

Complexity of Reconciliation of Multiple Regional Identities and Regional Policies: Example of Bosnia and Herzegovina

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Abstract

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) today shows marked inefficiency, which in economic terms is seen as an example of extremely unfavourable macroeconomic indicators. It is the most visible in the domain of the unemployment rate according to which this is the first country in Europe. This economic reality is particularly reflected in the elements of the spatial structure (population and settlements) and which flows into the overall social relations that are recognized as non-perspective countries / regions. This is one of the reasons why BiH is the first country in the world by the percentage of inhabitants who do not live in the country where they were born. The complexity of relations in BiH reflects the complexity of regional identities, which are recognized as the formula 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 (one state + two entities + three nations + four different religions). In addition to religious diversity, regional identities are characterized by physiognomic, cultural, economic and legal specificities of the existing two entities, which can be better reconciled and harmonized through a more efficient regional policy.

Keywords: Bosnia and Herzegovina (state BiH), spatial structures, regional identities, Republic of Srpska (entity RS), Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (entity FBiH), regional policy

1. Introduction

The notion of regional identity is a very complex and wide-ranging question that can be interpreted differently in a wide range of physiognomic and cultural landscapes. Depending on the interpretation of this term, two situations can be identified. The first refers to "endangered" people or ethnic groups, who accept this term as a kind of "last resort" through which the minority population defends the right to its cultural specialty and other specificities. Therefore, the regional identity carries the idea that part of the person's identity is rooted not only in the country, but also in the region in which he lives. This can also be seen on the example in which one, hypothetically, asks us where we are from. If we respond from the Republic of Srpska or Quebec, and not from BiH or Canada, then this is an illustrative example of regional identity. In terms of gradation, regional identity can also be represented as a sense of belonging, similar to that of a national identity, but to a lesser extent. Many nations live in unhealthy natural geographical conditions in the northern part of Europe and are confronted with a prominent process of emigration of their compatriots. In order to preserve the sustainability of development, they create a social awareness according to which regional identity gathers young people and aims to develop and nurture a sense of belonging to a given region. A similar example may refer to the mountain population of Scotland or eastern Serbia. The second context relates to a critical research of narratives about regional identity and its, possibly conservative, fetishized view of the power of the region, which goes beyond other forms of power in a regional context.

1.1 Regional Concepts of Identity and Policy: What's the Problem?

BiH was part of former Yugoslavia which after the first multiparty elections in 1991 and the civil war (1992-95), was established as independent state. Unfortunately, not even this new state of the two-entity structure with three equal nations failed to harmonize political goals with existing regional identities for the benefit of all citizens. Observing the current regional identities, a significant difference between the existing three ethnic concepts is observed. The first question is why regional identity is important problem? That idea has long been implicit in geography, as traditional approaches to regions and regionalism often celebrate the primordial nature

of the region, emphasizing their "personality" and harmony / unity between the region and its inhabitants... Regional identity is, in a way, an interpretation of the process through which the region becomes institutionalized, a process that consists of the production of territorial boundaries, symbols and institutions. This process simultaneously provokes and conditions discourses / practices / rituals that move on borders, symbols and institutional practices. Practices and media discourses gathering the structural and experiential dimensions of the process, it is useful to differentiate between the identity of the region and the regional identity (or regional awareness) of people living inside or outside of it (Paasi, 2003, pp. 475-477).

Traditionally regional geographic narrations have lost their validity in academic research and the corresponding ideological contexts of their production are now being explored by historians of geographical ideas. "Since the 1970s, reflections on the idea of a region have been characterized by the coexistence of two approaches: the classical one, with its emphasis on objective realities and the role of economic forces in the shaping of space, and they lived space one, with its interest in images, representations, signs, symbols, affectivity, and meaning. It appears today that the two approaches share a common aim: how to explain the social construction of space? In the past, geographers insisted mainly on the role of ecological conditions, economic infrastructure and activities. Today, they are also interested in ideological superstructures, narratives, representations and images" (Claval, 1998, pp. 18).

Narration of regional identity relies on various elements: ideas about nature, landscape, built environment, culture / ethnicity, dialect, economic success /recession, periphery / central attitude, marginalization, stereotyped images of people / communities and their fictitious history, utopias, and various arguments on identifying people. In order to create imaginary identities, a number of examples in practice and discourses are contextually used to construct desirable narratives with elements of more or less closed forms. Extensive literary opus, academic conferences and thousands of websites testify to the fact that regional identity is in various ways on the agenda, whereby it can be a constituent element of localized resistance to globalization. "Cultural identification refers to the existence of specific sets of values and beliefs in which specific human groups recognize themselves. It's mainly the result of the geography and history of the human organization, but it can also be formed on the basis of special identity building projects" (Castells, 2017, pp. 153).

Regional identity has become particularly visible through the notion of European regions, which have been accepted by various agencies for regional development and chambers of commerce. It is a term that refers to the multistage classification of national territory (NUTS units) for statistical purposes. "Nevertheless, the core-periphery paradigm which relies on setting sub-national territories and the state in opposition has had its day. For the cities and regions, the creation of a European polity means, in particular, that if they develop collective projects, they are likely to be able to mobilize a much more extensive range of actors as private or public sector, European, central or sub-national partners, and a much wider range of resources. However, this process is made easier if the cities and the regions already have substantial resources of finances, powers and collective action at their disposal—and this may depend on, for example, a strong identity, organized interests or regionalist movements. On the other hand, the weakest in this system run the risk of finding it hard to benefit from the new rules of the game. Although the game is more open, there is a risk that inequalities between territories — in terms of capacity for action or capacity to mobilize (and subsequent success in mobilizing) resources and external actors — will become wider, in favor of federated states or of certain cities and regions" (Le Gales, 1998, pp. 487).

