that what happened during the war has a lot to do with the fact that “Muslims were confused by the Yugoslavian identity and thought that they [Serbs and Croats] were our friends while they killed and deported Muslims” (ibid.).

During my stay in Republika Srpska I met with Tanja Topic20 in Banja Luka over a cup of coffee (Interview 14). She described to me the situation concerning identity in Bosnia:

National identities are dominant and a Bosnian identity is not included in these national identities. The construction of a Bosnian identity is a slow

18 Pseudonym.
19 Both pseudonyms.
20 See page 19.
process and the same goes for the European identity. The Bosnian identity is emphasized by political parties who aim for European Union integration. While Serbian and Croatian political parties in Bosnia identify more with the neighbouring countries while emphasizing their identity as natural. They keep on stressing that Bosnian identity is constructed and not given by nature while the others are historically legitimate. The ethno-pattern is considered to be all that matters and so it is the most dominant (Interview 14).

She reminded me, as the others have, that there are attempts in reinforcing a common Bosnian identity but that it is very difficult concerning the circumstances, and that the Dayton Agreement, as it is now, undermines that very identity (ibid.).

Topić’s analysis supported my pre-understanding of how the Dayton peace agreement was an obstacle for the process of a common national identity that would function as a unifying identity for the other identities. She also confirmed my preconception of the Bosniak, Serb, and Croat identity to be ethno-national.

5.2 Expressed Nationalness

Travelling from point A to B in Bosnia and Herzegovina one starts to notice the different identity features. Some of the most visible features are symbolical use of religion, language, the alphabets, flags, and monuments risen after the war. Another small, but interesting, detail is bottled water. In Sarajevo, one is usually given the brand Sarajevski Kiseljak or Olympija while in Mostar, depending on the side of the divided city, one is served Jana on the Croatian side and on the Bosniak side one would get the same water as in Sarajevo. In Republika Srpska the most common bottled water brand is Knjaz Miloš. It is probably safe to say that in Baščaršija, the old part of Sarajevo, the water Knjaz Miloš is not served at all.

In Republika Srpska the use of the Cyrillic alphabet is an extensively used feature as it is written on road signs as well. There are road signs where both the Latin and the Cyrillic

21 Serbia and Croatia.
22 Knjaz Miloš means the Prince Miloš.
alphabet are used, usually on larger roads, but there are several places where the Cyrillic alphabet is dominant. Since the Cyrillic alphabet is used in Serbia as well and is therefore strongly used as an identity symbol. The other important identity symbol is the red, blue and white Serbian flag\textsuperscript{23} with a cross and four C standing on each corner of the cross. The C is actually the Cyrillic counterpart of the Latin letter S and the four S stand for the slogan \textit{only unity saves the Serbs}.\textsuperscript{24} While in the Federation the strongest identity symbols are the different flags and probably the lack of the Cyrillic alphabet as well. However, as mentioned before there are road signs in the Federation, as well, where both the Cyrillic and Latin alphabets are used.

Nevertheless, the Croatian checkerboard, which is the coat of arms, is used as a symbol here and there in the Federation to mark the national status of houses, villages, cities, and store-markets as well as gas-stations. While the Bosniak identity symbol is both the current and the traditional coat of arms (the old 14\textsuperscript{th} century coat of arms, used by the Bosnian King Tvrtko I, with six golden lilies divided by a white line). These flags are hanging, here and there, in the Federation as well. Both the Croat and the Bosnian flag can be found in graffiti versions on walls of buildings and such. Also, I have observed the checkerboard covering roofs and windows of private houses in central Bosnia, in parts of Herzegovina, and one large flag of Saudi-Arabia in central Bosnia on the roof of a private house next to the road, which was an odd identity symbol among Bosnian Muslims. The national symbols are impossible to miss when entering either Republika Srpska or the Federation.

When travelling by train, from Sarajevo to Prijedor, the train stops in Doboj for some 30-45 minutes. This is because in Doboj the train changes the locomotive as the train coming from Sarajevo has “Federacija Bosne i Hercegovine” written on it, and since Doboj, more or less, is situated on the invisible border between Republika Srpska and the Federation it was thought of as an adequate place to change the locomotives so that travelling through Republika it is written “Republika Srpska”, with the Cyrillic alphabet, on the train. The train personnel also changed and a new conductor came to check our tickets. This would repeat itself when the train returned from Prijedor to Sarajevo.

\textsuperscript{23} The flag of Republika Srpska is also red, blue and white but it lacks the coat of arms. The Serbian coat of arms consist of the double-headed eagles with two lilies under each claw and holding a red shield decorated with a cross and the Cyrillic letter ‘S’ in each quarter around it. The coat of arms is also decorated with a royal crown although Serbia is no longer a monarchy.

\textsuperscript{24} Samo Sloga Srbina Spasava.
Almost all of the respondents mentioned monuments that marked war crime as important symbols for the different ethnic groups. In Pale, I met with three young women for an interview in a café (Interview 16). In their opinion, monuments raised to mark war crimes are highly important but they are misused at the moment and serve the nationalistic propaganda purposes. Jasmina meant that it was unfair regarding who gets to mark war crimes. She took the example of Srebrenica where masses are drawn every year on July 11th. She explained that it is wrong to call the war crime in Srebrenica genocide, since she means that the number of victims is exaggerative and that she has been informed that the true number so far is some 3,500 persons while it has to be 10,000 persons killed for a war crime to be recognized as genocide. Therefore, she believes that the event was over-represented in the media and got all of the attention from the world community, while in Sarajevo, on the other hand, they were not allowed to build a monument for those killed in Dobrovoljačka Street. They could only place flowers and wreaths on the street where the soldiers were killed, but not build a monument to mark the crime itself as they have in Srebrenica. “If people were allowed to mourn their losses and if the crimes and victims were fairly represented it would seize the tensions and people could move on with their lives”, Jasmina said (ibid.).

In Sarajevo there are stone plates with carved in names of the civilian population that died

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25 Pale is a town situated near Sarajevo now belonging to Republika Srpska. Pale used to be the administrative center and headquarters of Republika Srpska and its government during the war in Bosnia.

26 A pseudonym.

27 Srebrenica is a small town in Eastern Bosnia, which was part of one of the enclaves in Eastern Bosnia that was protected by the United Nations. Srebrenica was declared as a safe area in 1993 which created an influx of refugees to the town. In July 1995 more than 8,000 Muslim men were killed under the command of general Ratko Mladić. The International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia has declared the massacre genocide in 2004. After the war Srebrenica has been a part of Republika Srpska.

28 This is not supported by the UN Convention on Genocide as it does not confirm genocide in terms of statistics, http://www.hrweb.org/legal/genocide.html.

29 The shooting on Dobrovoljačka Ulica, Sarajevo, occurred in May 1992 where JNA troops were leaving according to an agreement of withdrawal after they detained the former Bosnian president Alija Izetbegović at the airport of Sarajevo. What happened is still controversial: however, Serbian prosecutors mean that there were 42 persons killed while general Milutin Kukanjac (former commander for the JNA troops in Sarajevo) said that only 6 persons were killed. Jovan Divjak who was, former JNA officer who joined the Bosnian Territorial Defence and was situated in Sarajevo, stated that there might have been 8-10 people killed in the shooting. What caused the shooting is still uncertain. During my stay in Bosnia-Hercegovina, Jovan Divjak got arrested in Vienna (March 2011) on the grounds of Dobrovoljačka due to a Serbian warrant: however, due to no grounds for prosecution he was released in 2012.
during the war – usually shot by sniper or from shelling. There are also carved in names of the two young women (students) who are considered to be the first victims of the war, and a memorial plaque to mark the bread massacre at Markale. The names carved in stone plates are not all Muslim names, but rather indicate of a mixed population. Sarajevo has, as well as other parts of the Federation, monuments raised for dead soldiers or in memorial of the heroic acts of the Bosnian army decorated with flags, the six lilies and the coat of the army of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Likewise, all of the carved in names are not Muslim, although they dominate. Even so, the Croatian monuments in the Federation are usually Catholic crosses raised for dead soldiers and civilian population, indicating that it represents Croat Catholic victims. Examples are the cross that is raised on a mountaintop in Mostar, or monuments with religious and nationalistic features on roadsides.