But also, its important stressed that "Wilbur Zelinsky (2001) showed that the problem of identities was ignored by geographers, as well as by other social sciences, until the mid - 20th century. It appears today as a key – question for anyone who wishes to understand the social sphere. Such a situation reflects the role of space in the building of identities. This process is generally presented in such a simplified way that nothing is said about its spatial aspects: 'I am similar to other individuals since I believe in the same symbols and the same values. I share the same identity as they do.' The significance of symbols is ignored. A symbol is not a pure abstraction" (Claval, 1998, 15)

On the other hand, it is necessary to look at the concept of the region from the economic side, which defines the region as a historically evolved, contiguous territorial society that possesses a physical environment, a socioeconomic, political, and cultural milieu, and a spatial structure distinct from other regions and from the other major territorial units, city and nation (Markusen, 1987, 16). This definition recognizes that regions are historically determined entities that emerge largely due to the interaction between humans and local natural resources. Although improvements in transportation have removed many of the constraints imposed by geography, the historical patterns of regional formation still affect the evolution of modern regions. Regions may also be defined in terms of natural resource, ecosystem or other geographic boundaries. A few authors

suggest an interesting approach to defining regions in terms of the interdependencies between natural resource systems and human populations. Based on the economic principles of development, different theories of regional development have been established.

“One of them is neoclassical trade and growth theories that provide a conceptual basis for understanding whether regional economies will become more or less similar over time. In the theory of neoclassical growth, regions with less capital per unit of labor will achieve higher yields and higher initial growth rates than regions with higher capital levels per worker (Barro & Sala-i-Martin 1999). Although the regional version of the neoclassical exogenous growth model proposed by Borts and Stein (1964) predicts interregional mobility of factors, most of them presuppose the perfect internal regional mobility of factors. Finally, neoclassical growth models often allow differences in technology and / or savings rates between regions. If it is assumed for these parameters that they are exogenous, then the regions will only be conditionally convergent according to the stable state of constant growth rate. In neoclassical growth models that allow variability in growth parameters, a stable state can differ between regions, but all regions will always reach constant income p.c., consumption and value of capital / work ratio” (Dawkins, 2003, 136).

Regional inequalities are an inescapable fact of Europe’s economic geography, so every country have to set up all efficient strategy to promote and support the ‘overall harmonious development’ of its Member States and regions. The aims are to strengthen economic and social cohesion by reducing disparities in the level of development between regions. One of the most prominent scientists in this field was W. Isard (1998) which used the concepts of location theory to develop a new area of science known as regional science, a branch of social science that investigates the influence of space on economic decision-making. After that he has developed analytical methods and which become a standard regional planning tool. Regional policy concerned both with the regional (normally thought of as sub national) constitution and effectivity of economy, society, culture and polity, and with the economic, social and cultural constitution and effectivity of regions. These two aspects of policy are not binaries: they are mutually constitutive of regional policy. However, although always influentially co-present in policy initiation, design and implementation, their relative significance varies across space and time. As objects of policy, regions are subjected to attempted policy-led transformations designed to ameliorate uneven development for reasons of social justice, welfare and economic efficiency. Whilst contemporary emphases in regional policy are increasingly preoccupied with a singular concern for economic growth, these motives are not mutually exclusive. Regional policy is rarely purely redistributive (Lee, 2009, pp. 637).

Also, existing BiH’s geographical schools shows quite different point of view of the regional identities and number, type and form of regions as part of regional policies. So, two approaches have been crystallized: “the first is represented by scientists from the Republic of Srpska who support decentralized state, including two entities structure and normative principle for the formation statistical regions at the level NUTS 3 and accordingly, within this entity define between four and six functional-urban regions (monocentric and polycentric) that developed around the largest urban centers (Prijedor, Banja Luka, Dobo, Bijeljina, Zvornik, Istocno Sarajevo and Trebinje). Another geographical school (scientist from the FBiH) have the other approach, which is based on the fact that BiH’s internal structure should be viewed as a single centralized economic space, which should be primarily divided according to analytical criteria (pre-war chambers of commerce, main traffic and infrastructural directions) rather than normative principles. They see the optimal nodal-functional organization in returning to pre-war functional relations and five such regions at the level of BiH. In this way, it is being tried to ignore the two-entity reality and the assumption for the implementation of this model is to change the constitution of BiH and create a “civil society” in which the existing regional structures will be lost and build a unitary state” (Mutabdzija, 2018, pp. 278).

In geographical terms, that anti constitutional proposal by colleagues from FBiH, is explained in such a way that "the current hopeless regional-geographical development of BiH crossed by the Dayton division can be resolved in the transition phase to the Europeanization of the regional division of BiH by stimulating the economic development of regional development communities and agencies. It should be modeled on the nodal-functional principle, while respecting only the territorial complex approach. That would include the frontal units of physiognomic character, which ignore the entity and cantonal divisions" (Spahic & Jahic, 2014, pp. 48). Similar point of view was presented by other experts like political scientist (Osmankovic & Pejanovic, 2009, pp. 240) or a few international organizations through the program EURED (Note 1).

1.2 The Starting Hypotheses and the Importance of this Research

This paper starts from the historical geographical review of the development of this problem and follows the definition of this term in different periods of modern development in BiH: the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the

Kingdom of Yugoslavia, the socialist Yugoslavia and the independent BiH. The primary hypothesis of this paper is based on the assumption that in multicultural societies the prosperity of state depends on the existence of democratic institutions, which ensure the application of high democratic standards in securing equal personal and collective rights for all citizens and peoples. And vice versa. It is also commonly known that uneven economic development intensifies regional differences, leading to political instability. This fact leads us to establish a secondary hypothesis, which starts from the existence of a regional policy that has a double impact: as a planning instrument and as a factor contributing to the harmonization of economic, political and social formative role of the regions as subjects of policy.

The consequences of inadequate treatment of regional identities and the lack of a clear and conducive policy of regional development lead to the strengthening, above all, of the political forces of divergence in relation to cohesive forces within such a society. In theory, this is not an unknown issue and refers to the application of an adequate policy, best represented by EU regional policy. The practical importance of allocating these statistical regions is reflected in the conduct of regional policy, but more importantly for the tasks of economic and overall planning for social development. In addition to these practical reasons, there are specific cultural landscapes that bear clear indications of regional identities. In practical terms, the negative trend in the development of society (the lack of democratic institutions and the absence of regional policy) leads to the polarization of that society. On the one hand, they are advocates of stronger centralization and reduction of democratic potentials of society, and on the other, they are advocates of decentralization and strengthening of democratic structures. Establishing consensus between these parties leads to an acceptable territorial regionalization and a provincial policy of regional development. The extraordinary processes lead to the strengthening of regionalism and separatism.

Importance of regional policy may stress regional responsibilities for addressing uneven development through regionally induced supply-side transformations – involving regional training, learning and innovation, for example – designed to increase regional economic efficiency, productivity and dynamism. It thereby places responsibility for these transformations on local workers and firms – albeit with some support and encouragement (both positive and negative) of various kinds (Lee, 2009, 638).

Based on this, it can be concluded that regional identity is one aspect of collective identity that is important in cultures that promote individual autonomy and cohesion of the group. Collective identity has many positive elements in terms of creating group cohesion, supporting internal solidarity and establishing rules that help in social transactions, but it can also be a source of conservatism and a mean of maintaining cultural barriers that hinder the progress of the group as a whole and the root of violent conflict between groups. But in itself, collective identity is neither negative nor positive, but a social characteristic that requires recognition, not a judgment (Marc, 2010, 81).

2. Methodological Approach

The methodological framework of this research, besides the method of analysis and synthesis, includes a wide array of geographical methods. In order to understand the specifics of regional identities in BiH, it is also desirable to analyze the spatial structures, which significantly determine them. These are primarily the specifics of physiognomy (relief), which will be analyzed through spatial differentiation by applying different principles and separating different regions. This will determine the similarities or differences between the structural elements of the geospaces, on the basis of which homogeneous regions were created. During the 20th century different regions have been identified in this region, and thus different regional identities have been portrayed. Applying the principle of homogeneity, several natural geographic regions were distinguished in the territory of BiH (Marek 1932, Melik 1949, Petrovic, 1957), and using the principle of physiognomy, different physiognomic regions were isolated (Markovic 1966, Rogic 1973, Smlatic 1983). Analyzing economic activities and their correlation with natural conditions, resources and different forms of agrarian landscape, the economic-geographical region was isolated (Ilesic 1961, Kanaet 1964). Obviously, there is a significant overlap between these regions, so a basic overview of the main morphological units is required.

2.1 Geographical Method

The starting point is the geographical method, based on which the geographical characteristics of BiH terrain and its regional differentiation were examined. For regional researcher, according ecological and economic functioning of society, landscape has always been an important element. So, applying this principle, Mitchell (2000) explains that new directions have emerged in the study of physiognomic regions: possibilism and cultural geography. The first direction is characterized by the basic settings of regional geography enriched by the new interpretation of the relationship between man and nature, the abandonment of geographical determinism and the formulation of an alternative concept (possibilism), based on the concepts pays, genre de vie and possibilities (Blas, 1902). The

second direction, culturally-geographically, developed during the 20th century in two branches. Overtime, the work of early cultural geographers split into two opposing camps. One group was epitomized by Carl Sauer, who is seen by many as a father of modern cultural geography, and by another by Friedrich Ratzel, Ellen Churchill Sample and Ellsworth Huntington, who sought to determinatively connect human behaviour to physical environment. In this connection “Donald Mitchell (2000) speaks of the ‘cultural wars’ of the modern World. Thanks to the new forms taken by the regional approach, it is easier to understand the very nature of modern space, with many groups coexisting within the same areas and competing symbolically for acknowledgement (Claval, 1998).

As a notion, a cultural landscape is formed under the influence of a cultural group from the natural landscape and is the premise of the object of cultural geography, where culture is a factor, the natural landscape is a medium, and the cultural landscape is the result of this interaction. Changes in the views of different orientations of cultural geography on culture followed the changes in the view of the basic object of research - cultural landscape (Sauer, 1925). Various landscapes correspond to different cultural traditions. Such a concept was in the spirit of perceiving culture as a way of life, characteristic of many human communities inhabiting a particular cultural area. Types of artefacts that were in the landscape were associated with different types of culture. Drawing attention to the fact that there is no culture in a certain space, but that every culture is polyvocal, the door has been opened to the search for the traces of multilayer's, i.e. social differentiation in landscapes. On the other hand, the awareness that the meanings are expressed in symbolic forms has revealed to cultural geography the fact that the landscape is not just what the eye sees. It carries symbolism, its hidden codes, and therefore it is not enough to just describe the landscape, it needs to be interpreted, revealed codes and assume the meanings of which they are an expression. "The development of cultural geography during this century records a shift from 'objectivity' to 'subjectivity'. After insisting Sauer's school of cultural geography on objects, i.e. on material elements of culture, in the 1960s comes the subject orientation: emphasizes the role of human communities that inhabit and shape the space; the reasons for the human behavior in the space, the role of perception of the environment are emphasized, and later the role of the researcher-geographer as a subjective interpreter is also emphasized. Combining selected aspects of both directions - and objectively oriented Sauer's cultural geography and subject-oriented perceptive and interpretive-oriented works - a modern branch of geography that proclaims itself as a "new" cultural geography tries to overcome, in accordance with general trends in science, the separation of the object and subject" (Sakaja, 1997).

2.2 Historical Geographical Method

The application of the historical geographical method provides an insight into the understanding of the contemporary economic development of BiH and the different interpretation of the cultural notion of regional identity. So, we need a “wide picture” about notion of culture and one of first definition itself is broader and refers to a complex whole that includes knowledge, belief, art, morality, law, custom, and other benefits and ways that a person has acquired as a member of society (Tylor, 1871). Modern interpretations reduce this notion to religion, philosophy and art (Jerotic, 2007) or to a set of values and beliefs that serve to inform, direct and motivate the behavior of people (Castells, 2017). But, cultural identity is one of the most important features of culture, and its basis is a lasting dialogue between literature, philosophy, music and theatre creativity (Eco, 2013) or it's a great deal has been written about the issue of identity over the last decades – its permanence or malleability, its role in the lives of individuals and societies (Zygmunt, 2001). He said that the sociologist Bauman has written that “identity research” has become an independent area of study, one that is developing very rapidly. What is more, “identity” has become a prism through which many important aspects of contemporary life can be viewed.