In Prijedor, Republika Srpska, the importance of war monument is highly emphasized and the town is excessively decorated with memory of dead Serbian soldiers. In Prijedor the struggle of legitimate after war monument and who gets to raise monuments, or such, is so important that even the mayor, Marko Pavić, was involved in a controversial discussion. The association of Former Camp Detainees of Prijedor30 decided to mark the massacres in the detention camps in Omarska31 on May 9th, which was celebrated as the Day of Victory over Fascism in former Yugoslavia. For several days the local news stated threats of consequences such as blockage of the infrastructure and shut down of electricity, from the mayor Marko Pavić, if the manifestation was to be held.

On a tour among the different detention camps in the region, Mirsad32 told me about the current functions of the former camps: the old school in Trnopolje that turned into a detention camp in 1992 was still functioning as an elementary school; the iron mine in Omarska that functioned as a detention camp in 1992 is today run by ArcelorMittal, one of world’s leading mine and steel companies; Keraterm that used to be a ceramics factory, just outside the city of Prijedor, that turned into a detention camps in 1992 offers today a variety of service from car wash to car polish even though the bullet holes are still visible in the facade of the building (Interview 9). Mirsad told me that it was impossible to build a monument here for the victims

30 Udruženja Logoraša Prijedor ’92.
31 Omarska is one of the detention camps in the area of Prijedor that was used in the spring of 1992. Thousands of non-Serbs, mainly Muslims and Croats passed the camp. The camp was called an interrogation camp for prisoners of war, but was used as a tool during the ethnic cleansing as the detainees were subjected to torture, starvation, sexual violence and murder. Omarska was thought to have only male detainees but it was later revealed that there have been 37 women there that were raped on regular basis and some killed. Human Rights Watch classified Omarska as a concentration camp.
32 The chairman of the Former Camp Detainees of Prijedor ’92.
that were killed during the war (ibid.). At the same time he pointed me towards another monument in front of the former camp in Trnopolje, where a concrete monument was raised for the lost lives of the soldiers that established Republika Srpska.

Similarly, on the road to the former concentration camp Omarska there is a small monument raised – and decorated with flags of the Republic of Serbia - for a few dead Serbian soldiers. In the centre of Prijedor there is a large concrete cross raised to mark the death of the Serbian soldiers, and the park next to the municipal building is decorated with names and birthdates of former Serbian soldiers carved in to stone. One can find the same memorial decoration (with or without specific names) at the hospital, the health care centre, the post office, train station and so on. Even at the police office there are portraits of the dead Serbian soldiers, carved in the large piece of stone with names to match, decorating a whole wall.

An interesting detail is that several of the soldiers died in 1991, according to the carved information, while the war in Bosnia was declared in 1992, indicating that there is a common belief that the war in Prijedor and Republika Srpska started before the war formally started in Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, in the city of Prijedor one cannot find a trace of evidence that suggests that there have been any other victims than Serbian soldiers during the war 1992-95 or that Prijedor was, and perhaps even still is, the notorious municipality where several atrocities have been committed (Stiglmayer, 1994:86-88). However, in the municipality I found non-Serbian monuments at two places: (1) in Kozarac there is large monument built with the names of the killed civilians from Kozarac and nearby villages and; (2) in the former concentration camp Keraterm there is a small stone with carved in information that Keraterm was a concentration camp and that in 1992 several atrocities were committed here towards non-Serb population.

5.2.2 Religion and Nationalness

The religious symbols, the different crosses and the Islamic moon and the star are also used to point out different identity groups. In contemporary Bosnia, mosques and churches seem to be built on each corner. However, these symbols of identity are somewhat sensitive matters and it is a risky business establishing when they are used purely religiously and when they are
used to strengthen the national identity. Even so, Tanja Topić pointed out that as Bosnia and Herzegovina is a secular state the religious impact on the everyday life is immense (Interview 14). Regardless of the religious symbols, the religious institutes seem to play an important role in bridge building and segregating the community, which is visible through the buildings of religious institutes and places of worship, and the importance of the religious connection with nationality.

Muhamet Merdić33, who has a master degree in Islamic science and has worked as an imam for ten years, said that religious symbols are more often than not misused (Interview 17). “One typical symbol that the Bosniak use are prayer beads hanging from the rear-view mirror of the cars. And it is very funny that prayer beads are used as a symbol of identification as they are used in many religions as a tool to count prayers and has really nothing to do solely with Islam”, Merdić pointed out (ibid.). He continued to point out other religious symbols that are misused, often to serve a nationalistic purpose, such as the cross over Mostar:

After the war a cross has been raised on one of the mountains from which Mostar was shelled. Now, this cross is not in connection to a religious institute and it does not serve a religious purpose. Instead it is put there to serve nationalistic powers. We have similar phenomenon in Žepče, Srebrenica, Ahmići and so on. In my opinion the religious institutes, although it is usually not them who raise these symbols, are highly responsible for the misuse of these symbols and the message they send (Interview 17).

Several respondents made it clear that religion plays a huge part in the process of national identification.

The young women that I met in Pale, told me that they were Bosnian with Serbian religion. It was explained to me that on these territories Orthodox religion and Serb nationality could not be separated from one another. “The same concerns Catholic religion and Croat nationality”, Ana told me (Interview 16). “You cannot be Orthodox and not be Serb”, Dejana explained (ibid.). That was the problem with identifying as Bosnian solely, according

33 See page 19.
34 Translation: ”Isto je što se tiče Katolicizma i Hrvata”.
35 Translation: ”Nemožeš biti pravoslavac a da nisi Srbin”.

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to them, as Bosnia does not have a common religion for its inhabitants, so the people must be divided in sub-national groups, which, in fact, are more dominant than the Bosnian nationality (ibid.).

Muharem Merdić clarified these thoughts (Interview 17). He means that the central of the Christian religious institution are not situated in Bosnia and that makes things even more complicated. The centre of the Orthodox institution is situated in Belgrade, while the core centre of the Catholic institution is seated primarily in the Vatican and secondarily in Zagreb (ibid.). Even so, Marijan Stojanović, the pastor of the parish of Prijedor, explained that it is impossible to connect Croatians with Catholicism and took his parish as an example where he had both ethnic Poles, Hungarian, and so forth (Interview 12). “I cannot stand by the altar and say ‘Dear Croats’. It is impossible and incorrect.”36, he said (ibid.).

Both of the two religious officials think that there are different levels of identifying oneself in Bosnia and that religion plays a great part of that identification. Merdić thinks that the different identity factors must be taken into account and cannot be ignored when building peace and reconciliation, but there must be a balance between all of them and it must be rethought which identity is primarily, secondarily, and so on (Interview 17). “Today ethnic and religious identities are prevailing and a common Bosnian identity is almost not visible at all”, Merdić told me (ibid.). Stojanović is of the same thoughts and thinks that it would be dangerous to repress the religious identities but that they have to work even more on a dialogue between the different religions and ethnic groups in public manners (Interview 12).

The religious institutes are the only ones that have a regular dialogue at the moment. We are the only ones who meet on regular basis and who actually talk to each other. Even though we do not agree at all times, we are still eager to keep the dialogue. It is easier in the Federation than it is in the Republic where sometimes it is difficult for the Orthodox institutes to contribute. That is not due to the priest but usually due to politics, Merdić explained (Interview 12).

Stojanović gave an example of difficulties in Republika Srpska (Interview 12),

When the mosque of the centre of Prijedor was re-built and an opening was

36 Translation: ”Nemogu ja stati pred oltarom i reći ‘Dragi Hrvati’. To je nemoguće i pogriješno”. Quote by Marijan Stojanović.
held I was there as a representative for the parish of Prijedor. However, there was not a single priest from the Orthodox community of Prijedor and that was very sad as it lead to tensions. Their absence was interpreted in different ways by all of the different groups. To the Muslim community they sent a message of non-approval. It also sent a message to the Orthodox community of non-approval for Muslims to re-build the ruined mosques, or even allow them to practise their religion. It was not a message of tolerance. I am not sure if that was the attention at all, but these matters are very sensitive and have to be considered carefully because the people look to the religious leaders.

In Sarajevo I met with four young women for an interview nearby the Catholic Cathedral. Two of the women identified themselves as Bosniaks while the other two stated that they were primarily Bosnian (all of them were Muslims) (Interview 15). However, they agreed upon that religion defined one’s nationality in Bosnia. “Even if you don’t identify yourself as Bosniak first, others do that for you, as soon as they hear your name”, Alma\(^\text{37}\) said (ibid.). When I asked them whether they viewed Catholic or Orthodox people living in Bosnia as Bosnian, all but one answered no. “The thing is”, Alma explained, “that it has gone so far and they do not wish to be called Bosnian so I have stopped viewing them as Bosnian” (ibid.). Melina\(^\text{38}\) did not agree: “They are all Bosnians as they are born here and obtain Bosnian citizenship but the different identities have gone to extremes, especially after the war, and the very word ‘Bosnian’ creates heated debates” (ibid.).

When discussing how important religion is in the everyday life, all of the young women meant that they are poorly familiar with the religion Islam. They thought that Serbs and Croats have generally better knowledge of their religions than the Bosniaks. Selma explained (Interview 15),

For example when we celebrate Eid most of us do not even really know why we celebrate Eid. For us it is mostly about getting money and party after the family dinner. While my Catholic friend knows every tradition of the religion and why they celebrate it. She knows how to prepare the different food for the feasts and knows why certain things are highlighted.

\(^{37}\) A pseudonym.
\(^{38}\) A pseudonym.
in certain periods. She knows how and why to pray to which saints for which purpose while I do not and neither does my mother. She cannot recite a single sura\textsuperscript{39}. Most of us do not even understand why we have scarfs when entering the mosque. We had an incident on a field trip to Zagreb where one of our colleagues, who was Muslim, was reluctant to put a scarf on when entering the mosque and made a fuss out of it. This is very bad for us. Our ignorance.

Nedžad Kusumović, from Mostar, told me that since the war he has started to practice Islam, which he knew of before but was not practicing although he was born Muslim (Interview 6). I was told that his wife is Croatian, from Croatia, but has converted to Islam during the war and started to practice the religion before him. He also emphasized the importance of religion in his identity, namely the Bosniak identity (ibid).

\section*{5.3 The Dayton Agreement and Nationalness}

The Dayton Agreement is an almost inescapable subject of conversation when speaking of politics, the war, or even identity. Even though almost 16 years have passed since the agreement was signed little has changed and the agreement stays an important and urgent subject in everyday life. There are different opinions regarding different parts of the agreement and not all of my respondents agree whether the agreement should have been signed in the first place. But they all agree that the Dayton Agreement has stagnated the post-war situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In Mostar I met with Janja Milinković who explained that the Dayton Agreement was necessary to sign at that time as it guaranteed peace (Interview 8). However, it has created chaos at state level functioning. “The constitution is very complicated in Bosnia and Herzegovina and it can not be solved by the country itself. The European Union is a very important factor and driving force for Bosnia and therefore we need its help to change the constitution”, she said (ibid.).

During my interview with Nedžad Kusumović I was informed that the signing of the

\textsuperscript{39} Suras are the chapters from the Quran.
agreement was a mistake as it has created - due to the creation of the entities - a situation where territory is bound to ethnicity. “People in Bosnia actually move to entities, which are in accordance with their ethnicity. This phenomenon was more evident in the immediate post-war period but many never moved back”, he explained (Interview 6). Similarly, Tanja Topić, from Banja Luka, means that the demographic picture has changed completely after the war and many cities are ethnically clean, with one strong majority and very small minorities.

I believe that the problem lies within the interpretation of the Dayton agreement. One example is that in the beginning the (Bosnian) Serbs were the strongest opponents to the agreement until they realized that they gained most and were given a state within a state by the Dayton agreement. But the agreement must be changed as it makes political crisis long-lasting and it has managed to cement an instable situation. It can only be reformed by the approval of all of the ethnic groups and the entities, which is impossible, at least at the present. The agreement is a straitjacket and the biggest problem today is the lack of political will; the present political elites and the international community’s lack of vision of what to do with Bosnia. The ethnic diversities that are created and reinforced by the Dayton Agreement will probably never be possible to go about as they have become more or less permanent. The constitution is engaged in either the abolishment of Republika Srpska or in the defence of Republika Srpska. But it would be better to start off by realizing that Bosnia and Herzegovina is a complex and complicated country that costs the taxpayers enormous amounts – which countries who are economically better off than Bosnia really cannot afford – for Bosnia has some 150 ministries. For a country with some 4 million inhabitants that is absurd (Interview 14).

Topić explained that, ironically, the reform that has been most successful is the reform of defensive strengths – the military- in comparison to other reforms that have “barely moved from step one” (Interview 14). However, she also believes that the international community plays a great part in putting pressure on Bosnian politicians and that they need to do that when it comes to altering the peace agreement as well. “We lack possibilities and capacity to solve the problems of Bosnia and Herzegovina with domestic force and we are in need of
international help. Without them there will not be any change”, she said (ibid.).

In Sarajevo, Diana shared her view of the Dayton Agreement being a “straitjacket” that puts the entire Bosnia and Herzegovina in a situation where her hands are tied behind her back. “The agreement must be looked over and modified or abolished altogether immediately. We have a straitjacket situation and the key of the jacket is not with us. We need external help but not as it is today”, Diana clarified (Interview 3).

There is no discussion in regards to whether the Dayton Agreement is discriminating or not. Firstly, we have three constituent peoples living in this country, but none of them can be Bosnian as they can only declare themselves as either Bosniaks, Serbs or Croats. If not they are regarded upon as ‘the others’. Secondly, you cannot choose to vote for whomever you like because only a Serb can be elected president in Republika Srpska while a Serb cannot be elected president in the Federation. In the Federation only Bosniaks and Croats can be elected presidents while they cannot be elected in Republika Srpska. This actually violates democratic values. Thirdly, what about ‘the others’? They are not even visible. They do not have any possibilities for higher political representation. Not even on most local levels. Where is the Roman and the Jewish minority? The Dayton agreement forgot about them completely (Interview 3).

Therefore Diana thinks that the agreement must be changed with external help but that the help has to come in the form of real partnerships between countries because the partnership of today are, according to her, not real partnership (Interview 3). Amer Kapetanović view on the matter is comparable to that of the others: the agreement needs to be altered. He means that the first step, in the direction of improvement, is to improve the Dayton peace accords and thusly create a base (Interview 2).

The constitution that we have in Bosnia now cannot be found anywhere in the world. We have three constituent people and not one of them can be Bosnian. Even so the citizens obtain Bosnian citizenship, I mean, the nationality is expressed in the passport but you cannot express it within the own country. So the passport is really all that connects the people to
the state while the rest goes via other levels. The Citizen–State relationship is not developed or even sufficient due to the Dayton agreement, the Entities, and so on. To build a Bosnian nation is a very difficult and complicated task with the agreement being as it is. The agreement actually goes against the European Union Convention of Human Rights and democratic values. It needs a revision in order to improve the functionalities of the state. I think that the European Union integration can mend what the Dayton agreement has ruined (Interview 2).

However, Kapetanović thinks that Bosnia needs special treatment by the European Union in order to succeed to overcome the present condition (Interview 2).

5.4 Understanding and Pre-understanding

As written in chapter two, the pre-understanding I brought with me into the field was that the Dayton Agreement enforced a situation where a common national identity, in this case a Bosnian identity, becomes difficult to endorse and uphold. This is turn would create a situation where it becomes problematic to express, a somewhat, common idea of the state, which is why the Dayton Agreement becomes counter productive. While my respondents confirmed this pre-understanding, they also intensified it and took it to another level by describing their lifeworld. The explanation of how they viewed themselves, but also others, was a bit more intense than were my pre-understandings.