During the contemporary historical and geographical development (from the Berlin Congress in 1878 to the present), BiH has been following two constants: economic underdevelopment in relation to neighboring regions / states and the lack of democratic institutions. At different stages of social development in BiH there were universal goals, a more dynamic economic development and a greater efficiency of the state administration. At the same time, it can be recognized that its regional / ethnic diversity is seen as an aggravating factor for the realization of these goals. Therefore, it was tried to diminish autonomy and emphasize the need for a stronger centralization. Was there a planned and long-term regional policy in such conditions? This period in the development of BiH has been marked by four different phases, with the question of regional identities being interpreted differently in each of them. The first period was during the Austro-Hungarian administration (1878-1918) when new political goals were proclaimed (merging with the other state) through the change of cultural-civilization patterns. This was attempted to be achieved gradually through the retention of an earlier (Ottoman) administrative division into six areas and strongly favoring the unique cultural identity of all inhabitants. This is the policy most visibly carried out by its administrator B. Kalai, which was manifested through the existence of one state language (Bosnian) and one nation (Bosniaks), among which there were only confessional differences. This is confirmed by the explicit allegation that "the government only knows about the local population as Bosniaks, who by faith are divided into

Muslim, Eastern Orthodox and Catholic Christians" (Stancic, 1991). The second period refers to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1918-1945), whose political ideal was the freedom of the South Slavs and the creation of an integral Yugoslav nation. During this period, the two phases differ, the first, conditionally unitaristic, characterized by an administrative division in six areas (as in the previous period), with only one administrative centre of the new state (Belgrade). In the conditions of visible poverty and overall social backwardness, during this phase in the development of Bosnia, one of the most important changes was "the democratic structure of the Yugoslav state from 1918 to 1929 and the triumph of the idea that religion is not the watershed between the nations" (Ekmečić, 2010). The second phase in the development of BiH, within the Yugoslav state (1929-1945), has federal characteristics, and in order to overcome the anachronistic cultural matrices, the administrative organization (four regions) has been changed, and BiH emerge from the framework of its "historical boundaries" (borders on Uni, Sava and Drina). In the third period of socialist Yugoslavia (1945-1991), BiH was a centralized republic with the centre in Sarajevo. In the domain of regional policy, historical progress has been made in the development of urbanization and industrialization throughout BiH, with highly ideologized social life on the basis of "brotherhood and unity". Yugoslav society as an integrative element of civil society was apostrophized developed at the expense of religious differences and all "war scars" that are consciously forgotten. The only aspect of regional identity was a geographical definition, based on which "Bosnians" and "Herzegovinians" existed, and their peculiarities were described by the populist phrase: "Bosnia is neither Serbian nor Croatian nor Muslim, but it is also Serbian and Croatian and Muslim". Today, according cultural heritage exists three cultural identities / nations but still exist strong idea about recovering single notion as Bosniak.

2.3 Method of Regionalization

The method of regionalization involves the implementation of the widespread NUTS (Note 2) classification, whose objective is to extract statistical regions as the administrative unit of BiH. In the domain of such an organization, the BiH level can be considered as the first-order unit (NUTS 1), and the entities meet the criteria for the separation of statistical regions of the lower rank (NUTS 2). Also, at the level of units of the second level, complex cultural landscapes have been formed, which generally have a homogeneous dispersive spatial arrangement. What is lacking on the level of both entities are regional units that correspond to lower levels of organization (NUTS 3) and which would be separated on the principles of complex regionalization (based on several qualitative characteristics), mainly as nodal-functional regions. It is precisely within these units that cultural objects are identified that have a dominant homogeneous spatial arrangement and whose meaning needs to be interpreted. The borders of these statistical regions, as an element of the administrative organization of each state, are mainly an expression of a compromise between the interests of economic and political subjects that direct the economic, social and spatial development of each region. Precisely on this element is the absence of a harmonized regional development policy at the level of BiH, since there are oppositional attitudes among the representatives of the leading political / ethnic communities. Within the EU, these regions have played the role of normative and analytical regions, and have enabled a simple and unambiguous division of territory to form regional statistics. Normative regions reflect political will, their borders are determined by historical heritage, and analytical (functional) depart from geographical criteria (natural, social, economic). It is clear that representatives of the Serbian people are advocating a position on the inevitability of establishing normative regions (Republic of Srpska and the Federation of BiH), while representatives of the majority Bosniaks people advocate the establishment of analytical regions (as they existed until 1991 in the unitary Socialist Republic of BiH). Representatives of the Croatian people, as the least indebted, advocate the establishment of normative regions, within which their political and cultural interests would be better articulated. It is clear that through the elements of BiH's internal regionalization, they try to better affirm cultural contents, individually different for each nation, which lead to the identification of regional and cultural (ethnic) identities.

2.4 Method of Analyses

As element of method of analyses, complexity of notion regional identity will be observed through four aspects: natural, cultural, legal and economic. All specifics can be recognized within the framework of regional identity, which significantly contribute to the polivocality of cultures and identity diversity in BiH. Their essential characteristics derive from regional differentiation of space based on different principles and creation of different types of regions (homogeneous, functional and statistical). In homogeneous regions (natural geographic, physiognomic and economic-geographical regions), some types are separated based on the existence of one or more qualitative characteristics (Claval, 1998), and it is noticeable that the primary units are shifted right from the north to the south of BiH. Since modern socio-economic trends impose new views on the approach to geographical valorization, integration, differentiation and organization of geospaces, the concept of homogeneous regions has become inadequate and does not reflect all the dynamics and complexity of the interaction of natural-geographic

and economic-geographical factors in the process of creating new cultural landscapes. The development of "New geography", as a new paradigm based on procedural functionalism, enables the complex research, planning and direction of these contemporary social geographic processes. Protagonists of contemporary regional geography found the most appropriate solution in the concept of functional regions. Instead of the natural geographic determinant (river valley, woody plain, plateau ...), the key word becomes a city function. The basic economic and social functions are grouped into certain fields (regions) and points (cities) that have the role of poles of convergence and divergence (distancing) of spatial and functional connections. It connects, unifies and more or less integrates different territorial (natural-geographic) entities into functionally rounded, but open regional systems at the heart of cities. Therefore, functional regions (nodal, social geographic and functional-urban) do not possess such spatial regularity in reporting as homogeneous regions, but they create different cultural and geographical contents (ethnographic, social).