My respondents created an understanding of how essential religion was for them, even if one was not religious, in order to point out national belonging. Although it is obvious that religion becomes important in this sense as it usually is in similar contexts, in this case it is highly used both through the religious institutions, through symbols, nationalism, and in everyday life to distinguish one another. Not only by stating the own identity, but also in order to categorize people into Bosniaks, Serbs, and Croats. Even if some of the respondents differed in this meaning, they provided with an understanding of how religion is viewed as, more or less, synonymous with nationality. Quite a few of the respondents problematized the
concept of common Bosnian identity for gathering the different identity groups, as it did not have a clear religious perimeter and seemed to be difficult to define.

Moreover, the respondents delivered an understanding of the importance of staying within the frames of the three dominant identity groups. Also here some respondents did not fit in to this description, although they were few. However, the narration of the lifeworld of the ordinary citizens did not only confirm that they had to categorize themselves in these terms due to imposed structure by the Dayton, but rather that they recognized security in staying within their own group and not intermingle unnecessarily with other groups. Many respondents preferred the thought of excluding national identities over a common, and including, national identity.

Furthermore, in accordance with my pre-understanding of the Dayton Agreement being an obstacle and counter productive, it becomes visible that all of the respondents, regardless of national belonging, consider the Dayton peace agreement to be unproductive and in need of alteration or abolishment all together. Yet, the lifeworld of my respondents points towards an understanding of the difficulty of altering the peace agreement from within the country. This indicates that there is a conviction that this is impossible and that the international society needed to assist Bosnia more actively in this process. Thus, this results in an understanding of high mistrust and suspicion between the different identity groups, but also in regards to the state. This understanding, in turn, also provides with an understanding of how remarkably limited reconciliation actually is, since both the citizens and the official, confirm that Bosnia cannot solve its own situation but depends on external help. An internal dialogue appears to be less reliable and sought than a dialogue with external parties.
6. Analysis

This chapter will focus on understanding the context through the perspective of the analytical framework in order to answer the two posed research questions. The two parts will focus on discussing to what extent a common Bosnian identity is visible while the last sub-chapter will attempt to define the contemporary state of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

6.1 Identifying Identity – Is there an emerging national identity?

This study has spotted several features attached to identity in Bosnia to serve nationalistic purposes: religion, history, legitimacy, ‘spare nations’, war, territory, Dayton, alphabets, and even bottled water. Anderson (1991) wrote that nation, nationality, and nationalness are the major factors we use to identify ourselves and that these features are regarded as inherited by nature. Imagined communities are, according to him, those that are based on the belief that a particular group, which makes the nation, shares certain attributes and values that makes them believe that they feel more solidarity with the own group members than with individuals outside the groups (73, 89, 131). However, a Bosnian identity does not seem to be included in the constructed imagined communities in Bosnia. Amer Kapetanović’s explanation of levels of identity appears to be highly appropriate: Ethno-national identity tends to be primary while the identification with the Bosnian state seems to come in second or third hand. Most of those who identify with Bosnia primarily tend to be Bosnian Muslims, however, even there the Bosniak identity is taking over.

When taking Anderson’s concept of imagined communities as the point of departure and considering the narration of the respondents, the results point towards an understanding of how imagined communities, based on national belonging, are not only construction throughout the country, but they also appear to be considered as given by nature, unchangeable and unmanageable to step out from. National identities emerge to be a comfort zone for many of the citizens and the entire discussion has gone from a political factor to an
important part of the everyday life where national identities are of vital importance and function as a guiding compass in the society. Some respondents even claim that it is not only important to state the own identity, but also of high significance to be able to identify Others, and be identified in return. To take it even one step further, it has become important to reveal which identity is constructed and which is given by nature, inherited, and thusly legitimate, which is visible by how respondents connect religion to national belonging as though they are synonyms. It is also visible in how some respondents declare themselves to be born into a certain identity as though it is an inescapable fact and has nothing to do with social construction.

There are several contributing reasons for the heated debate on identity in Bosnia and my respondents give account for some. Although they may disagree on their views on identity, they agree that nationalism in all its forms, supported by the Dayton Agreement, has been given an unrealistically large part in setting the agenda for the identity debate and that it keeps it heated. The debate includes an argumentative discussion on imposed and temporary identities, taking root in the everyday lives of the citizens, and each of the national identity group regards the other to be imposed. In addition, the war of 1992-95 seems to be an on-going driving force in the process of reinforcing the ethno-national identities. It has become even more important, not to mention safe, in the ‘own’ territory, to state which of the ethno-national identity groups one belongs to as the reconciliation process seems to have been a slow and passive process as the need for segregation appears to be more important than the need for integration.

Nevertheless, it is quite evident that people tend to connect different ethno-national identities with specific territories around the country, but what happens outside the Bosnians borders is also relevant in this equation. That is, the neighbouring countries, Serbia and Croatia, have an impact on identity in Bosnia, and Serbian and Croatian ethno-national identity groups in Bosnia seem to find these states as ‘spare nations’ while it is unclear to which extend Bosniaks look to a specific spare nation and which nation it is, even though one might assume that Turkey could to be a relevant candidate due to the history of the Ottoman Empire and Islam.

Yet, one could speculate whether the reason to why the greatest extent of identification with the Bosnian state is thought to lay among the Bosnian Muslims mostly due to the fact that a ‘spare nation’, if there is such, is too far away, or that it is more of a state building question closely linked to the process of nationalism in Bosnia during the last centuries. This question is difficult to answer, and this study has also pointed out non-Muslims who consider
themselves to be Bosnian. However, some factors such as history, the national processes during the nineteenth and twentieth century, and the recent war, are of importance when attempting to answer this question, but the reasoning of *spare nations* is probably decidedly relevant especially when looking at this subject from the respondents views on Bosnia, Serbia, and Croatia.

Still, the emergence of a common Bosnian identity is a slow process. According to some of my respondents, a common Bosnian identity is more visible to foreigners than to Bosnians themselves, and those politicians who promote a Bosnian identity are usually those who aim for European Union integration. Yet, in my analysis, the question of identity is a complex one and Bosnia is a complex country with several national identities, including the integration and segregation of these identities, which are always going to affect the central idea one would wish to have about Bosnia and identity, i.e. a national identity that could function as a primary and gathering identity for the all of the other identities.

There are those who mean that their national identity is Bosnian and they wish to be able to use that particular national identity legitimately within the frames of the constitution. They are a group that regard the national identities to be imposed and enforced upon them due to politics, internal and external, and they refuse to be categorised by these identities. The group regard the other identities to be based on ethnic belonging, not national, and thusly are segregating in their function in regards to the Bosnian community. The aim of these respondents seem to be to tie one main Bosnian identity to the nation state which, they believe, is integrating rather than segregating. In addition, the separate identities are usually viewed as a good tactic for avoiding social, political, and economical questions of importance, while being able to govern irresponsibly as long as the chaos of nationalism identity crisis prevails. Still, these respondents remain a small group, a group that is dimmed by the physical decoration and constant mantra of the different nationalistic politicians throughout the country. Taking the mentioned into consideration, an imagined Bosnian community remains limited and difficult to strengthen.

6.2 The Dayton, identity, and the state

One does not have to spend too much time in Bosnia to realize that there is an identity crises
going on in regards to a Bosnian identity. The study points out that several factors contribute to the identity question, while the least noticeable is the identity with the own state throughout the country. The results from the field reveal that all of the identity groups are dissatisfied with the outcome of the Dayton Agreement and view it as, more or less, an obstacle for a stable political and societal development and progress in Bosnia and Herzegovina. That the Dayton peace agreement is complex and problematic might not be too far from the truth. However, I would conclude that there are several other obstacles regarding the Bosnian political scene, apart from the Dayton, that need to be looked over carefully for Bosnia to be pulled out of her contemporary state of affairs. Even so, the Dayton Agreement does represent probably the most serious problem since it perpetuates and structurally gives continuity and empowers an unsustainable political and societal situation in Bosnia. My respondents seem to believe that the contemporary political situation in Bosnia cannot be solved within the state, as the state of Bosnia lacks the capacity and her politicians lack the will for change. Equally, it does not only seem that the politicians are mistrusted. The vital importance of keeping oneself within the own national identity groups and relay on the same provides with a picture of unwillingness to truly interact and accept a common national identity. However, many believe that European Union integration would have a great impact on Bosnia and her future. The results from the field point to limited and weak recognition with the state and its capacity to come to a solution. Instead, a vision of help from abroad to come and solve the situation in Bosnia is more evident.