3. Results: Regional Identities and Policy

Regional identity is a complex category that includes four different aspects of identity. Each of them essentially characterizes the whole and makes it unrepeatable. The example of BiH shows the incompatibility of these aspects, including the policy of regional development was unclear or did not exist, and the regional differences between the centre and the periphery were increasing. In the crisis situations during the previous century, should it be noted, the interruptions in the development caused mutual misunderstandings and were marked by wars (1914-18, 1941-45, 1992-95), which were always in their character bearing the elements of civil war.

3.1 Natural Identities

The principle of homogeneity is used as the starting point and the simplest approach to regional differentiation of the relief. On the example of this regionalization, elements of geographical determinism are seen, but the application of the principle of physiognomy is of greater importance for the creation of specific regional identities. Low terrain is located in the north of BiH and is part of the Pannonian plain and its periphery, which is dominated by quaternary river deposits that formed the ravine at the confluence of the right tributaries of the Sava River. These terrains are separated from the Pannonian section at about 150 m altitude. Pannonian Plain in the morphological view is recognized as macro plains of Una (Knežpolje), Vrbas (Lijevce polje), Ukraine (Ivanjsko polje), Bosnia (Brodsko-Samacko polje) and Drina (Semberija). In the higher terrain of the Peripanon zone, under the influence of river-denudation processes, valleys were formed on unguent sediments, which have marine and laconic origin, and are mostly represented by clay and sand. River valleys are different in their morphological characteristics, normal and composite, cliff and canyon, polyphase and polygenetic appear. The upper boundary of the Peripanon Zone represented the boundary of Paratets, and in our conditions, an important border was symbolized by zones of various economic activities, farm and forestry and cattle breeding (isohypse 500 m). This was also the historical border that went around the rims of the Prijedor, Banja Luka, Dobož and Zvornik basins, which in the Roman period (1st century) divided Illyricum into two provinces: Pannonia (north) and Dalmatia (south). One millennium later, this line was called the "dry border", which after the Pozarevac peace (1718) was the border between Austria and the Ottoman Empire, and in 1995 it became an inter-entity line of demarcation (Republic of Srpska-Federation BiH) within BiH. In the present circumstances, this line divides the Republic of Srpska into two roughly equal halves: the north and south. In the north there are about $\frac{3}{4}$ of population, and in southern $\frac{1}{4}$. From these relations of spatial distribution of population, the basic socio-economic differences within the RS also arise. And the northern part of the territory of the Federation of BiH belongs to this area. As dominant morphostructural units, there are hilly and lower mountain terrains with cut composite valleys of the middle flows of Una, Vrbas, Bosnia and their tributaries. Most of this terrain is represented by the Rudne and Flysch Mountains, and the boiling extensions in the middle flows of the mentioned rivers testify to the lake stage in the development of this relief (the consequence of the terry-charred basins in the Spreca valley). The mountainous region covers two geotectonic units, of which the central parts of BiH belong to the Inner Dinarides, and the southern karst terrains are part of the External Dinarides. All of these terrains are built of rocks of different structure and age. The most important morphological units within this mountain-hilly area have a cascading character. In the southwest, the mountain peaks between which are formed, tectonic predisposed, numerous karst fields, and east of this zone are the highest Dinaric Mountains. The terrain descends steeply, through the high plateau and deep canyon valleys of the Neretva and the Drina, towards the south and the submediterranean and coastal zone. It is a Herzegovinian holo karst, which characterizes all forms of karst relief.

Based on the natural geographical characteristics of the territory, a natural identity has developed that has its own regional specificities through which it defines its local identity. From this brief description of the main relief lines, the existence of two regional identities is visible. The Northern identity is present in the north, and it is characterized by the largest concentration of population, the densest network of settlements and cities, and the

tradition of crop production and fruit growing. In modern conditions, this zone represents the most promising economic space along which the longitudinal axis of development (east-west) is presented, represented by the highway "9th January", which will connect the largest cities of the region and make connection with the Paneuropean traffic corridor X (Serbia). Mountain-valley regional identity has greater spatial dispersion, but a lower concentration of population and a small number of larger cities. Traditionally, this is the zone of forestry and cattle breeding and complementary industries, built in smaller towns in valley extensions. This zone crosses the transversal axis of development (north-south) which represents the backbone of the traffic system. It is the Paneuropean corridor Vc, connecting the Adriatic with Posavina and via Croatia going to Budapest. Both regional identities are substantially altered under the strong influence of urbanization and industrialization, and contemporary urban processes align the essential characteristics of these identities and lead to an increasing concentration of population along existing transport corridors. As specific zone of this identity exist karst submediterranean.



Figure 2. Natural geographic regions and the network of modern axes of development. Natural entities of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Melik 1949) are: Pannonian perimeter (5), Low hills and basins (8), High Dinaric Mountains and Plateau (9) and Low seaside interior (2). It's amended according: M. Spahic, H. Jahic, 2014