Looking at the Dayton Agreement one will find that it attempts to hold a Bosnian and Herzegovinian state together while it undermines the same with an exaggerated decentralization, a division of the population (not only by ethno-national groups but also by constituent and non-constituent population), and the creation of a nominal government that is disabled by decentralization, veto power, and ethnic quotas. This is mostly obvious in Annex 4: Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Annex 4 begins with declaring Bosnia a sovereign, internationally recognized, democratic state - with respect for human rights, international law, and so forth – with three constituent peoples (Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs) and Others, who can obtain citizenship on state level and Entity level. Yet, all of them are citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina without the constitutive possibility to be Bosnian. The Annex continues by determining ethnic quotas of the constituent peoples to the different power levels within the state, restricting the possibility of elected representatives from the whole country by bounding representatives of a certain constituent people to a certain Entity.

In this sense, Dayton ties certain ethno-national groups to certain territories with the
opportunity of self-governance on specific territories. The idea of concentrated nation groups on ‘native soil’ could pose actual threats that the identity groups might attempt becoming self-determining polities aspiring for sovereignty while the same identity groups, on the other hand, need to have representatives of the ‘own’ groups to ensure that self-determination is possible (Hechter, 2000:14-15; Gellner, 1997:24). This is attempted to be well-adjusted by the Dayton agreement: to avoid aspiration of sovereignty among the constituent peoples by proving self-determination and states within the state. Yet, the Dayton Agreement completely leaves out Bosnians as a nation group together with their constituent place among the constituent peoples declared by the constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, their piece of territory/Entity in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and their need for self-determination by being able to vote for Bosnian representatives. This should not be interpreted as though there were four nation groups before the Dayton, nor that Bosnians as a group aspired for a particular territory during the peace negotiations. Having this in mind, the Dayton peace agreement questions the actual need for the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina to exist, as the question logically emerges: is there any sense in having a Bosnia without a Bosnians nation group that is supposed to provide legitimacy to the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina?

On the one hand, the Dayton Agreement perpetuates a segregated society regarding identity, language, institutions, territory, and political room of manoeuvre by dividing everything in three pieces. On the other, it simultaneously holds these nation groups within the internationally recognized borders of Bosnia and Herzegovina while providing them limited and inefficient space for cooperation between the different levels. Consequently, Dayton becomes highly counter productive in the sense that it does not allow for the constituent nation groups to enjoy full self-determination (namely sovereignty) while it provides the same constituent nation groups with enough self-determination to make the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina nominal, and a joint Bosnian identity group insignificant. Therefore, the Dayton peace agreement has indeed become a straitjacket.

6.3 Defining the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina

The idea of the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and therefore the definition of the same, is very difficult to specify without weakening one of the nation groups or diminish the state of
Bosnia and Herzegovina as such. However, it is not in my interest to do either, but rather to point out what the Dayton Agreement – being the constitution of the country – has created, and how the respondents view their identity, the Dayton, and the state.

Looking at the demonstrating pyramid of Buzan’s three component parts of the state, the Bosnian components remain problematic to define. If we assume that a nation group serves a purpose for the state and the state serves a purpose for the nation group - most importantly they provide each other with legitimacy - then the Dayton Agreement has damaged the idea of a Bosnian identity and state altogether. 1) The Dayton pulls away the possibility of the Bosnian identity as an umbrella for the Bosnian ethnic identities. 2) The Dayton de-centralize state authority and enables central institutional power (such as education, agriculture and forestry, culture, finances, health, and transport to mention a few) on Entity and Cantonal level, and gives Entities state prefixes and functions (Republika Srpska and Federacija Bosne i Hercegovine). What is left is the physical base in the form of internationally recognized borders. The demonstrating pyramid below of the Bosnian components would therefore appear as below when taking the results of the study into account and looking at it through Buzan’s (1991) view of the state from an internal perspective.

**Figure 4. The Component Parts of the Bosnian State**

Naturally the question emerges; does the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina serve a purpose for
anybody? Does the population of Bosnia and Herzegovina provide legitimacy to the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina or has it become impossible to do so as a consequence of the Dayton Agreement and a hampered reconciliation process?

Gellner (1997) writes that it is not simply enough to define borders of a territory for a nation-state to exist. It must be combined with a reconstructed social order through an institutionalized centre that creates ‘like-mindedness’ among the inhabitants within the borders in order to create ‘own’ members for self-determination process to take part (27). Obviously, the Bosnian nation has become more segregated in their feeling of ‘like-mindedness’. The respondents tell a tail of the three national identity groups being more important to protect and preserve than the ambition towards a common identity that could hold all of the three identity groups. Hence, the nation-state process fails to produce aspiration for self-determination in this regard as the Bosnian nation group which, according to Buzan, should pave the way for the nation-state, is more interested in the three dominant national group belongings than in a central Bosnian nation in this study (Buzan, 1991:72-73). This research suggest that the nation-state bottom-up process is weak and little noticeable in Bosnia as most respondents do not seem to share a somewhat common identity, nor an idea of the Bosnian state, as there to protect their nation group or their interests. If anything most of the respondents seem to feel more comfortable with the national identity groups, feeling affinity within the groups, recognizing that the group will provide protection and care for their private interests, and somewhat suspicious of the motives of the other national identity groups. The inhabitants of Bosnia are not sharing an extended Bosnian identity that is primary and thusly it fails in providing legitimacy for the state which leads to weakness in upholding a nation-state. The respondents seem to be more eager to keep within their national identity groups, and the imagined and real borders of those identities, i.e. the Entities, Canton, but even local borders that known to the members.

On the other hand, Bosnia and Herzegovina cannot genuinely be defined in a state-nation mode either. A state-nation process demands that the institutions are controlled by the state for the top-down perspective to succeed in socializing population and thereby reinforcing, or constructing, a somewhat homogenous primary identity for the nation without necessarily abolishing the ‘older’ identities (Buzan, 1991:73-74; Anderson, 1991:103). The results from this study, both regarding observation, interviews, the Dayton peace agreement, and the governance of Bosnia and Herzegovina, indicate that Bosnia does not fit in the state-nation definition for several reasons: (1) Bosnia does not obtain state-control over institution which are instrumental in socializing the population such as the educative institutions, these are
instead delegated on Entity and Cantonal levels; (2) the Dayton Agreement has diminished the possibility to a common identity for its population by providing three constituent nation groups where the ‘Bosnian’ nation group is not included; (3) the Dayton peace agreement binds the different ethno-national groups to specific territories and provides the different ethno-national groups with sub-states with own institutions and relatively extended self-governance; (4) it is a reasonable assumption that the citizens of Bosnia identify more with ethno-national groups than with a Bosnian nation group; and (5) the state of Bosnia is not reinforcing a socialization of the different identity groups into one common and relatively homogenous identity group, nor is an integrating program of its citizens visible on state level.