3.2 Cultural Identities

From a geographical point of view, culture is a subject of cultural geography, which, as its systematic branch, is concentrated on communities and societies at the local, regional and national levels, with emphasis on the relationship between man and the environment (Goodall, 1987). Therefore, it can be said that the cultural identities of Bosnia and Herzegovina are related to the identities of its people: Serbs, Bosniaks and Croats. The cultural identity of Serbs is today identified with the Republic of Srpska, dominated by their culture, history, art, ethnographic specialties in the domain of customs and tradition, as well as contemporary cultural aspirations and traits. "Since its entry into the historical stage, Serbian people have been polycentric and have lived in several historical areas, separate and independent principals, states, and later empires. So it is today, so the Serbs have two states: in Serbia they are sovereign, and in BiH they share sovereignty with Bosniaks and Croats" (Antic & Kecmanovic, 2016). The cultural identity of Bosniaks is more complex. From a territorial point of view, it mainly relates to the northern part of the Federation of BiH, and basically derives from the economic and social structure of BiH during the Ottoman period. As such, a privileged ethnic group, Muslims lived mainly in cities and traded crafts and trades. Today, Bosniaks form an absolute majority in the largest cities of the FBiH, and in the Republic of Srpska they have a dispersed position. A similar schedule, but a significantly smaller number, has Croats. The elements of their regional identity are the clearest in the border zones towards Croatia, while in central Bosnia and parts of the Republic of Srpska they have only a dispersive character. As a kind of correctness in the distribution of the population in the territory of BiH, it is noted that there are three models of regions: distribution of Serbians people (blue) shows a homogeneous model, homogeneous-dispersion model within the Bosniaks people (green) and Croatsians people (red) have a dispersion model,

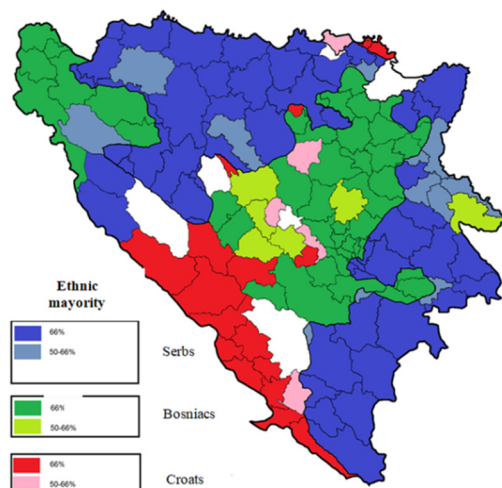


Figure 1. Ethnic structure of BiH according to results of the 2013 census (Source: <http://www.statistika.ba>)

The basic definition of the cultural identity of every nation and political community is dominated by religion, which is a striking feature of their immaterial cultural identity. In the reality of Bosnia and Herzegovina, it is confidently equated with ethnicity, so if apostates and agnostics are excluded, all Bosniaks are mostly Muslims, Croats are Catholics, and Serbs are Orthodox. In BiH co-exist Islam and Christianity, and at the level of religion, those differences are increasing. Within Christianity, there are two major religions (Catholic and Orthodox), and within the framework of Islam two main currents (Sunni and Shiites). About 4/5 inhabitants of Republic of Srpska are Orthodox, about 13% belong to Islamic, and <5% are Catholic. On the territory of the FBiH, about 70% of the populations are Bosniaks-Muslims, about 22% are Catholics, and about 3% are Orthodox. From this kind of religious mosaic, the cultural diversity and the number of different religious objects that make up the recognition of cultural identities arise. Based on the data from the monograph on churches and religious communities in BiH (Mustafic et al., 2012), the oldest dioceses of the Serbian Orthodox Church in the territory of BiH are the Dabrobosanska episcopate (Sarajevo) and the Zahumsko-hercegovačka and primorska (Mostar) episcopate founded by the Holy Sava 1219 and from this period come some of the most important monasteries. Within the framework of Islam there are several madhhab (school of theology) and in official use in BiH there is a Sunni-Hanafī school. This madhhab is considered one of the "soft" Islamic schools, which is open to modern ideas. Within the Catholic faith there are several ranks, "Franciscans", "Jesuits", "Benedictines" and others. Some of the oldest Catholic church-monasteries have been preserved to this day and are located in central Bosnia. The Jewish Community is smallest and consists of members Sephardic and Ashkenazy people.

There is a lot of scientific controversy and misunderstanding in the domain of use and the name of the mother tongue. There is a clear connection between the history of language and the history of the people, and these issues come to the force in the late 20th century. Language is the basic identity issue of every nation and all the peoples of BiH speak the same language (stokavski pronunciation), this language was created through the reform of the national into the literary language, conducted by Vuk St. Karadzic (1818). Until 1991 all nations called this language the same "Serbo-Croatian or Croatian-Serbian, which was in fact a politically renowned Serbian literary language" (Kovacevic, 2013). As a rule, languages are called by nations, not by countries, and the problem arises when Bosniaks name their language (Bosnian) and thus impose it as a state language. A very important subsystem of cultural identity is the cultural goods that are in different stages of protection. These are numerous religious buildings, fortifications and fortified cities and architectural objects of public and private significance. Particular contribution to cultural identity is provided by populated places, both urban and rural, with a particular emphasis on the identity of cities, their specific urbanism and architecture, their style (culture) of life, as well as their relationship to the natural environment. Because of these specificities there are different approaches in evaluating certain periods, and the key difference is in the assessment of the Ottoman period in the history of BiH. This period was the subject of controversy, so "the relations between the Bosnian-Herzegovinian cultures-ethnics, shaped through the long centuries of Ottoman rule, were customary, especially after the bloody end of the twentieth century, to think of the Manichaeans simply, in two interacting polarized stereotypes. According to one, the main and constant line of these relations is divergence, arising from the inability of the different religions in the

organized political community. Advocates of this view with many dark passions interpret the whole history of life in Bosnia as a history of eternal conflict, general hatred and misfortune, within which the people to whom they belong, of course, suffer most and suffer the most severe casualties ... Contrary to this, not less flat and fake from it, it is a historical cliché that draws the past of Bosnia as an idyll in which good neighbourly relations, tolerance, multiculturalism and general style flourish, and idyll only occasionally spoil the evil intentions and invading plans from a closer geographical-national environment" (Lovrenovic, 2017).