Yet, Hechter also point out that new traditions are set by the state such as flags, anthems, monuments, and so forth when going into a state-nation mode (2000:64). In this regard one can argue that Bosnia actually has managed to create a new post-war flag for the state of Bosnia and an anthem – although without lyrics – but these are relatively impotent moves in regard to an integrating socialization of the population as they are results of external pressure. It also becomes rather impotent when one takes into consideration that other flags are used within the Entities, which indicates that the population identify more with these than the state flag, and that different official languages are used on different territories (Bosnian, Serbian, and Croatian), and that monuments are risen at every corner usually to serve nationalistic purposes in supporting the ethno-national identity groups. They are seldom raised to support the nationalistic purposes of the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

However, both the state-nation mode and the nation-state mode are visible in Bosnia and Herzegovina but not on state level. They are visible on Entity level and Cantonal level. If one looks at the structure of power delegation and governance in Bosnia and Herzegovina it becomes quite evident that the Entities and the Cantons control important institutions within the country, which can be modified in serving the purpose of a particular identity group on a particular territory and thusly only socializing one particular group while the rest are more or less discriminated against. I will once again point out that the educative institutions play a major role in this process as they set the norm for language, history, custom, culture, tradition, and in Bosnia also extensively religion in combination with national belonging. This reasoning is also supported by the Dayton Agreement as the agreement sets the constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, more or less, based on a division of three – in accordance to the three Constituent peoples – and focuses more on binding particular Constituent peoples to particular territories - not only by providing the peoples with sub-states within the state but also by cementing these structures in that it limits the possibility for political room of
manoeuvre to change the actual situation as it restricts a representative democracy of the voting process to ethno-national criteria again bound to specific territory – than providing the state with tools in order to reinforce a common identity groups without neglecting the ethno-national patterns. These structures give raise to a state-nation mode on Entity and Cantonal level as these levels are functioning as sub-state, they have state prefixes, state structures of power, they use the language that fits the major population of a particular territory, they use other flags in combination to – or without – the flag of the Bosnian state, they set their own agenda of the schooling system, and they allow ‘other’ identity groups than the major identity group but they stress on obtaining one ethno-national group as the norm directly or indirectly.

This is similar to the nation-state process. As mentioned above, there must be an identity group that feels certain kinship with members of the same groups, who together form a nation that provides the nation-state with legitimacy and usually aspired for self-governance while the nation-state simultaneously serves to provide the nation with legitimacy (Hechter, 2000:14-15, 30). My respondents have clearly revealed that the ethno-national identity groups are dominating this arena and that a Bosnian identity group or nation is small and limited in both possibilities to act through the state and in members feeling this certain primarily kinship. Having said this, the nation-state process is also in need of state-controlled institution and the Bosnian state lacks that in many regards while the Entity level and Cantonal level obtains that possibility and can therefore provide the ethno-national groups with legitimacy in a particular territory while the group in return provides the Entity and/or Canton with legitimacy and aspiring for self-governance. Hence, a pattern become visible where three different identity groups, recognising themselves as three different nations with the formal support by the Dayton Agreement in doing so, considers themselves better off in this segregated system, as the Dayton provides them with self-governance to a large extent, than in a system where the state of Bosnia would have the executive, policy-making, and supervisory power concerning the country as a whole. It becomes obvious, from the results of the study, that the relationship between the citizens and the state is far less developed than the relationship between the citizens and the Entities and/or the Cantons if ones identity matches the Entity and/or the Cantons. Looking at the result of this study, it seems as though the Dayton Constitution favours Entity identity rather than a national Bosnian identity, and that the Dayton agreement counter productive in relation to Bosnia and Herzegovina as a state.

As a conclusion, it is not possible to truly define Bosnia and Herzegovina as a nation-state or a state-nation as it has both limited and weak features of the both. However, in my opinion, the Dayton Agreement, which is a major factor in this discussion, has managed to create a
nominal state level functioning and focuses only in setting the sovereign borders, the flag and providing the country with a capital. The rest of the constitution is a description of how the state is supposed to function with a high decentralization and divided powers among the three Constituent peoples. Most focus is put on dividing all possible functions in three, and on creating sub-states in Bosnia with relatively high extent of self-governance. As a result, both the nation-state mode and the state-nation mode are visible on sub-state levels but less visible on state-level, and the Dayton Agreement is hampering both the nation-state process and the state-nation process of Bosnia and Herzegovina.
The Dayton Agreement is a rather controversial subject inside, and outside of, Bosnia and Herzegovina. The agreement managed to end the on-going conflict between 1992-95, even so, there are different opinions concerning the peace agreement’s contribution to the post-war situation in Bosnia and whether the contribution is of a positive or negative nature. This study aims to look into the whether the contribution of the Dayton Agreement to the process of nation building in Bosnia and Herzegovina becomes counter productive as it contains elements of both nation-state and state-nation foundation. Therefore, the study goes into the question of identity and how people in Bosnia view themselves and the Other, and how they view the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina in combination with the Dayton peace agreement.

According to Benedict Anderson (1991), identity groups are not static as they are shaped and changed over time, and therefore Anderson refers to them as imagined communities. Anderson means that imagined communities are constructed so that members of the group believe that they feel more cohesion within the own group than outside of the group – he refers to them as nations. Since our present political consciousness is not possible to separate from nationalness, our identity is shaped by nationalism, nations, and nationalness to a great extent (131). A somewhat like-mindedness identity group, nation, must share an idea of the state, as the existence of the state depends on the nation and the nation needs the state to obtain self-governance (Buzan, 1991:70-71).

The result of this study indicates that people in Bosnia tend to identify themselves in terms of national identity groups primary, where religion and territory have a decisive role in shaping identity and a political discourse on legitimate identities is visible. However, these structures are not only visible in the political sphere but also in every-day life. These national structures appear to have emerged in most life spectrums from schooling to private relations. It is evident that people tend to form imagined communities where they consider themselves closer to people with similar identity attributes than with members of Other imagined communities regardless of their similar interests, physical nearness, and so on. One can assume a generalization in that people tend to believe that they are guaranteed favours in return of the other members based on the link of solidarity they are supposed to share due to common identity attributes. Thusly, in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina, both Croatian and
Serbian politics affect Bosnian politics, and even attitudes I believe, as the two countries function as spare nations of the groups that consider themselves Croat respectively Serb.

Even though a common Bosnian identity is not as visible to Bosnians themselves as it is to people outside Bosnia, it exists. Yet the identity is a less nurtured identity in the political nationalistic climate in Bosnia. A common Bosnian identity is a slow process with little political room of manoeuvre and room for development. It is quite evident that the three national identity groups are dominant in the way people identify themselves, but it is also evident – from observations – that it is attempted by the different governing forces in different areas to point out which identity ought to dominate that particular areas. Hence, the three national identities are given more space in the public area while other identity groups are marginalized. As a result, a common Bosnian identity does not fit these structures at all and is mostly visible among those aiming for European Union integration in their political programs or personal beliefs.

Apart from the prevailing national politics, the Dayton Agreement is also a contributing factor to the slow process of an emerging common Bosnian identity as it empowers the three national group formations and their political space. The agreement divides the country in terms of nation and territory. The peace agreement declares three Constituent people – Bosniaks, Serbs, and Croats – who obtain possibilities for self-governance on certain territories, and divide these territories – Entities - based on national belonging. In that way, the peace agreement binds nationality/ethnicity to territory while it does not offer the possibility of being Bosnian at all, or constituent unless one is Bosniak, Serb, or Croat.

Furthermore, the Dayton Agreement damages the idea of a common Bosnian identity and questions the idea of Bosnia all together. This research suggests that a nation-state bottom-up process in Bosnia is little noticeable due to the lack of a common Bosnian identity. The study indicates that people seem to feel more comfortable in the three nation groups, as they sense affinity with the groups, appreciating that the group will provide protection and care for their interests. Even so, Bosnia and Herzegovina cannot fully be defined in a state-nation mode either. As a state-nation process demands that the institutions are controlled by the state for the top-down perspective in order to socialize the population and thereby reinforce/construct a homogenous identity for the nations.

The results from this study indicate that Bosnia does not fit the state-nation definition as the state does not obtain state-control over institution of importance regarding socialization, as the Dayton peace agreement has diminished the possibility to a common identity, as the Dayton Agreement binds the three nation groups to certain territories and provides these
groups with sub-states with own institutions and self-governance, as there appears to be limited support for a common central identity emphasized by the population or the state itself.