3.3 Legal Identities

Today's BiH was created by the Dayton Peace Agreement (1995), which ended the unfortunate conflict between the warring parties, mostly mono-ethnic armies (VRS (Note 3), ABiH (Note 4), HVO (Note 5) and APZB (Note 6)). BiH consists of two entities (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republic of Srpska) and one district (Brcko). Republic of Srpska was created as an expression of the will of the Serbian people in BiH, after the violent breakup of the SFRY (Note 7). In a referendum on the stay in Yugoslavia, held in BiH in 1991, the Serbs expressed such a mood massively, but this was not accepted and a unilateral referendum on the allocation of BiH from Yugoslavia was held in 1992. Although voted "for" <2/3 of the population enrolled in the voter list, BiH declared independence, which was a prelude to a civil war that lasted 3.5 years. Today the territory of the Republic of Srpska is divided into 63 local self-government units, seven of which have the status of a city, and 56 the status of the municipality. "Having in mind the prescribed competencies of the municipality, it is clear that the huge disproportion of the size of the territory and the number of inhabitants, between the largest and the smallest municipality (city), creates disproportion in the ability to fulfill the prescribed competencies and, consequently, the quality of life in them. For this reason, the concept of spatial development of Republic of Srpska points to the need to review the role and competencies of municipalities "(PP RS (Note 8) to 2025).

The legal identity of the FBiH is derived from the legitimacy of the political relations of the two people (Bosniaks and Croats). The starting point for defining this issue could be the referendum held in March 1992, and the absence of dialogue and compromise introduced BiH into the war, during which "everyone was against each other". In order to end the war, a ceasefire agreement was signed. It was called the "Washington Treaty" because it was signed in Washington in 1994 and allowed the ceasefire between the warring parties. It also anticipated the creation of a confederation between Croatia and the FBiH, but this possibility was never seriously considered. Under the agreement, the combined territory under the control of the Croatian and pro-Islamic forces was divided into ten autonomous cantons and a Muslim-Croat federation (later the Federation of BiH) was established. The cantonal system was established to prevent the domination of Muslims over Croats, and the FBiH became one of the two equal entities in BiH. Unresolved large political and identity issues, all these years, the FBiH is inefficient and burdened by political crises. The Bosniaks as the most numerous people are not satisfied with the concessions they give in the domain of functioning of power. The parity principle implies equality and equal representation of members of all peoples in the institutions of executive power. The Croats are dissatisfied because they have entered the FBiH > 50% of the territory that was under the control of The HVO (27% of BiH), but they do not have their own entity, public broadcasting service, etc. Everyone is looking for a new concept of the FBiH / BiH organization in which the existing "injustices and shortcomings" of the existing system will be corrected. In domain of legal identity, exist only two entities: the Republic of Srpska (RS) and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH).

3.4 Economic Identities

This identity, above all, means the sustainability of development that is directly related to the increase in the employment rate of the population. Since BiH is in the region of the Western Balkans, where economic problems are present in all countries, it is clear that the general framework for faster economic development is not realistic. In accordance with contemporary doctrines of New Economic Geography this situation is complicated by the neighboring (Western Balkans) whose total GDP (17.5 million inhabitants) is equivalent to only half of the GDP of Portugal (10.5 million inhabitants)? This is confirmed by the idea that increased yields lead to an increase in agglomerations and the growth of rich regions and their divergence towards poorer regions (Krugman 1991). Since economic success is defined through the general level of economic wealth and the number of scientific and technological innovations, it is clear that the increase in employment rates and demographic development is also contributing to it. This can also be seen from the structure of the economic production and recognition of a particular region based on the product that is created on it. The economic identity of BiH has largely depended on the level of use of local resources (agriculture, extractive industries), and today they are elements of the economy on which accelerated economic growth and development can be based. Carriers of dynamic change have become the cities, and in the conditions of low urbanization (40%), this is becoming more difficult for the development of few large cities and their regional environment. In the essence of every economic identity, the forces of economic expansion are recognized, from the city markets for new and diverse import goods, the rapid increase in the number

of city jobs, technologies for increasing rural production and productivity, the relocation of city plants, and capital of urban origin. It is therefore concluded that "it is a cruel truth that there is no decent way to overcome rural poverty where people do not have access to productive urban jobs. It was valid during Scotland's displacement and still applies. It is a matter for the wealthy US and is also true in the case of poor World Bank clients. Many technologies, including cheap, flexible, medium and small technologies, are available to improve rural yields and productivity of rural workers. But what is not available where needed most are flexible, powerful cities of import substitution. In their absence, technology that arrives arbitrarily from distant cities is not a blessing but a curse, and the economic wealth it creates is always partial and sometimes even completely illusory"(Jacobs, 2010).

It is clear that BiH's regional identities depend on these parameters, the gravitational power of the main nodal-functional centers, and the overall economic strength of the given regions. Significant support to this development is culture and cultural heritage, through which the competitiveness of its products is achieved. This effect of sustainable development is enhanced by a very complex network of settlements, which is reflected in the strengthening of the lowland cities, as well as the absence of functional and hierarchical network of urban centers and development holders in the hilly and mountainous area. The very complex morphological structure of the relief of these regions and the hydrographic network has caused a very rare network of road roads per unit area. Therefore, the geographical characteristics of this area are complex and significantly determine the identity of the entire BiH. Based on these characteristics, in the earlier periods of technological development, economic and social frameworks have been clearly defined, partially preserved even today. The population living in the river valleys or the basin extensions of northern and central Bosnia is primarily oriented to urban centers and the most represented economic activities: industry, crafts, trade. Forestry residents are closely related to the exploitation of forests and wood processing, cattle breeding and crop farming for their own needs. Population of karst and highland areas is dominantly related to animal husbandry, crop farming and, more recently, tourism.

Table 1. Correlations between regional identities and regional policy in BiH during 20th century

Phase	Period	Regional identity	Regional policy	Civil Wars between three nations
I	1878-1918	Bosniaks	No	1914-1918
II	1918-1945	Integral Yugoslav	No	1941-1945
III	1945-1992	Bosnian and Herzegovinian	Partly	1992-1995
IV	1995-	Serbian, Croatian, Bosniak	Partly	-

According natural resources, infrastructures and human resources, in BiH we can recognise two regions: agro-industrial at the Nord and mainly agricultural at the South.

3.5 Regional Policies

Today in BiH there are at least two regional policies (at the entities level: RS and FBiH). The problem is not in their number but in the fact that there is no harmonization of these policies. The reason for this lies in the disagreement of political goals and regional identities, and this creates constant crises in the functioning of all government's level. The political representatives of the Bosniaks people dominate the awareness of the unique and civic BiH identity and the "democratic" concept of "one man, one voice". For the political representatives of the Serbian people, the preservation of the Republic of Srpska as a framework that meets all the values of their regional identity is of primary importance, while the Croats, who are the smallest and dispersed, have a strong desire for territorial linking of local communities in which they are the majority. Since there is a significant correlation between regional and cultural identities, there are also different approaches to evaluating individual periods, as historical geographical memory. Since this element is very important for the formation of collective ideas about the common past and ethnic unity during their cultural and historical development, the key difference between existing cultural / regional identities arise in the assessment of the Ottoman period in the history of BiH (1463-1878). This period was the subject of controversy over two irreconcilable approaches and never reached a coherent standpoint in science, let alone in ideological images and judgments.

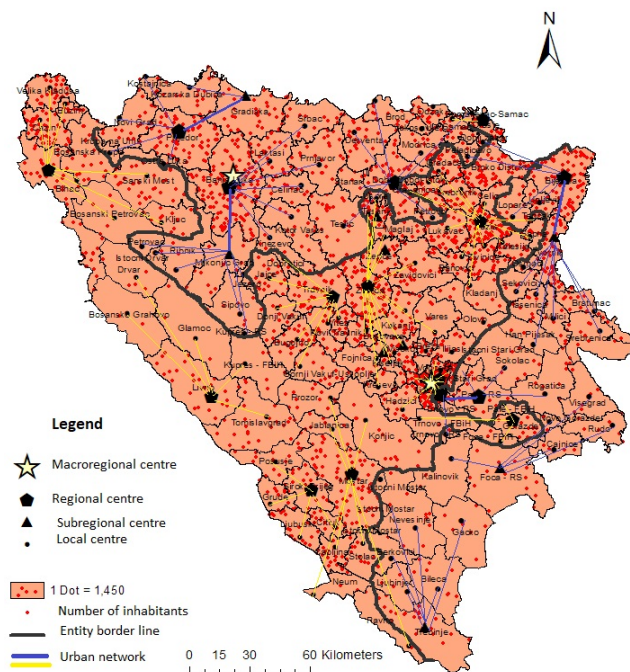


Figure 3. Network of urban centres and nodal-functional connections in BiH as optimal framework for implementation multi stages regional policies (Mutabdžija, G. 2018)

Today, there are several regional policies at the level of administrative units in BiH. At the level of the Republic of Srpska, a unique regional policy is being implemented which, due to the economic problems of this entity, is still not satisfactory. The greatest effects have been achieved in the area of construction of the highway network and regional hospitals, but there are still small effects in the domain of stimulating industrial development. On the territory of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the basic territorial units are cantons (10) and they are responsible for the implementation of development programs. The elements of a successful regional policy are invisible and insufficient and a consequence of this is double. On the all executive level strengthens the bureaucratic structures and the emigrations of young people.

4. Discussion

Finally, we can conclude that there are coincidence of starting hypotheses and results of this research. During a certain period, BiH did not succeed in establishing democratic institutions that would be able to apply the democratic standards in crisis situations. As a proof of this conclusion, there were three civil wars, including "wide picture" of the causes, consequences and participants on the world scale. It is also clear that BiH did not obtain satisfactory economic development what had consequences for macroeconomic stability and political instability. This refers to the totality of social relations, and therefore the modest economic results that motivate yang people to leave BiH.

The complexity of regional identities within BiH can be simplified through representation of two regional entities that have the characteristics of NUTS 2 statistical units. Identity issues of the Republic of Srpska are significantly different from those of the other entity. While the FBiH is a collection of two geographical concepts and historical provinces (Bosnia and Herzegovina), the Republic of Srpska is a political-geographical term that tends to the concept of a nation, the nation's awareness of statehood. The essential characteristics of these identities are recognized as natural-geographic (north-south) and cultural-geographic (ethnographic), and harmonization of identity is what its sustainable spatial development needs to achieve. The identity of the Republic of Srpska, as well as the identity of its regions, would have the character of sustainability only if these identities (natural, cultural and economic) in a given legal framework are harmonized and horizontally linked. Sustainable development of the Republic of Srpska and its regions would be achieved and provided that its regional centres are strengthened and that the development of the economy is based on local resources, without compromising, but contributing to the regulated area and its natural environment as a resource for development.

On the other hand, the FBiH on the most recognizable regional identities derives from its name. It refers to the existence of certain natural-geographic, settlement-demographic, economic-social and ethno-psychological features. The simplest thing is that Herzegovina is a historical region with geographical features (the Neretva river basin), which is trying to redefine it in contemporary ethnic and political geographical circumstances. In the Bosniaks corps, there is a strong idea of erasing this regional identity in order to create a unified and unallocated ethnic definition of a complete and unique state in which the most numerous people are identified only with the term Bosnia. On the other hand, Croatian people derive part of their identity from this regional specialty, within which the majority, but in the Federation of BiH, only 1/5 of the total population. Its identity base is dominantly Herzegovina. The rest of the population unites members of other nations, those who do not want to declare themselves or their determination are unknown, and their participation is 5%. Therefore, when we speak about regional identities, we primarily refer to domicile population and its sense of belonging and attachment to natural geographic environment (natural identity), the constitutional-legal position and administrative and legal definition of territorial units of lower level (legal identity), dominant ethnic characteristics in terms of language, religion, cultural aspirations and achievements (cultural identity) and economic and social status of certain ethnic groups or population as a whole, measured by macroeconomic indicators (economic identity).

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Notes

Note 1. The program started in 2001 and has proposed establishing two NUTS 2 and three NUTS 3 at the state level.

Note 2. The Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics

Note 3. The Army of Republic of Srpska (mainly Serbs)

Note 4. The Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, often referred to as Bosniaks Army (mainly Muslims)

Note 5. The Croat Defence Council (mainly Croats)

Note 6. Army of Autonomous Province of Western Bosnia (mainly Muslims)

Note 7. Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia

Note 8. Spatial Plan of the Republic of Srpska

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