On the other side, both the nation-state mode and the state-nation mode are visible in Bosnia but not on state level. Instead one can find these modes on Entity and Cantonal levels. A visible nation-state mode requires an identity group, which feels a certain connection with members of the same groups. This group forms a nation that provides the nation-state with legitimacy and the nation-state simultaneously serves to provide the nation with legitimacy (Hechter, 2000:14-15). As the study reveals that a Bosnian identity group or nation is small and limited in both possibilities to act through the state, and in members feeling this certain connection, but that the three national groups are emphasized both as identities and their possibilities to act through the Entity and Cantonal levels. This accomplishes to provide the nation with legitimacy in a particular territory and vice versa. Similarly, the structure of governance in Bosnia and Herzegovina shows that the Entities and the Cantons control significant institution, which can be altered in assisting the purpose of a specific identity group on a certain territory and, hence, aim for socializing one particular group identity. One can find support for this when looking at the constitution set by the Dayton Agreement, which bases its fundamental solution on a division of the three Constituent peoples – and emphasized on securing particular Constituent peoples to particular regions by offering them possibilities for self-governance. These constructions confirm a state-nation mode on Entity and Cantonal level since these levels are operating as sub-states with ability to foster the right identity group.

The Dayton peace agreement has initiated a very difficult political situation with extremely complex state structures and limited possibilities for change. The clear division into three nations, and the constitutive tying of particular groups to specific territories, has hampered both the societal and political situation in Bosnia. The Dayton Agreement, as a document, is consistent in holding together Bosnia and Herzegovina as a state, yet it leaves the country with little room of manoeuvre at state level while it cultivates segregation of the population in Bosnia and Herzegovina and completely diminishes a common Bosnian identity. It is important to understand that it is the structures based on the Dayton Agreement that lie as the fundamental obstacle for dissolving the three national identities as primary, and the emergence of a common Bosnian identity. The lack of state institutions that could provide a common Bosnian identity with positive response manages to cement the situation of the contemporary view on identity among the citizens. An attention-grabbing finding in the field reveals that all of the respondents believe that a solution to the contemporary situation cannot
be solved from within as such a solution would demand political will and capacity from the own citizens and politicians. Instead the respondents believe that the solution to Bosnia’s problems needs to come from the international community.
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Interview 5. Adnan (pseudonym), April 2011. Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina.


Interview 15. Alma, Melina, Selma & Nadija (pseudonyms), May 2011. Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina.


APPENDIX 1, Map of Bosnia and Herzegovina

(http://www.un.ba/stranica/about-bih.)
APPENDIX 2, Term of Reference

Bosnia-Herzegovina: a nation-state or a state-nation?

Background

After the breakdown of Yugoslavia, and the war in 1992-95, Bosnia-Herzegovina was declared as an independent sovereign state. However, the Dayton peace agreement continued with, not only recognize Bosnia-Herzegovina as a sovereign nation-state, but also dividing Bosnia into two Entities which were entitled to autonomy: the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska. The different Entities would, according to the Dayton agreement, together install a parliament where different delegates and representatives would consist of two thirds from the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina as they would represent both the ethnic Bosniaks and Croats, and one third from Republika Srpska who would represent the ethnic Serbs.

In the Dayton peace agreement one can find several annex which declare Bosnia as a sovereign state and simultaneously urge the autonomy of the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Republika Srpska. In that sense it is possible to conclude that the peace agreement in a sense is counter productive. Considering that, the question then emerges: is Bosnia-Herzegovina a nation-state or a state-nation, or is it a peculiar bond of them both?

In his book Imagined Communities, Benedict Anderson, explains that political consciousness is not possible to separate from nationalness (Anderson 1991:131). Nationalness, nations, and nationality has become the major issues through which we can identify ourselves and claim legitimacy of our identity and the territory that is supposed to belong to an imagined community- that is, the ones with whom we feel affinity as they are a part of our identity group. An imagined community is constructed by adding specific features and attributes to a specific identity group. In the case of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and the question of state-nation or nation-state construction, nationalism, nation, and nationalness are of major importance since it seems as though it is the identification and continuous construction of imagined communities of the different ethnic groups that prevail. If so, it would then be proper to conclude that the nationalness, which has become equal to political awareness in the world, is not centralized in creating a "Bosnian identity" as a Swedish or an American identity. It rather seems as though it is more centralized in creating other sub-identities around which imagined
communities are formed. One example is how the different groups are referred to by many: the Bosnian-Orthodox are called Bosnian-Serbs or just Serbs, the Bosnian-Catholic are refer to as Bosnian-Croats or simply Croats, while the Bosnjaks are usually referred to as Bosnian-Muslims or only Muslims. Therefore, perhaps the greatest reason for conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the political instability is in its core a question of identity rather than based on territorial disputed as the Dayton Peace Agreement considered it to be.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this study is to look into whether the Dayton peace agreement has become contra productive since it founds its solution of the armed conflict based on nation-state foundation, which apparently has not been successful. The question then emerges: Could it instead be proper to understand, from an analytical point of view, that Bosnia-Herzegovina is indeed a state-nation put in a nation-state *straitjacket*? This field work aims to look deeper into whether there is a hegemonic *Bosnian identity* and how the mechanism of nationalness is constructed around the identity, and whether the identity in its turn is an obstacle for the contemporary political situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The point of departure will be based on Anderson and the concept *imagined communities*.

**Methodology**

For this study a mini variant of the hermeneutic method will be applied, and contain both the objectifying and alethic view. The study will not try to prove or use a firm theory, but will instead focus on understanding, reflection, and interpretation of the purpose above. In addition, I would like to challenge by own views and pre-understandings of the peace process in Bosnia-Herzegovina, as I find the difficulties to be extremely complex. As I believe that a strict political and/or structural analysis of the contemporary situation cannot capture the questions concerning identity below the surface, I will attempt to approach this study with help from my own pre-understanding and Anderson's idea of imagined communities. Nonetheless, this is a method, which emphasize on the understanding and reflecting of a particular social phenomenon, it will not deliver a final truth. Instead it will attempt to give an in-depth provisional understanding of the *part* and the *whole* of a social phenomenon through the process of *understanding* and *pre-understanding* by looking at texts and dialogue (Alvesson & Sköldberg 1994). Therefore, the study will be of a qualitative nature and
the field work will include ethnographic methods such as interviews, discussions, and observations in order to gain a deeper understanding of identity and how it is understood and applied by its inhabitants and politicians in Bosnia-Herzegovina.
APPENDIX 3, A Short Summary of the Dayton Agreement

This annex is basically a detailed ceasefire agreement, which is divided in three phases. It describes how the supervision of UNPROFOR, which will be taken over by IFOR and NATO, will go about. Furthermore, it describes how the disarmament will be executed. The appendix provides an agreement and specification of the role and status of NATO and its personnel.

Annex 1-B: “Agreement On Regional Stabilization”
The annex promotes cooperation between the Entities in the field of security as a means to achieve transparency, confidence and trust. The annex details demobilization and disarmament steps further in this annex.

Annex 2: “Agreement On Inter-Entity Boundary Line and Related Issues”
The annex speaks of the boundary line of the division of Entities of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The boundaries will not have any internal borders and free movement should apply to all Entities. The appendix provides with a map of the division of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Moreover, the Parties agree on binding arbitration of Brčko District, where three arbitrators will be appointed – one from the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, one from Republika Srpska, and the third by the appointed arbitrators, and if they cannot agree the President of the International Court of Justice will appoint the third arbitrator – as it was a disputed area of the Inter-Entity Boundary.

Annex 3 “Agreement on Elections”
This annex goes into the different areas concerning elections. The annex declares Bosnia and Herzegovina to be a democracy with ‘free and fair’ elections. It also declares that the first election will take place months after the agreement has entered into force, and that it will be supervised by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

Annex 4: “Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina”
This annex begins with stating that the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina will be based on
human dignity, liberty and equality. Furthermore, Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, which are listed in the annex, should apply to Bosnia and Herzegovina. Herein, the agreement recognized the republic as a sovereign state – the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina “shall continue its legal existence under international law as a state, with its internal structure modified as provided herein and with its present internationally recognized borders”. Sarajevo is declared to be the capital of the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Entities are to enjoy the right, given by the Constitution, to establish special parallel relationships with neighbouring states if they are consistent with the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina, but they may enter into other agreements with states and international organization with the approval of the Parliamentary Assembly. The Entities are to assist the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina so that it may honor its international obligations, and the Entities (together with subdivision of the Entities) must conform fully to the Constitution and the decision of the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, the Entities are given the possibility to enjoy all governmental functions and powers, within the Entities, that are not expressly assigned to the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina by the Constitution. The Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina may decide to assist inter-Entity coordination on matters not within the responsibilities of Bosnia and Herzegovina provided by the Constitution, though only if the Entity does not object in any particular case.

The Constitution declares three Constituent Peoples - Bosniaks, Serbs, and Croats – and Others who obtain Bosnian citizenship. It also declares citizenship of the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina and citizenship of Entities (providing that all Entity citizenship are thereby recognized as Bosnian citizenship), and gives the citizens possibility of dual citizenship if there is such a bilateral agreement between Bosnia and Herzegovina and other states.

Moreover, the annex explains the design of the Parliamentary Assembly, which shall be divided into two chambers: the House of Peoples and the House of Representatives. In short, the House of Peoples is to consist of 15 Delegates – one-third selected by the National Assembly of Republika Srpska, and two-thirds selected by the House of Peoples of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina – of which nine members comprise a quorum providing that those nine are divided according to ethnic quotas, i.e. three Serb Delegates, three Bosniak Delegates, and three Croat Delegates. The House of Representatives is to consist of 42 Members, again divided by ethnic quotas, i.e. one-third consisting of Bosniaks, one-third of Serbs, and one-third of Croats, who are directly elected from their respective Entity. The majority elected to the House of Representatives will comprise a quorum. Each
chamber is convened in Sarajevo and the majority of each chamber must approve all presented legislations.

The Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina is divided among 3 members: one Bosniak, one Croat from the Federation, and one Serb from Republika Srpska. Each decision can be taken only by consensus, which basically means that each Member of the Presidency obtains veto power. The Presidency appoints the Chair of the Ministers, with the consent of the House of Representatives, who in turn appoints other Ministers who will take office after the approval of the House of Representatives. The Constitution also allows for an amendment of the Constitution – however, not regarding the Human Rights and the Fundamental Freedoms – by the decision of the Parliamentary Assembly if two-thirds of those present and voting in House of Representatives vote for an amendment.

The Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as presented in the agreed Constitution, serves to uphold the Constitution, where all members together constitute a quorum, and their decision is final and binding. The Court is to consist of nine members: four members selected by the House of Peoples of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, two members from National Assembly of Republika Srpska, and the remaining three are to be appointed by the President of the European Court of Human Rights with the consultation of the Presidency. The judges selected by the President of the European Court of Human Rights are not to be citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina or any neighbouring states.

Furthermore, the Constitution decides that all authority for issuing currency and for monetary policy is given to the Central Bank of Bosnia and Herzegovina. A Governing Board is introduced, and for the first period after the Dayton agreement enters into force, it shall consists of a Governor that is appointed by the International Monetary Fund and three Members on a six year term – again divided by ethnic quotas, a Serb, a Bosniak, and a Croat where the two appointed by the Federation will share vote. After the first period of six years, there shall be five Members appointed by the Presidency, also with six years term, with one of the Members is to be appointed the Governor.

**Annex 5: “Agreement On Arbitration”**
This annex highlights that the Parties have agreed on settling disputes with a system of arbitration.

**Annex 6: Agreement on Human Rights”**
The annex lists the different human rights and what they imply together with international
Annex 7: “Agreement on Refugees and Displaced Persons”
Herein the different Parties have agreed that refugees and IDPs have the right to return to their homes and claim property taken by force from 1991 (onward until the end of the war), or if destroyed to receive compensation. The different Parties must create political, economic, and social conditions to enable voluntary return. Further, the refugees and IDPs have the right to vote in their original municipalities if they reside within the state and were named in the census of 1991.

Annex 8: “Agreement On Commission to Preserve National Monuments”
The Annex calls for an establishment of an independent Commission, of five members, to preserve National Monuments bearing in mind the cultural, historical, religious, and ethnic heritage. The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina appoints two members, one member is appointed by Republika Srpska, and the rest are appointed by the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and title one of the members as the Chairman. All of the Parties must fully cooperate with the Commission. The members of the Commission cannot be held liable for any criminal acts carried out within the space of their responsibilities, and foreign members, including their families, enjoy the same privileges and immunities in accordance with the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations.

Annex 9: “Agreement On Establishment of Bosnia and Herzegovina Public Corporations”
The Parties have agreed upon the establishment of a Commission on Public Corporations. The commission consists of five members; one elected by Republika Srpska, two elected by the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the rest are appointed by the President of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. The Public Corporations is to organize and operate transportation facilities, such as roads, railways and ports in order to facilitate the operation of utility, energy, and postal communication facilities for the benefit of both Entities. The Commission is to fully cooperate with all international organizations involved in the peace implementation process, including the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, and obtain necessary legal authority within the scope of their duty.

In this annex the Parties agree on the need for rehabilitation of infrastructure, economic reconstruction, establishment of political and constitutional institutions within the state of Bosnia, preferment of respect of human rights and the return of displaced persons and refugees, and the holding of free and fair-minded elections, which in turn will be assisted by a number of international organization. Moreover, the Parties call for the appointment of a High Representative by the United Nations Security Council, who will assist and monitor the Parties own efforts, and those of the organizations and agencies involved in the civilian aspect of the peace settlement. The High Representative will report to the United Nations Security Council, among other international actors, and cooperate with IFOR to ensure the peace process. The High Representative is the final authority regarding the interpretation of the Dayton Peace Agreement on the implementation of the peace settlement. The High Representative, together with professional staff of the Office of High Representative and their families, will enjoy the same privileges and immunities in accordance with the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations.

**Annex 11: “Agreement On International Police Task Force”**

The Parties call for the establishment of International Police Task Force to assist the Parties in providing the citizens a safe and secure environment in their respective jurisdictions, and assist in the peace settlement process including training and advising of the host country’s law enforcement personnel and the Parties’ activities of law enforcement. The High Representative coordinates the activities of the IPTF, although the IPTF is autonomous in regards of their functions under the Dayton Peace Agreement. The IPTF is supposed to operate within internationally recognized standards and respect for human rights and the law of the host country. The Parties are to fully cooperate with the IPTF and facilitate the operation of the IPTF. The IPTF is headed by a Commissioner, appointed by the Secretary General of United Nations in consultation with the United Nations Security Council, who reports to the Secretary General and provides the IFOR Commander with necessary information. The personnel of the IPTF and their families are to enjoy the same privileges and immunities in accordance with the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations.
APPENDIX 4, A Simplified Version of the State Structure of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Authority of the State of Bosnia-Herzegovina

High Representative

The High Representative is the highest political authority in, and he/she is the highest authority of interpreting the Dayton Peace Agreement.

The Presidency of Bosnia-Herzegovina

Bosniak Member of the Presidency

Croat Member of the Presidency

Serb Member of the Presidency

The Presidency is based on shared power between the three ethnic groups; however, from Republika Srpska a Serb must be elected while a Bosniak and a Croat must be elected from the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Presidency is based on an eight-month rotation system, where the first mandate is enjoyed by the one who have most votes.

The Council of Ministers

Chairman of the Council of Ministers

Minister of Human Rights and Refugees

Minister of Justice

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Minister of Security

Minister of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations

Minister of Defence

Minister of Civil Affairs

Minister of Communication and Transport

Minister of Finance and Treasury

The Presidency appoint a Chairman for the Council of Ministers, who is approved by the House of Representatives, who in turn appoint the other nine Ministers that will take office when the House of Representatives approve the selected Ministers.

Figure 4. Authority in Bosnia-Herzegovina at National level.
Figure 5. Authority in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Entity Level.
Figure 6. Authority Bosnia-Herzegovina, Republika Srpska, Entity Level.
Figure 7. Authority in Bosnia-Herzegovina, District Brčko, Regional Level.
Figure 8. Authority of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Canton, Regional Level.
Figure 9. Authority of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Canton, Regional Level.
Authority of the Cantons of the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina

Figure 10. Authority of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Canton, Regional Level.